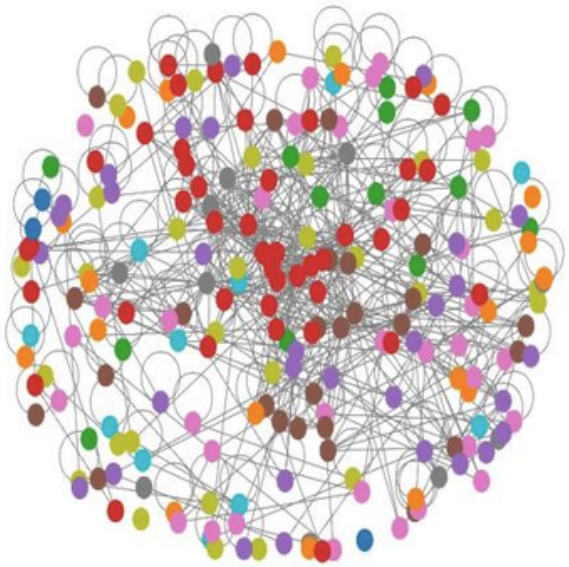
NIHR | Research Delivery Network

UNIVERSITY of HULL | Centre for Addiction & Mental Health Research

OCTOBER 2026
ISSUE 2



NARA

Northern Addiction Research Alliance

News

NARA Logo

The NARA logo represents the strength and diversity of collaboration among researchers in addiction and mental health research. Each coloured node represents a unique researcher, colour-coded by their higher education institution (HEI), while the connecting edges represent research collaborations through co-authored publications. Together, these connections illustrate how collaboration brings different researchers and institutions together to form a stronger research alliance.

More info: Full Article

Welcome to this edition of the NARA News (NN), which celebrates the continued growth of our membership and the promotion of collaborations in research and care.

We are particularly pleased to welcome those early- and mid-career researchers from relatively small addiction research groups and hope that NARA can support you in creating links and contacts to form regional and national collaborations. Building and sustaining multidisciplinary and multi-institutional collaborations is the theme of this issue, which celebrates the increased engagement of ECRs and the success of Beth, Andrew & Liam from the Northeast and Lisa based in Scotland.

Over the last few weeks and months, we have also observed the expansion of Mental Health Research Groups to include Huddersfield, Keele, Lancaster, Lincoln, and Plymouth, who join the existing network of MHRGs and leadership awardees in offering opportunities for collaboration. I was delighted to recently attend the launch of both the Centre for Community and Primary Care Mental Health Research, Keele and the Centre for Equity in Mental Health, Huddersfield which is described more fully by Professors Mike Doyle and Ann-Louise Caress on page two.

As we approach the last financial quarter of this year, we are seeking to secure funding for 2027/28, which we hope will allow for the expansion of NARA across all regions of England and countries of the UK. If you are interested in helping to support ECRs and clinical academics in your area, or contribute to the NN or meetings please contact James Ekpa or Sarah Capes via NARA-CAMHR@hull.ac.uk

Professor Thomas Phillips

SCAN TO VISIT NARA WEBSITE

Open your phone's camera and scan the QR code to visit the NARA website.
nara.hull.ac.uk

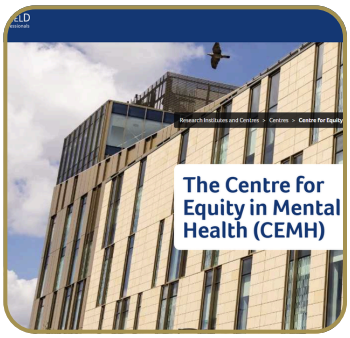
SSA SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF ADDICTION

Annual Conference 2026
12th - 13th November
More info

MCA Medical Council on Alcohol

Annual Symposium 2026
Wednesday 18th November
More info

NIHR Centre for Equity in Mental Health: Building Research, Reducing Inequalities



Professor Michael Doyle, Emma Doggett and Professor Ann-Louise Caress

Mental health problems are a major challenge across Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield (CKW), where high rates of anxiety, depression and suicide are compounded by poverty, poor housing and unemployment. Local communities, people with lived experience, healthcare providers and voluntary sector organisations have consistently identified two key priorities: improving access to mental health support and addressing the social determinants that drive poor mental health outcomes.

