

Newsletter

ISSUE 14 : Winter 2021



A year in the Life of DIAMONDS — Looking back on 2021

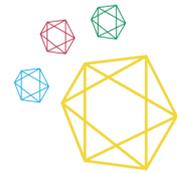
What a year! 2021 has been our busiest year yet with major milestones and achievements coming thick and fast.

Early in the year, we were busy securing Ethics approval. Alongside those important permissions, we were working with our partners [NiftyFox Creative](#) and [Pipe & Piper](#) to finalise the **DIAMONDS** intervention. We are so proud to have a bespoke support programme, delivered by trained professionals using a pen-and-paper workbook as well as a digital app. In the early summer, our collaborators at Leicester Diabetes Centre were hard at work designing a training programme for the **DIAMONDS** Coaches to teach them how to deliver the intervention. The first group of Coaches from NHS Trusts across the region were trained in May. And then, when everything was in place, we were able to open our feasibility study and recruited our first participant in early July 2021. This was a huge step and I couldn't be more proud of the whole team and all our partners who worked so hard to get to this point.

The year is drawing to a close and recruitment of participants is coming to an end, while the delivery of the intervention will continue into the new year. We have learned so much over the past 12 months. Most importantly, though, I have been reminded - once again - that team work really does make the dream work. None of our achievements would have been possible without the incredible **DIAMONDS** research team, the wonderful and generous community that is **DIAMONDS** Voice, our partners, and collaborators, the staff at the participating Trusts, and, last but not least, the people who are volunteering to take part in our study. To all of you, I owe my thanks.

In a couple of weeks, it will be 2022, which will bring a whole new set of exciting challenges as we take **DIAMONDS** into the next phase. Before then, we will take some time to pause and reflect, to rest and recharge. Wherever and however you will be spending the festive season, I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and happy time! 2022 is coming - and we will be ready!

Jennifer Brown, DIAMONDS Programme Manager



diamonds.

Improving diabetes outcomes for people with severe mental illness.

This issue :

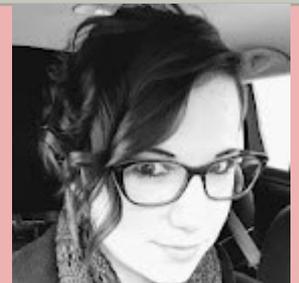
Looking Back on 2021

Getting Involved

Double Act at Humber

EMERALD Reflections

DIAMONDS Voice Update



Jennifer Brown



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Improving diabetes self-management for people with severe mental illness.

For more information, visit us online:

www.diamondscollaboration.org.uk



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THE 2021 FESTIVAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
1st - 30th November



Economic and Social Research Council



Claire Carswell

Getting involved in Research...

On the 9th of November the **DIAMONDS** team hosted an online event for the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Festival of Social Science. The two-hour event focused on the benefits of patient and public involvement in research. The first hour of the event included a presentation from the **National Institute of Health Research Clinical Research Network (NIHR CRN) Yorkshire and Humber's**, Evie Chandler, who explained the different ways people could get involved in research. The second presentation was from **DIAMONDS** Research Fellow, Dr Claire Carswell and **DIAMONDS** Voice member Keith Double, who described the way **DIAMONDS** Voice has been central to the research programme and the recent achievements of the group. The second half of the event involved a lively panel discussion on peoples experiences of involvement in research. The panel included Atique Arif NIHR Regional Champion for RDASH, Keith Double from **DIAMONDS** Voice and BDCFT, Hannah Gray from Involvement @ York, William Johnston from the Renal Arts Group at Queen's University Belfast, Kirsten Thompson, Chronic Illness Advocate and NIHR Research Champion. The audience asked the group questions about the benefits of research, their personal experience with research, and big picture questions about the implications of patient and public involvement for the future of research and clinical practice.

In addition to our presenters and our panellists, we want to say a special thank you to everyone else who helped bring this event together, including Jennifer Brown, Scarlett Brunstrom, Vicky Hales, Gary Hellewell, Sarah McCardle, Angie Ross, and everyone who attended the event and contributed to such an interesting and enlightening discussion. We received positive feedback, for example; one delegate commented on the usefulness of the session;-

'A lively and thoughtful discussion about the potential for patient involvement in research. It helped me to consider how contributing to research impacts the patient/participant and understand what they are gaining from the experience. Also, the importance of sharing findings and developments with participants. Great event, well done to all involved!'

We would also like to thank the **ESRC** for providing us with the funding to host this event as part of the Festival for Social Science.



Double Act at Humber Research Conference 2021

DIAMONDS Programme Manager Jen Brown and **DIAMONDS** Voice member Gary Hellewell presented the work of **DIAMONDS** to a mixed audience of clinicians, researchers and the public at the NHS Humber research conference on Thursday 17th November. The session was well received and the host commented favourably on the presence of both service user member and academic, sharing the same podium at such events.



emerald.

