



*Transforming the culture of care*

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## **NEWS RELEASE...NEWS RELEASE**

### **Mental health service improves patient experience and reduces cost by putting culture first**

People experiencing mental ill health are benefitting from a cultural approach to their recovery, leading to a reduction in service use and more met needs, announced the Cultural Consultation Service (CCS) at its national conference in London last week.

Commissioned by Tower Hamlets NHS, in 18 months the CCS team conducted over 900 clinically-related contacts, more than 300 face to face contacts with staff, over 300 face to face contacts with service users and 250 contacts with staff at team meetings. The patients, who were referred, mostly had a diagnosis of schizophrenia and complex needs

By using cultural consultation, which takes account of cultural factors in the expression and management of mental distress and focuses on patients' narratives (or stories), the outcomes and experiences for service users and the cultural capability of mental health professionals improved.

#### **The main service benefits highlighted at the conference include:**

- clinicians noted that service users had significantly higher overall functioning
- some improvement in the levels of depression and anxiety
- The level of service take up (and by implication associated costs) significantly reduced after CCS intervention
- Clinicians found the service helpful as it provided a richer perspective and allowed service users to talk about things they had not been able to before
- Nearly 50 per cent of the clinicians who responded to the evaluation wanted a cultural consultant permanently based within their team.

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**Professor Kamaldeep Bhui, Director of the Cultural Consultation Service, said:** “We have enabled clinicians to work more collaboratively with patients from all backgrounds. Our service has given them greater choice to ensure that their concerns, worries and preferences are better understood. CCS has provided clinicians with new skills backed by evidence-based practice. This gives people experiencing mental ill health the best chance of recovery as they are empowered to shape and use the treatments that work for them.”

**Speaking at the conference, Gregor Henderson, Wellbeing and Mental Health Adviser at the Department of Health, said:** “Mental health policy is changing radically. There is a greater appreciation of the social determinants in response to mental health.” He added that there were possible “future priorities for future guidance and support” regarding culturally competent services and access, and welcomed “more sophisticated solutions” in mental health care.

A full scientific report on the Cultural Consultation Service’s impact locally, with case studies, will be published in February 2012.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

The **Cultural Consultation Service (CCS)** ([www.culturalconsultation.org.uk](http://www.culturalconsultation.org.uk)) is the only UK-based organisation that provides cultural consultation, training, research and policy at multiple levels, including the individual, teams, organisations and social systems. Its central philosophy is to engage with the narratives of individuals, carers, the workforce and organisations, and to intervene in a way that promotes recovery, person-centred care and empowerment. With roots in social science and anthropology, the service takes account of cultural factors in the expression and management of mental distress and are incorporated in the assessment, engagement and treatment of patients.

An executive summary of the Cultural Consultation Service (CCS) was launched at the **Transforming the culture of care conference on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012** at Mile End Hospital, London. Hosted by CCS, the event highlighted the initial findings of CCS’s 18-month delivery programme and provided a platform for over 100 commissioners, service providers, clinicians and service users to discuss the best ways to address the current challenges in mental health care.

**Speakers at the conference included** Gregor Henderson, Wellbeing and Mental Health Adviser, the Department of Health, Darren Summers, Senior Commissioner (Mental Health), Tower Hamlets NHS, Patrick Vernon, Chief Executive, The Afiya Trust, Nilu Ahmed, Consultant Data Analyst for the CCS research, David Truswell, Senior Project Manager, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust and Akin Adepoju, Senior Commissioner (Performance) East London and City NHS Trust.

## MEDIA CONTACT

To request interviews or additional information, contact Joy Francis, The Creative Collective.

**T:** 020 7288 6255 **Mb:** 0771 382 7372 **E:** [joy@thecreativecollective.com](mailto:joy@thecreativecollective.com)