To respond to these challenges, the University of Huddersfield, in partnership with the University of Liverpool and South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, has secured funding to establish the NIHR Centre for Equity in Mental Health (CEMH). The Centre brings together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, community organisations and people with lived experience to develop a sustainable programme of research focused on reducing mental health inequalities across CKW and beyond.
At the heart of the Centre is a commitment to equity in mental health. Our working definition is: "The systematic and evidence-based reduction and elimination of avoidable and unjust differences in mental health outcomes, access to care, quality of services, and participation in research across populations, through approaches that are proportionate to need and responsive to diverse social and cultural contexts." [1]

The Centre has two overarching aims: first, to develop innovative, applied research rooted in the lived experiences of local communities that reduces mental health inequalities; and second, to build a vibrant and sustainable mental health research culture across CKW. Research activity will be delivered through four interconnected work packages focusing on innovative psychosocial interventions, improving care pathways and multi-agency working, equitable use of big data and artificial intelligence, and health economics. Cross-cutting themes of co-production, training and development, and sustainability will underpin all activities.

A defining feature of the Centre is its commitment to partnership working and co-production. People with lived experience will have a central role in shaping priorities, designing studies and interpreting findings through dedicated leadership roles, advisory panels and community researcher positions. All interventions and outputs will be co-produced with intended users to maximise relevance, accessibility and impact.
The Centre also creates significant opportunities for collaboration across Yorkshire and Humber and the wider UK. We are keen to work with universities, NHS organisations, local authorities, voluntary and community sector partners, and research networks that share our commitment to reducing inequalities. In particular, there are exciting opportunities to collaborate with NARA and related initiatives to address the complex intersections between mental health, substance use, social disadvantage and recovery. Such collaborations offer opportunities to develop innovative research, strengthen research capacity, attract external funding and generate evidence that informs policy and practice at regional and national levels.

Through a strong programme of knowledge mobilisation and dissemination, the NIHR - CEMH aims to ensure that research findings are translated into meaningful improvements in services, systems and outcomes. By bringing together diverse expertise and lived experience, the Centre seeks to become a catalyst for collaborative research that advances equity in mental health and improves lives across Yorkshire and Humber and the UK.

Website: Centre for Equity in Mental Health - University of Huddersfield
More info: cemh@hud.ac.uk

1 Adapted from Braveman & Gruskin, 2003; Whitehead, 1992; Carey et al., 2015.



Addiction and mental health – how do we help people in an emergency?

Dr Lisa Schölin

The challenges facing people with addiction and mental issues in accessing care have become increasingly apparent. But what happens when people present with acute needs? My Fellowship, funded by the Society for the Study of Addiction (SSA), will look at presentations to 999, NHS 24/111 (telephone healthcare advice), and the ambulance in Scotland.

The project will focus on understanding why people are presenting, how well addiction and mental health is captured in routine data, what care interactions look like, and what people's experiences are. Ultimately, the aim is to develop actionable insights to ensure people who present with acute needs get the right support and that any opportunities for wider prevention can be identified.

I am looking forward to getting started on this project and throughout the work stay connected with NARA. The vibrant research community tied into NARA offers opportunities for connection and learning across a whole range of topics related to addiction. Being based in Scotland I hope both to learn from and connect with researchers in England to explore how my work in the longer term can have a broader focus across the UK's emergency care services.

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Spotlight on Research

Dr Andrew Richardson

Building upon the presentation delivered at the NARA event in May 2026. Dr Andrew Richardson's presentation findings on the hidden harm of gambling within North East substance misuse services has now been published in the International Gambling Studies Journal. Details of his paper are found below.

