

## **Debt Counselling for Depression in Primary Care: An Adaptive Randomised Controlled Trial**

Dear [Lead Partner]

We would like to recruit your practice as a site for this NIHR HTA-funded trial exploring the impact of providing access to debt counselling advice for patients with depression and worries about debt through GP practices. This study has been funded by the NIHR Health Technology Assessment programme. Our aim is to recruit patients from general practices around three centres: Site 1, Site 2 and Site 3.

### **Why are we conducting this research?**

Depression & associated anxiety continue to be common among patients seen in general practices. Many such patients also have debt & prolonged absence from work and there is increasing evidence of a relationship between indebtedness, depression & the risk of self-harm & suicide. The four-tiered stepped guidance to managing depression recommended by NICE recommends a holistic approach, particularly in Primary Care settings, but there is currently little research into the impact of debt counselling on mental health recovery. Consequently we are conducting a randomised controlled trial to find out the extent to which debt advice provided by Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) counsellors for patients with debt & depression, accessed through general practices, makes a difference to their recovery.

### **What would be involved for the practice in taking part?**

If your practice was to agree to help us with this study, we would ask you to conduct a search of your patient records to identify people with depression. We would require a GP at the practice to review the list of identified patients to exclude any patient the GP considered it would be inappropriate to be approached. We would provide patient information packs and ask the practice to mail this information out to appropriate patients. The practice would receive payment for time spent conducting and reviewing searches and mailing out information, and if required support and guidance will be provided by the Primary Care research network and research team.

We would also wish to recruit some patients through poster and flyer advertisement in the practice waiting room. The intention would be to have local research network and/or study researchers hand out flyers to patients attending the practice, with patients being able to discuss the study in more detail with a researcher should they wish to do so.

We would ask that one or two GPs in the practice agree to conduct initial assessment appointments with patients that consent to take part in the study, following their random allocation to either study intervention (debt advice from a CAB counsellor) or treatment as usual. During the assessment appointment, GPs would refer patients who had been allocated to the intervention arm of the study, to a CAB counsellor.

We will ask a number of the GPs that help us with this study to take part in an interview with a researcher after they have participated in the study for approximately 6-12 months. The purpose of the interview will be to explore clinicians' experience of, and views about the study intervention.

### **What do you need to do next?**

We would ask that you kindly consider being involved in this study and discuss it with your practice partners. A member of the research team or Primary Care research Network will telephone your Practice Manager in the next two weeks to see whether you are interested in being involved in the study. If you are interested, we would like to come and talk with you in more detail about what would be involved and answer any questions that you may have.

We hope that you will consider joining us in this study.

We look forward to discussing this with you further.

Yours sincerely

Name of Chief Investigator

Chief Investigator

Name of Local Investigator

Principal Investigator

Cc Practice Manager