**Centre for Academic Mental Health**

**Strategy**

**Vision**

The [Centre for Academic Mental Health](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/psychiatry/) (CAMH) is part of [Population Health Sciences: Bristol Medical School](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/population-health-sciences/). We aim to provide a flourishing and supportive environment in which we:

* conduct high quality research that addresses important questions in relation to improving mental health;
* provide excellent undergraduate teaching on psychiatry that educates and inspires the next generation of doctors and which promotes psychiatry as a career;
* provide postgraduate training and mentoring to develop the skills and experience of those interested in mental health research, building research capacity for the future;
* use the evidence from our research to make a difference to healthcare and health policy.

**Context**

The Centre seeks to provide a sense of belonging, coherence and common purpose for academics working on mental health research across the Department of Population Health Science, as well as the wider University. Our research is multidisciplinary and collaborative bringing together expertise in psychiatry, epidemiology, primary care, public health, psychology, statistics, and social science.

**Current research strengths**

Our research is primary concerned with population health issues in relation to mental health. We strive to enhance knowledge to reduce impairment and distress associated with mental ill health across the lifecourse. Our research includes: (1) the identification of biological, psychological, cognitive and behavioural mechanisms to explain mental health risk and using this knowledge to inform treatment and prevention of mental disorder; (2) the identification of biomarkers predicting transition to disorder and treatment response; and (3) large scale trials and natural experimental evaluations of interventions.

We have major research strengths in seven main areas:

1. *Epidemiology and treatment of common mental disorders in primary care* – this research focuses on the clinical and cost-effectiveness of interventions for individuals with depression and anxiety in primary care. This works also includes the application of new technologies and understanding mechanisms of psychological interventions based on findings from basic cognitive science (leads: [Kessler](http://www.bris.ac.uk/contact/person/getDetails?personKey=ciAVjZUj3r9bis6mbwIXQXnBja3C1q) and [Wiles](http://www.bris.ac.uk/contact/person/getDetails?personKey=es0MUQ1ZgO0AQKqlZvx0Z21pcuw9hz)).
2. *Intergenerational & perinatal mental health ­*– this includes studies identifying genetic, behavioural and cognitive mechanisms underlying the association between maternal and offspring mental health problems, in-depth study of parental behaviour ([Pearson](https://www.bris.ac.uk/contact/person/getDetails?personKey=8WAZsbi9MfQZxoL7JjEUomCRG6IcmJ)) and the study of interventions designed to improve perinatal mental health (Evans).
3. *Neurodevelopmental disorders* – this work focuses on the epidemiology of autism and other developmental disorders focusing on modifiable antecedents and outcomes, and interventions that may improve the health and lives of people with neurodevelopmental disabilities (lead: [Rai](https://www.bris.ac.uk/contact/person/getDetails?personKey=Z5kOGzusSbFNkI8lone7T3xnLsWnZ9)).
4. *Suicide and self-harm* – this research focuses on understanding the causes of suicide and suicidal behaviour in order to inform clinical and population prevention strategies (leads: [Gunnell](http://www.bris.ac.uk/contact/person/getDetails?personKey=zpfKATf3DexrH2z27NJOshwAhAS6CE) and [Moran](http://www.bris.ac.uk/contact/person/getDetails?personKey=cChSDFEsWXyDY1yXoX18EE8A9vFDei)).
5. *Psychosis* - this work focuses on the aetiology of schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, and improving the management of, and treatment outcomes for, people with such disorders (lead: [Zammit](http://www.bris.ac.uk/contact/person/getDetails?personKey=wiNgRsUaVQIUHDHOqhM2uCb0JAlImE)).
6. *Personality Disorder* – this work focuses on the epidemiology and treatment of personality disorders and associated co-morbidity. The research spans descriptive epidemiological studies, feasibility studies of novel interventions, large multi-centre trials of complex psychological interventions, as well as the evaluation of national services for people with personality disorder (lead: [Moran](http://www.bris.ac.uk/contact/person/getDetails?personKey=cChSDFEsWXyDY1yXoX18EE8A9vFDei)).
7. *Addiction –* research in this area focuses on identifying patterns and consequences of substance use, including both high-risk and population based approaches to the prevention of substance use (lead: [Hickman](http://www.bris.ac.uk/contact/person/getDetails?personKey=0xDXRN5hWra2peIRIySYIu8z21Unsf)).

We use the results from our research to develop and test novel interventions to treat, prevent and reduce harms associated with mental disorder. Our research also informs local, national and international health policy regarding the prevention and treatment of mental disorder.

As well as strengths in these specific areas, our research utilises a wide range of methodologies including life-course and genetic epidemiology, health economics, statistics, cognitive and behavioural science, qualitative research methods and anthropological/ethnographic approaches. We also have a strong track record in conducting large multi-centre randomised controlled trials (RCTs).

**Teaching**

In partnership with our NHS colleagues, we provide undergraduate training in psychiatry. Psychiatry teaching is an integral part of the new [MB21 curriculum](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/2019/medicine/mb-medicine/) introduced in September 2017.