Title: Practitioner perspectives on addressing gambling harms within substance misuse services: a qualitative study in the North East of England

Aim: The aim of this research is to investigate the barriers and facilitators for drug and alcohol workers in addressing gambling harms within substance misuse settings.

Methods: Thirty-four semi-structured, online interviews were conducted. Participants were recruited across the North East of England and included staff from specialist charity services, local authorities and primary care treatment services. Thematic analysis of transcripts identified five themes, which were inter-connected and reinforced the practitioners' difficulties in identifying the hidden harm of gambling.

Results: The five themes comprised of no training or awareness on gambling, stigma as a barrier within their services, gambling not being prioritized by management, drug and alcohol services not being commissioned to treat gambling harms, and the perception that not asking the question helps no one.

Applications: Although conducted in the North East of England, the findings highlight broader systemic challenges for substance misuse services in identifying and responding to gambling-related harms. We concluded that client welfare could be improved through preventative approaches, including signposting or referral routes to a gambling-specific treatment services.

Read in full here: Full Article

NARA Word Search

R	H	S	E	L	T	S	A	C	W	E	N	L	V
A	R	L	A	N	C	A	S	T	E	R	S	H	H
E	M	A	N	C	H	E	S	T	E	R	Y	H	G
S	S	H	E	F	F	I	E	L	D	O	S	U	U
P	A	T	W	I	U	T	N	H	R	A	T	D	O
D	L	N	S	O	M	H	I	K	E	S	R	D	R
L	E	I	T	E	E	S	S	I	D	E	E	E	B
H	T	D	V	D	S	T	E	E	A	S	R	R	S
C	E	H	S	E	E	S	S	E	S	A	F	S	E
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O	U	G	U	P	L	P	L	E	L	F	E	I	D
O	N	L	N	K	H	V	O	T	R	O	T	E	D
O	S	I	L	B	L	N	P	O	E	R	S	L	I
E	Y	U	R	P	L	L	U	H	L	D	O	D	M

LIVERPOOL
HUDDERSFIELD
MIDDLESBROUGH
LANCASTER
NEWCASTLE
YORK
TEESSIDE
MANCHESTER
SALFORD
HULL
SHEFFIELD

The word search includes institutes that are currently represented in the NARA network



Congratulations to Liam Knowles from Bridges Family and Carer Service who won the £100 poster prize at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Research Conference 2026. Liam presented a poster titled 'Thanks for asking' Questions to Affected Others about the impact of caring and what they want.

More info: liam@bridgesprojects.org

Funding Success
Dr Beth Bareham



I was delighted to recently secure two exciting funding awards that will help advance my research on alcohol-related harm and co-occurring alcohol and mental health problems.

The first is a Randerson Foundation PhD Studentship, awarded through Newcastle University's Faculty of Medical Sciences, to investigate the impact of heavy drinking in older adults on healthcare costs. I'm pleased that we have now appointed a prospective PhD student, who will be joining us in September. We are excited to welcome them to the team and begin this important programme of research.

I was also awarded an NIHR Pre-Application Support Fund, which will provide protected time, training and mentorship to develop a competitive NIHR Postdoctoral Award application. This work focuses on exploring opportunities to improve integrated care for people experiencing co-occurring alcohol and mental health problems, a group who are often excluded by alcohol and mental health services due to their complex support needs. The award will allow me to work closely with service providers, commissioners, researchers and people with lived experience to shape future research in this area.

NARA has played an important role in both successes. Through the network, I have connected with researchers working across addiction and mental health, including colleagues who are supporting my development through the Pre-Application Support Fund and contributing as PhD supervisors. I have particularly valued the opportunity to connect with other members of NARA and learn about the breadth of addiction research taking place across the North. I am looking forward to visiting the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Research (CAMHR) at the University of Hull in September to meet colleagues, learn about different approaches to addiction research, and explore ideas that may inform future work on co-occurring alcohol and mental health problems.

