



Dr Suzanne Elliott (centre) with Dr Emma Williamson and Joseph Murphy, manager of Leicester City Council's street outreach team.

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Leicester 'psychology on streets' will aid rough sleepers across UK**

Innovative work that takes psychology onto Leicester streets to support homeless people is being featured in a new national training programme.

Dr Suzanne Elliott, clinical psychologist with Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) has been filmed with Joseph Murphy who manages Leicester City Council's street outreach team for a free UK-wide online training programme focusing on the mental health needs of people who are sleeping rough.

Dr Elliott, part of LPT's homeless mental health service, was invited to take part in the training programme because of her involvement in Leicester's street outreach service -which has increased the outreach support already offered by the LPT team - and her expertise in 'psychologically informed environments' This is an approach that helps to provide services based on a strong understanding of the psychological and social issues behind homelessness.

Through their street outreach work, Dr Elliott and LPT homeless service mental health practitioners are going out onto the streets every week with the city council's street outreach team.

The LPT and city council teams have followed national best practice by working together closely to develop this innovative approach and 'psychology on the streets' is now earning

growing recognition as good practice across clinical psychology for people who are homeless.

The new national training programme aims to widen access to best practice training for street outreach workers across various sectors who support homeless people with complex mental health needs.

Said Dr Elliott: “The training film is directed at people who work with rough sleepers and aims to make them more mental health aware. I use a narrative approach to psychological wellbeing which encourages practitioners to see beyond the problems that someone has, and seek to get to know the other stories about the person that are important to them. I’m sharing this approach with support workers to build trust and better relationships with rough sleepers.”

She added: “As LPT practitioners working with people who are homeless, we take a lead from the expertise in the city council’s street outreach team team who have decades of experience in this area.

“When they approached us about joint working, we were keen to pilot something different by being a regular presence on the streets. We have also listened to people with lived experience of homelessness who were telling us that we needed to be seen and trusted more by rough sleepers.

“Homeless mental health service staff now go out every week with the outreach team raising awareness about mental health and building relationships with people who have lost trust in everything while they are sleeping on the streets. There is still a lot of stigma attached to mental health services in the rough sleeping community and this is part of our work to tackle it.”

Joseph Murphy explained: “As an outreach service for rough sleepers our aim has always been to take a personalised proactive approach. This is why I first approached Dr Elliott to develop this way of working through a joint working street-based model so we can empower people to take support and ownership on their journey away from rough sleeping to a more healthy lifestyle.



Coun Adam Clarke, deputy city mayor for environment, public health and health integration said: “Many rough sleepers have serious mental health issues that need tackling before they can even start to engage with other services.

“By taking a psychologist out to people on the street instead of expecting them to come to us, we are removing a barrier that will hopefully enable many more people to get the support they need to get off the streets for good.”

The national training programme has been funded through the Mayor of London’s Rough Sleeper Innovation Fund and backed by Westminster City Council and London Borough of Lambeth.

The project is led by Dr Emma Williamson, a clinical psychologist with South London and Maudesley NHS Foundation Trust who recruited leading experts to share their expertise for the new training platform.

Dr Williamson said: “I have followed the great work Suzanne has been doing with the local homeless outreach team in Leicester for some time and invited her to be part of the project and film two mini videos to showcase her work.”

The free online 18-month course covers mental health prevalence, social exclusion, complex trauma, practical engagement techniques, risk assessment, legislation and system sector awareness.” It is expected to be available free in the New Year via

<https://www.aneemo.com/rsif-award>

The course comprises four modules, each with four to six mini training videos from other leading experts including Sir Michael Marmot Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London, Prof Nick Maguire Associate Professor in Psychology at the University of Southampton, Deputy London Mayor, James Murray, and the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust START homeless team.

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. **Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT)** provides community health, mental health and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £275 million and employ approximately 5,500 staff. For more information visit: [www.leicspart.nhs.uk](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk)

2. **Raising Health** is our registered charity (number 1057361) which raises funds to support LPT's excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision, to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff.

[www.raisinghealth.org.uk](http://www.raisinghealth.org.uk)

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