Understanding risk factors for diabetes and the experience of diabetes healthcare for people with severe mental illness.

Visit our blog:

diamondscollaboration.org.uk/blog

Reflections on publicised findings:

‘Living with diabetes along side a severe mental illness’

Earlier in the summer we publicised the findings of the **EMERALD** Study in the **Diabetic Medicine** (Volume 38, Issue 7 July 2021): These are some of the reflections and comments from our **DIAMONDS** Voice members and participants. The full script can be seen on our blog.

Najma Ashraf, Mental Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator, RoshniGhar (<https://roshnighar.org.uk/>)

‘I can relate to the findings from my experience working at Roshnighar; with clients who have severe mental illness and diabetes. If in a crisis; especially in a low mood, it is so difficult for them to manage their diabetes. The women we support at Roshnighar experience inequalities accessing the health service. The main difficulties are language and cultural barriers, which lead to a lot of misunderstanding, and they often feel their voice is not heard. The areas our women particularly struggle with are; poor health literacy, not knowing what support is available, and no advocates, and so the process of the health care appointments are a big challenge.’

What we would like to see change: ‘Information with visual aids, available in different languages and generally more language support. Interventions that were culturally adaptable and meet the needs of their lifestyle. Education and self management programmes to help them manage their diabetes and overcome their difficulties. Also, services and support available so when they are in a crisis or in a low mood they know what to do...’

Irina Sidorova, DIAMONDS Voice

‘It’s a start to raise awareness to the public and the services about the complex issues for those who live with severe mental illness and other physical health difficulties like diabetes;- especially the comment (in the paper) about the services working together – mental health and physical health is often not joined up. In the past a lot (of information) has been anecdotal but now to see it as research evidence is amazing! Evidence is so important as otherwise it’s a constant debate!’

The next step: ‘I’m in agreement with the importance of self-education and management...’

‘It is so important to look after yourself and work in cooperation with the services. The health service can only do so much...’

Gary Hellewell, DIAMONDS Voice

‘The health and mental nurse practitioners need the training as dealing with SMI and diabetes is so complex. The paper is so important and it needs to be out there in the public domain!’ I’m overwhelmed to be part of this and so proud!’

The Importance of taking part in the study: ‘It’s important to get the researchers to think more about the people’s experiences to help them design meaningful ‘real life’ questions for the research. As a result we were able to highlight the areas that were not raised by previous research, e.g the importance of exploring the issue of sleep’





diamonds voice.

Putting the public voice at the heart of DIAMONDS research



Over the summer as restrictions were lifting we were able to start to meet our partners and **DIAMONDS** Voice members in person as well as using zoom link facilities.

We had our first 'blended' meeting at St Georges Conference Centre Leeds in September, where we were able to help develop and give feedback on a session for the online Research Festival at the University of York (which features in the central pages of this newsletter). As this worked very well, we hope to provide a similar event next spring 2022. Also, we have been able to engage with other community services like Mind in Bradford and the Cellar Project Bradford who are keen to support **DIAMONDS** and **PRIMROSE** projects as part of their campaign to improve health outcomes and services for those living with mental illness. Then more recently Gary Hellewell accompanied Jen Brown to the Humber Research Conference 2021 on Day 1, whereby they presented the work of **DIAMONDS**. They made a great double act! You can watch the presentation on YouTube. Gary comments on his experience....

'I loved it! It was interesting listening about different projects and meeting people from different places it gives you different insights... It's important to share what we are doing . Communication is what it's all about!'

Finally, we thank you for working with us to help shape the direction of research as well as helping us to share the findings so we can have an impact on future services and health care.



Angie Ross

We meet 3-4 times a year.

Our next **DIAMONDS** Voice meeting is online:

Wednesday 2nd December 2021 at 12 noon

Interested? We are always looking for new members, who have lived experience of severe mental illness and diabetes, or other long term health conditions. No previous research experience is required.

Please contact Angie Ross

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E: ppihealthresearch@gmail.com

We bid farewell and many thanks to Julie Blanchard and Colin Lewisohn



Colin and Julie (pictured at the far end of the table) started supporting **DIAMONDS** Voice in 2018 and have made invaluable contributions to the development of the DIAMONDS App 'Change One Thing'. They are now moving away from the area and so we wish them all the best. We will continue to hear Colin a little longer as he is the voice-over for our animation on the **DIAMONDS** Collaboration website.

FUNDED BY

NIHR | National Institute for Health Research

This newsletter presents independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) under its Programme Grants for Applied Research (PGfAR) Programme (Grant Reference Number RP-PG-1016-20003) and its Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR) Programme (Grant Reference number 15/70/26). The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health.