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Developing Collaborations in Research and Care

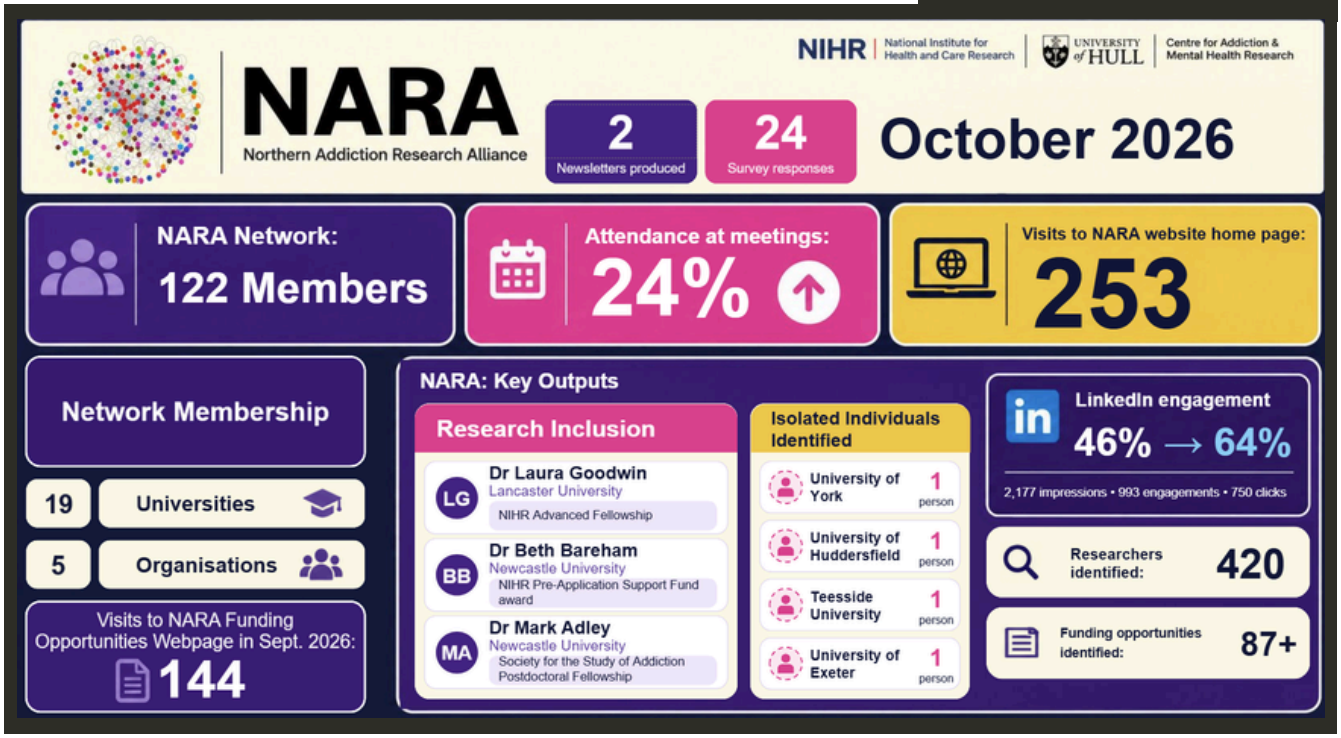
We were joined by researchers, healthcare professionals, people with lived experience, commissioners and policymakers for a day of collaboration, innovation and shared learning at the **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Research (CAMHR) Conference 2026 on 30th September.**

Attendees had the opportunity to hear from leading experts including Professor Tim Kendall CBE and Dr Mike Kelleher, discover successful collaborative projects and help shape the next generation of research and evidence-based services.

Presentation slides from the day can be found at: CAMHR Conference 2026 Slides



NARA Community



NARA continues to strengthen research connections, collaboration and funding opportunities across its growing network. This infographic highlights key achievements, engagement and progress in supporting a more connected and inclusive research community.