

In the news...

The Institute of Mental Health seeks to help transform the understanding and treatment of mental illness.

We are a partnership between two highly respected organisations, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and The University of Nottingham.

MindTech announced as pivotal new research centre to improve the nation's health

MindTech has been named as one of the 14 new NIHR HealthTech Research Centres (HRCs) which will work with businesses, researchers, the NHS and patients to support the development of medical devices, diagnostics and digital technologies over the next five years.

Building on 10 years of success as an NIHR Health Technology Co-operative (2013-2017) and NIHR MedTech Co-operative (2018-2024), the MindTech team have been selected to receive a share of £42 million the NIHR is investing in establishing the new centres across England that will drive life-changing research into health technologies.

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- The Lancet Psychiatry's Joan Marsh at the Institute
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MindTech announced as pivotal new research centre to improve the nation's health

The MindTech HRC aims to harness the power of digital technologies and technology-dependent interventions (Mental HealthTech) to transform mental healthcare delivery. It will make a vital contribution to supporting the Mental HealthTech industry deliver evidence-based innovations that close current treatment gaps, modernise patient management and offer more effective, accessible, timely and personalised interventions.

Professor Chris Hollis, Chair of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Digital Mental Health at the University of Nottingham and Honorary Consultant in Developmental Neuropsychiatry with Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, will lead the new HRC and he reflected on MindTech's enduring achievements:

It's fantastic news that MindTech's success has been rewarded with this new NIHR HealthTech Research Centre designation to drive the development, evaluation and implementation of new technologies to improve mental health care and address the needs of people with mental health problems.

MindTech will apply innovative technologies such as Virtual Reality, artificial intelligence and neuromodulation to the diagnosis, assessment and treatment of mental health conditions across all stages of life. The new HRC will bring together expertise in technology development and evaluation from the University of Nottingham with clinical expertise from across Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, including Prof Richard Morriss and Dr Neil Nixon (mood disorders), Dr Sam Malins (psychological therapies), Prof Chris Hollis and Joe Kilgariff (neurodevelopmental disorders) and Prof Martin Orrell (dementia).

More news on MindTech's new projects and plans will follow soon.

Welcome

Our **December newsletter** shares updates and achievements from across the Institute of Mental Health and showcases the best in mental health research.

Professor Martin Orrell
Director, The Institute of Mental Health



The recent announcement of the new MindTech HealthTech Research Centre funding over the next five years is a reflection on the fantastic research work and continued hard work of their dedicated team. The need to explore new technologies, develop our understanding of the capabilities of existing platforms and devices, and answer new questions in mental health research, are all vitally important areas of work that the team will be addressing in the coming years.

MindTech's achievements and projects over the last five years have begun to shape the narrative of how we think about mental health

and technology. From exploring the uses of virtual reality to create online worlds to support the treatment of phobias and psychosis; to harnessing the power of computer gaming storytelling to support young people overcome anxiety; through to evidencing how an online therapy tool could address major NHS services and staffing shortages, by delivering care remotely.

I am excited that the Institute will continue to play a pivotal role in the delivery of the new MindTech HealthTech Research Centre and we can't wait to see the results of their research over the next five years.

Please visit our [website](https://www.institutemh.org.uk) or follow us on Twitter [@InstituteMH](https://twitter.com/InstituteMH) for all our latest news and updates.

CANDAL project wins national Neurodiversity award

Dr Maddie Groom (Director of our Centre for Neurodevelopmental Disorders Across the Lifespan) and Dr Camilla Babbage accepted the “Neurodiversity Research of the Year Award” at the Celebrating Neurodiversity awards dinner on behalf of the wider team including Dr Bethan Davies from the IMH and Dr Jennifer Salvage, Paul Stevenson, Emma McNally, Marie Ralph, Daniel Jones and Dr Seonaid Anderson. The award recognised the work that the academic team developed with project partners from universities, NHS, charities and those with lived experience or parent/carers, as they campaigned for better services and the introduction of NICE guidelines for Tourette Syndrome care pathways. The group is campaigning to raise ongoing awareness of the challenges faced by people with this complex condition.

Derby Quad, BACKLIT and CANDAL have announced a new Neurodivergent Studio Residency recipient – Christine Thomas

The funded studio residency for a neurodivergent creative in 2023 is a pilot programme created by QUAD, BACKLIT and the Institute of Mental Health. The aim is to help early career artists, facing barriers due to their neurodivergent condition, to develop their practice.

Multi-disciplinary and fine artist Christine Thomas was awarded the residency and is receiving professional development support as well as use of a studio space from September 2023 until March 2024.

Christine often works with textiles and her areas of interest include locational identity and the domestic, often from a feminist perspective. She uses her practice led research methodology to inform her experimental processes. Often incorporating rurality and the domestic whilst exploring concepts of environment and place.

Christine will be working with QUAD, BACKLIT and the Centre for ADHD and Neurodevelopmental Disorders Across the Lifespan (CANDAL) on a new piece of work which will be exhibited at the Institute of Mental Health in 2024.



