

## Liaison Mental Health Training

North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Salford have embarked on an innovative partnership, which will see them working in collaboration to develop and deliver a first-of-its-kind liaison mental health training programme, funded by Health Education England North West.

The 18-month project aims to improve the skills and knowledge of frontline staff working within liaison mental health services across the North West. The need for the programme arose following work undertaken by the North West Coast Strategic Clinical Network, which revealed the acquisition, development and continued supervision of core competencies required to work within liaison mental health services was inconsistent and largely dependent on local offers of internal leadership.

The programme offers the opportunity for 150 clinical staff from liaison mental health services across Greater Manchester, Cheshire, Merseyside, Lancashire and South Cumbria to complete a three-month training course that will be delivered by the University of Salford at their purpose-built counselling and psychotherapy training facilities, and in their clinical simulation suite.

This suite features rooms designed to look exactly like hospital wards with equipment provided by NHS suppliers and realistic human patient simulators. Walking on real hospital flooring, passing a busy nurses station, the sounds of telephones ringing and nurse call buzzers creates an atmosphere in keeping with a hospital ward.

The programme will ultimately help to standardise care provided within liaison mental health services across the North West, upskill the liaison mental health workforce and will importantly improve experiences for patients within acute hospital settings who have mental health needs, and their carers.

The programme is truly a collaborative venture, utilising the strengths and expertise of the two partner organisations to deliver a comprehensive training package, with academic and clinical strengths enhanced by the oversight of our expert reference panel.

The panel comprises multi-disciplinary liaison professionals and experts by experience who have helped to shape the content and structure of the programme. In addition, face-to-face workshops and a Twitter listening event, which had an overall reach of over 1.6 million, were facilitated to further input into the development of the training package to ensure it meets the needs of staff working within liaison mental health teams.

The course will consist of five full-day sessions and five days of online distance learning. The first cohort of the programme will begin in September 2018, with two further cohorts scheduled for November 2018 and January 2019.

