

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Leics speech & language therapist wins grant to develop national Mental Health Act guidelines**

A Leicestershire senior speech and language therapist has fought off strong regional competition to secure funding to develop Mental Health Act 2007 information specifically tailored for people with learning disabilities, which could be shared nationwide.

Alison Drewett, who works in Adult Learning Disabilities at Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, has successfully gained a place on one of the country's leading healthcare research programmes, called the Research into Practice programme (RIPple) which is run by the Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC-NDL).

Now in its second year, *RIPple* allows therapists, nurses and NHS managers in the East Midlands to undertake a fast-track piece of research that is immediately relevant to improving patient experience. Insights gained from the programme can be incorporated into making improvements to services for patients and carers.

Alison's research project is the design of an accessible version of Section 3 of the Mental Health Act for use on admission for treatment, and how to make sure it gets used by staff. The reason to focus initially on Section 3 of the Act is that this is one of the most commonly invoked parts of the legislation. The project will heavily involve people with learning disabilities in the production of materials, and is due to be completed by July.

Section 3 allows a person to be admitted to hospital for treatment. It must be necessary for their health, their safety or for the protection of other people that they receive treatment and it cannot be provided unless they are detained in hospital. In addition, the mental illness must be of a nature or a degree that requires treatment in hospital.

People with learning disabilities are likely to also have communication difficulties affecting not only their expressive language but also their understanding. When they are also experiencing mental health difficulties, it may be more likely that they need extra support around their communication because they may be experiencing distress and confusion.

Alison said: “By law, healthcare staff have a duty to ensure that patients, including those with learning disabilities, are provided with accessible information that’s tailored for them in order to understand what rights they have, to understand what they are being told, to be able to make meaningful choices and to be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

“The Mental Health Act 2007 effectively takes away a person’s right to make their own decisions if certain conditions are fulfilled. This makes it extremely important that patients are made aware of what is happening to them or could happen and what their rights are in such cases. This information needs to be accessible in order that people are aware of their rights and how to exercise them.”

Alison was one of 18 successful candidates to gain a place on the programme, with initial research findings expected to be produced later in summer 2013.

RIPple is run by CLAHRC-NDL, which is part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), serving Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire, with a main regional base at the University of Nottingham.

CLAHRC colleagues with expertise in research methodology, ethics, process and evaluation as well as supporting patient and public involvement in research, will help guide the programme’s participants in their work.

Professor Rachel Munton, CLAHRC-NDL Director, said: “This ground-breaking programme has, for the second year running, attracted an incredibly diverse set of research proposals. Just like the 11 projects we funded last year, this year’s cohort are very practical, dealing with real issues or opportunities faced by staff working with patients and service users and they have the potential to speedily transform the patient experience.”

More information on CLAHRC-NDL is available at <http://www.clahrc-ndl.nihr.ac.uk>

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides a range of health and wellbeing services mainly for people living Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Trust serves a population of one million, has a budget in excess of £250 million and employs approximately 5,400 staff. For more information visit [www.leicspart.nhs.uk](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk)

**Our mission:** To advance health and wellbeing for you and your community

**Our vision:** To become an integrated Foundation Trust with a passion for quality and excellence

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