In addition, in partnership with the School of Psychiatry in Severn Postgraduate Medical Education, we offer a high quality integrated academic and clinical training programme for those intending to follow an academic career pathway in psychiatry.

The Centre also hosts a Certificate of Psychiatry Undergraduate Education. This aims to enhance knowledge and develop skills for our wider [Clinical Academy](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/medical-school/study/undergraduate/clinical-academies/)  teacher faculty. The Academies provide clinical training within the Bristol Medical School footprint, which includes Swindon, Gloucester, Bath, Bristol, Weston and Taunton.

In addition, the Centre provides a thriving environment for postgraduate research training. Students have access to a wide range of training opportunities including the internationally renowned [short course programme in Population Health Sciences](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/medical-school/study/short-courses/) and courses organised through the [Bristol Doctoral College](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/).

Staff within CAMH are encouraged to take up opportunities to become involved with undergraduate and postgraduate teaching (for example, the newly established [Masters programme](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/2019/health-sciences/msc-epidemiology/) and [short course programme](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/medical-school/study/short-courses/)) as well as supervising postgraduate research students.

**Environment**

We work closely with the [Bristol Biomedical Research Centre](https://www.bristolbrc.nihr.ac.uk/); [NIHR ARC West](https://clahrc-west.nihr.ac.uk/); [MRC IEU](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/integrative-epidemiology/); [CRIC](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cricbristol/); [NIHR Health Protection Research Unit](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/population-health-sciences/centres/nihr-hpru/); [NIHR School for Primary Care](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/primaryhealthcare/); and [NIHR School for Public Health](https://sphr.nihr.ac.uk/). We use longitudinal data from the Bristol-based [Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alspac/) (ALSPAC) in a wide-ranging programme of work investigating a range of mental health outcomes, including the second generation (ALSPAC-G2). RCTs evaluating complex interventions take advantage of established links with the UK-CRC registered [Bristol Randomised Trials Collaboration](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/population-health-sciences/centres/brtc/) (BRTC). Our research also benefits from the cross-disciplinary expertise encompassed by the new [Elizabeth Blackwell Institute’s Younger People’s Mental Health Research Initiative](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/blackwell/health-research/mental-health/). We have close links with local NHS and Local Government Bodies and lead or collaborate with [Bristol Health Partners](http://www.bristolhealthpartners.org.uk/) Health Integration Teams (HITs) in Depression, Psychosis, Self-harm and Perinatal Mental Health. Internationally we have strong collaborations with research institutes in the US, [Australia](https://www.mcri.edu.au/research/projects/2000-stories) and Europe, particularly around the KaBris collaboration (with Karolinska, Sweden) using the rich record linkage opportunities in Scandinavia. We also collaborate with colleagues in Sri Lanka, South Africa and Brazil (including the Pelotas Cohorts) and are strengthening collaborations with Africa, S America and SE Asia through a recent MRC funded Global Mental Health award.

**Public Engagement**

We work closely with the local community in Bristol providing live demonstrations of research at city events. This has Includes a partnership between the MHINT research team and ['We the Curious’](https://www.wethecurious.org/education/what-we-offer)

**Goals for the next 5 years**

* To continue to promote and improve the national and international profile of mental health research undertaken within the Centre.
* To actively seek opportunities to expand our research and build expertise in currently unexploited areas of interdisciplinary research.
* To continually improve the quality of learning and the student experience in undergraduate psychiatry teaching.
* To strengthen links with national and international partners as well as major funding bodies including MRC, NIHR, ERC, ESRC, Welcome Trust .
* To strengthen and expand public involvement in our research.
* To increase the impact of our research by ensuring that our research findings are translated into clinical practice and health policy.
* To increase the capacity for mental health research within the School by:
  + increasing the number of clinical and non-clinical doctoral and post-doctoral studentships and fellowships awarded to staff within the Centre.
  + attracting new international talent
  + continuing to seek NIHR funding to support Academic Foundation year programmes and Academic Clinical Fellowships.
  + to provide mentoring opportunities for students and early career researchers to support their development and transition to independence.
* To increase the proportion of funding from long-term grants (e.g. NIHR BRC, NIHR Programme Grants for Applied Research).

**Strategy**

We will achieve our aims by:

1. Ensuring that our research continues to be published in high impact international journals and is disseminated at key national and international conferences.
2. Publicising our work through the Centre, School and University websites, and other media, including social media accounts, as well as working with national and international press and broadcasting.
3. Arranging a regular seminar series to provide opportunities for networking with colleagues based locally and elsewhere.
4. Holding biannual research meetings to showcase the work of the Centre.
5. Encouraging wide collaboration across the University and externally, in order to develop innovative programmes of research that stand the best chance of securing competitive funding.
6. Encourage and support all staff to develop new skills through training opportunities available both locally, nationally and internationally, and in applications for externally funded fellowships to ensure opportunities for career development at all stages .