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Blackpool Researching Together - Mental health

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Mental health problems can affect anyone and have a significant impact on the lives of individuals, their families and the wider community. People with severe and enduring mental illness are at greater risk of poor physical health and reduced life expectancy.

Through engagement with the local community we have learned that the biggest mental health concerns facing our residents are:

- Community and peer support groups and networks
- Men's mental health
- Access to and the quality of mental health services
- Mental health and addiction
- Prevention and early intervention for children and young people
- Mental health stigma
- The impact of cost of living on mental health
- Dementia and Alzheimer's prevention
- Unpaid carers mental health
- Social media and self-diagnosis
- Connections between physical and mental health
- Social isolation
- LGBTQIA+ mental health
- Self-harm
- Impact of things like diet, housing, income, childcare, work, green space on mental health

Blackpool Researching Together is working to provide research in areas that will help address some of these concerns.



Research projects

Exercise referral scheme review

Working with Active Blackpool, the team are involved in co-designing an exercise referral pathway to improve uptake of the current exercise referral scheme by understanding and overcoming the current barriers to accessing the scheme and completion of the programme.

Community co-researcher Sandra helped facilitate two co-designed workshops to find out what works with the current system, what barriers there are to uptake and completion, and what can be improved and how. The workshops were held with a mixture of exercise practitioners and community participants of the scheme.

The information gained in the workshops has been transcribed and analysed and the team recently presented the findings of the project back to participants so they could provide valuable feedback on our recommendations.

[Find out more about Active Blackpool's exercise referral scheme](#)



Cannabis support for young people

We worked with Blackpool Council's public health team to co-produce an engagement project with young people aged 16 to 25. The project aimed to find out the reasons and motivations for cannabis use and to understand what support young people feel is necessary for those wishing to address their cannabis use.

Our youth community co-researchers arranged focus groups to take place at local Further Education and VCFSE organisations. They developed participant information sheets and the themes and questions which would be asked in the sessions. In total 20 young people took part in the focus groups which were then audio recorded and transcribed by the team.

Our research associate then supported the co-researchers to conduct a thematic analysis of the data. This was used to produce a summary of key findings from the work, to understand the extent of the challenge facing Blackpool in relation to cannabis use among young people and the need to provide further support.

Guidance and support

- Help and support If you or anyone you know is feeling low or at risk of suicide
- [How to look after your mental health](#) - support and advice on how to look after your mental wellbeing
- [Young people's mental health support](#) - variety of mental health support for young people
- [Find further mental health support in the Fylde coast area](#)

The NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) Blackpool is part of the NIHR and hosted by Blackpool Council. The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.

NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaborations enable local authorities to become more research-active, embedding a culture of evidence-based decision making.

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