How do MHRN-C Clinical Studies Officers (CSOs) facilitate projects?

Aims of CSO involvement in MHRN-C

The MHRN-C aims to build up a portfolio of successful strategies by which CSO involvement improves the recruitment to and completion of the whole range of different types of studies in mental health research.

This information will help MHRN-C to target and tailor recruitment facilitation strategies at the earliest point for all of its adopted studies.

CSO Role

Clinical Studies Officers (CSOs) are available in Bangor, Cardiff and Swansea to assist researchers in a number of ways, principally identifying patients eligible for the project and providing information and support for participants[1].

The following list shows the range of activities that MHRN-C CSOs are currently involved in:

Preparation

- Shadowing research team member
- Training in assessments
- Venepuncture training
- Meeting with clinicians and attending clinics
- Screening notes
- Feasibility & case note audits
- Telephone screens
- Identification of new investigators
- Web searches
- Service mapping
- Study promotion – presentations, leaflets, news articles etc
- Local team visits e.g. EIS to promote research to network and create contact links
- Participating in site initiation visits

Recruitment of participants

- Taking consent (*where appropriate, depending on the study*)
- Assisting with information giving in the consent process
- Baseline assessments
- Sample taking (salvia and blood)

[1] **NB** Allocation of CSO support to a particular study is negotiated and agreed by MHRNC and CRCCymru and is dependent on the resources available within the hub at any given time. Studies adopted onto the Network cannot therefore assume that they will be allocated CSO time and even when CSO time is offered the MHRN-C does not guarantee indefinite CSO input and may, with negotiation, need to reduce/remove this input at any time.

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Administration

- R&D applications
- Ethics applications
- Assisting with honorary contract
- Obtaining definitive advice for the RM&G Advice Service
- Preparation of recruitment packs
- Updating databases

Measuring the Impact of CSO support in MHRN-C

Data will be collected and recorded to evaluate the benefits of CSO input into MHRN-C adopted projects.

CSOs submit a monthly activity reports with details of the projects that CSOs are currently working on, hours worked on the project and the activities they do for the project.

CSO involvement can be very varied, complex and hard to evaluate tangibly. However, for studies with recruitment difficulties at the time of UK MHRN adoption measures used to gauge the positive impact of CSO support include:

1. achievement of a recruitment target
2. and/or increase in the recruitment rate