**A new liaison role to address the physical health care of people with severe and enduring mental illness**

**Background**

People with severe and enduring mental illness (SMI) die up to 25 years prematurely, with poor physical health being a major precipitating factor[[1]](#footnote-1). Collaboration between primary care and mental health providers can improve care for people with SMI; however it is a complex issue.

**Aims**

The aim of this programme was to explore the potential of an integrated model of physical health care through the development of a Physical Health Link Worker (PHLW) role. A PHLW was based within the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) and worked across five GP practices. The PHLW attends Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings with GP surgeries to identify and address unmet physical health care needs

**Methods**

The pilot ran from September 2012 to March 2013. A triangulated approach to data collection was used by gathering and analysing information from
MDT audit data, semi structured interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and audit data.

**Results**

Evaluation results indicate that the PHLW role and the MDT meetings have had a positive impact on integrated care, particularly through sharing of information, identifying unmet needs, co-ordination of actions, and proactive delivery of care. During 24 MDT meetings held between September and March, 163 actions have been developed for a total of 101 Service Users which addressed missing cardiovascular risk data (26%), conducting PH assessment (23%), overdue medication reviews/changes (10%) or referrals to lifestyle service (10%).

**Conclusion and Discussion**

Data indicates that the introduction of multi-faceted interventions, including a PHLW and MDT meetings has improved the management of physical health care for people with SMI. However, this model is tailored to one specific setting and might need to be adapted when implemented in other localities.

1. Agyapong, V.I., Jabbar, F., Conway, C. (20102) Shared care between specialised psychiatric services and primary

care: The experiences and expectations of General Practitioners

in Ireland, *International Journal of Psychiatry in Clinical Practice,* 2012; 16: 293–299 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)