

2011 Bamford Implementation Commissioned Call

Chief Investigator: Dr Berni Kelly, Queens University Belfast

Title of research project: Transitions & outcomes for care leavers with mental health and/or intellectual disabilities.

Abstract: This study examines the interface between child and adult services to support the needs of care leavers with mental health and/or intellectual disabilities transitioning to adult life. These young people are over-represented in the leaving care population; are at high risk of multiple levels of adversity, exclusion and oppression as they move into young adult life; and are likely to require continued support during transition and in young adult life. Yet there has been very limited consideration of the transitional experiences of this group of care leavers in extant research literature. The study will use existing health and social care data collection processes to profile the characteristics of care leavers with mental health and/or intellectual disabilities and undertake case studies with a sample of these care leavers to examine transitional experiences and outcomes in young adult life. Quantitative and qualitative data collection methods will be utilised, including an innovative peer research approach. Case studies will provide new insights into their transitional experiences and develop recommendations on how best to organise the interface between child and adult service systems to more effectively support their transition to adult life. It is anticipated that findings from this study will inform child and adult health and social care providers on how to make best use of available resources and effectively fulfil Corporate Parenting responsibilities across the boundaries of child, 16+ and adult service systems. The study should also inform future service development by investigating the effectiveness and compatibility of existing service systems and exploring alternative models of service delivery to meet the transitional needs of care leavers with mental health and/or intellectual disabilities.