

Welcome to the final issue of 2017. This issue brings together a range of research papers, case studies and brief papers. The first paper by Shaw and Edelman investigates the relationship between personality disorder treatment readiness and dropout from community-based offending behaviour group interventions in the UK: a cognitive skills programme, a general violence programme and a programme for domestically abusive men. Based on their findings, they report that paranoid and antisocial personality pathology present important obstacles to effective offending behaviour group work in the community. The findings call for further consideration to be given to these important responsivity factors in the delivery and evaluation of such interventions.

A second research paper by Hargate and colleagues explores the experiences of both staff and patients in a medium-secure mental health unit, in relation to the self-harm and/or suicidal behaviour of others. Interpretative phenomenological analysis is used to analyse semi-structured interviews conducted with staff and patients. Three dominant themes were identified during analysis: the impact of suicide and self-harm; the role of others; and the importance of understanding and experience. The paper provides an insight into the experiences of staff and patients in a medium-secure male mental health unit, offering benefits to practitioners when considering support mechanisms. A third research paper by Huthwaite and colleagues uses a modest sample size in order to explore weight changes during psychiatric hospitalisation to identify “obesogenic” features in a mixed inpatient service. Based on the data collected, they inform us that whilst antipsychotic medication is known to cause weight gain, this should not be considered in isolation when attempting to explain psychiatric inpatient obesity. They argue that an inpatient admission is an opportunity to provide a healthier eating environment, health education and assertively promote less sedentary behaviour and healthier sleep habits.

What follow are two case study papers. The first by Maltman and Turner describes a case involving partnership working with a female offender with complex needs. Drawing on recommendations from the 2011 Offender Personality Disorder Strategy around partnership working, the paper describes the development of a “volcano metaphor” as a conceptual framework to assist those workers without psychological training to better understand the complexity of a client’s intense emotional world. The paper also reflects on the impact of an individualised formulation and inter-agency working on through-the-gate working. Duff and colleagues then present a case study of what they describe as being a novel service for the non-offending partners (NOPs) of men who have sexually offended against children. They examine the rationale for the service and preliminary qualitative data that reflect how NOPs experience the group innovations. Despite a small group size, the paper describes the positive changes that the NOPs programme supports regarding child protection skills, as well as the value that NOPs perceive in incorporating male therapists and male offenders into the process. However, the impact on recidivism and reduction of further harm to children are yet to be fully investigated and these are identified as being central questions for the service in order to ensure that it offers a valid and reliable intervention programme.

This issue concludes with two brief papers. The first paper by Kewley provides a short review paper outlining current police risk assessment and management practice in the UK when working with those convicted of sexual offences. The newly implemented Active Risk Management System tool used by police across England and Wales is introduced.

The paper provides a brief review of the current literature and practice, concluding that for effective practice to be achieved, practitioners need to have skills and experiences, as well as core values that support the notion of change. Finally, a paper by Livanou and colleagues provides an overview of transitions across forensic child and adolescent mental health services in England and Wales. With the aim of delineating the national secure services system for young people in contact with the youth justice system, the paper reviews findings from the existing literature of transitions across forensic child and adolescent mental health services. The authors conclude that young offenders experience a broad range of difficulties, suggesting that there is a need to develop, test and evaluate models of transitional care that improve mental health and wellbeing of this group.