

## **Sociology of Mental Health Study Group**

**Convenors: Lydia Lewis, University of Birmingham and Angela Cotton, Edge Hill University**

**Annual Report 2011-12**

### **The group's aims are to:**

- Heighten the profile of study in the area of sociology of mental health;
- Provide a forum for the communication and discussion of work being carried out in the area;
- Facilitate networking and information-sharing between those working within or having an interest in the sociology of mental health;
- Provide a forum of support for those interested in studying mental health and distress from a sociological perspective;
- Provide a core of expertise in the area of sociology of mental health.

### **Activities**

We have had another busy year hosting events and producing publications for the Study Group. A day conference, *A Difficult Alliance? Making Connections between Mental Health and Domestic Violence Research and Practice Agendas*, was held at Edge Hill University in June 2011. Funded by the Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness (FSHI) and with organizing led by Angela Cotton, it attracted an audience of nearly 100 academic sociologists and mental health researchers, students, and users and providers of domestic violence services and mental health services within the statutory and third sectors, alongside representatives from the police and probation service as well as local government. A briefing paper from the event was subsequently produced and has been very well received. It is available on the web site, along with other conference materials.

A Study Group AGM was held at the BSA Medical Sociology Group conference in Chester on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2011. This gave an overview of the Group, its aims and activities, and provided an opportunity for new members to join and to review plans for future initiatives. A draft of the briefing paper detailed above was presented and discussed.

Along with colleagues Graham Martin at the University of Leicester and Andy Gibson at the University of Exeter, Study Group co-convenor Lydia Lewis is currently involved in organizing a day symposium on *Public and patient involvement in health care: Implications of the 'Big Society'*, to take place in Leicester on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2012. This will include a presentation from Professor Marian Barnes on developments with the mental health survivor/service user movement. This is funded by the FSHI and the Research Unit on Civil Society at the University of Leicester.

Ex study group co-convenor Patsy Staddon has been successful with a proposal to edit a book arising from the Study Group seminar series in partnership with the Survivor Researcher Network held in 2009, *Researching in Mental Health: Sociological and Survivor/Service User Perspectives*. Provisionally entitled *Mental Health Service Users in Research: Critical Perspectives*, the book draws together contributions to the seminar series along with additional chapters from researchers working in a variety of contexts.

### **Membership**

This currently stands at 258. We have a broad based membership encompassing representation from the third and public sectors as well as academics and students.

**Lydia Lewis and Angela Cotton, Co-convenors, 2011-12**

**Study Group web site: [www.britsoc.co.uk/medsoc/MedSocMentalHealth.htm](http://www.britsoc.co.uk/medsoc/MedSocMentalHealth.htm)**