Find out more about Christine's work by visiting her website www.christinethomas.co.uk

New paper for clinical effectiveness of new depression treatment model

Leading from an NIHR ARC funded project, a new paper has been published in the Journal of Affective Disorders led by Neil Nixon, Boliang Guo, Richard Morriss (from our Centre for Mood Disorders) and Sandra Simpson (Research Delivery Team, Notts Healthcare). The paper reports the long-term clinical effectiveness of a randomised controlled trial testing a specialist, collaborative model of care for people with persistent moderate to severe unipolar depression.

Alzheimer Europe Conference

The Institute's Director Martin Orrell and Dr Esther Gerritzen spoke at the 33rd Alzheimer Europe Conference in October, presenting Dr Gerritzen's latest work on online peer support and young onset dementia. Several of the Centre for Dementia's PhD students also presented posters of their latest projects. If you want to see more highlights from the delegates at the event, search on X/Twitter for the hashtag #33AEC.

Dementia Day to Day Blog

The Centre for Dementia has released a new series of stories on their Day to Day blog. Covering topics including how to support those living with dementia over the festive period, how LGBTQ+ individuals face discrimination in accessing care and advances in reminiscence therapy through physical prompts.

One blog post in particular highlights how Artificial Intelligence (AI) has huge potential in the Dementia field. Many us, when we think of AI may just think of ChatGPT or Autogenerated artwork. However, it has already shown promising capabilities in healthcare and these developments could play a role in treating and supporting those living with, and experiencing dementia.

Researchers across several organisations have developed different tools using AI for dementia care, to assist in a variety of ways. Helping with diagnosis, prognosis and independence. From analysing a patient's speech and language patterns for faster diagnosis. To adding motion and door sensors to monitor and assist the patient, whilst still allowing them independence in their own home. These developments could play a pivotal role in the future of dementia care and treatment.



You can read more about this via [News, on the Institute's website.](#)

ESRC fund new project exploring “influencers” stories on mental health



Professor Paul Crawford (Director of our Centre for Social Futures) joins Dr Ruth Page (Principal Investigator, University of Birmingham) and Dr Michael Larkin (Aston University) in part of a new ESRC-funded research project exploring how stories told by social media ‘influencers’ can help young people or put them at risk as they gain awareness of, and respond to, challenges in mental health.

Social media allows a wealth of information to be easily accessible, and with 90% of teens aged 13-17 having access to social media ([AACAP](#)) it's no surprise that they are able to view information regarding mental health. Whether it's 'My therapist told me...' videos on TikTok, '5 Signs of [insert various diagnosis here]' on Instagram or 'Tips for dealing with...', on YouTube. It would be difficult as

a young person using social media to not come in contact with this content, especially as 'influencers' are increasingly using their platforms to talk about their own mental health and how to navigate this information as a young person.

Influencers are among the most frequently followed accounts by young people in the UK, with audiences of millions. Mental health is often discussed in the stories that influencers share on sites like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. Little is known about the quality of the mental health information influencers provide and the impact on young people's knowledge, emotions, attitudes and behaviours.

The new project will analyse the stories about mental health offered by influencers and work directly with young people to help them develop strategies to evaluate and respond effectively to this communication. In collaboration with the McPin Foundation, the team will develop evidence-based resources for young people and those who support them, such as their families, peers, carers and educators. There is little consensus about how best to address the risks to and opportunities for young people's mental health in this context and this new research will explore solutions so young people can use social media in a safe and helpful way, whilst setting 'the needs of young people at it's heart' (Dr Page).

New paper highlights importance of flexible approach to research recruitment

A new paper published from the MindTech team, '[Widening participation – recruitment methods in mental health randomised controlled trials: a qualitative study](#)', reports on a new study which explored the use of online (e.g. social media) and offline (e.g. in-person) recruitment as an approach to improving diversity in mental health randomised controlled trials (RCTs). Published in the BMC Medical Research Methodology journal, the study has highlighted the importance of offering a flexible and multifaceted recruitment approach which can support inclusivity and widen participation in mental health research.



Editor in Chief of Lancet Psychiatry visits the Institute

Joan Marsh (Editor in Chief of Lancet Psychiatry) visited the Institute on Thursday 16th November to share her wisdom on how to get published in high quality journals. For any researcher looking to get their paper published, the Lancet Psychiatry is an internationally trusted prestigious journal, and a rewarding recognition for their work. To hear directly from Joan in an insightful presentation, attendees were able to learn gold dust information on ensuring papers are asking interesting questions, targeted at the right audience and journal type, and show an advancement to prior research.

Notts Healthcare colleague shortlisted for Healthcare Honours



Congratulations to Dr Pallab Majumder, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at the Trust who was shortlisted in the Healthcare Honours Awards in the Expanding Impact category.

Healthcare Honours is a unique event, run by the British Journal of Healthcare Management, where nominees are recognised and celebrated for their achievements and contributions to the delivery of NHS services and their exceptional leadership skills. Dr Majumder was shortlisted for his outstanding commitment to making a difference to the lives of children and young people, ensuring they receive the best possible mental health support.

Part of Dr Majumder's work is with looked after children (LAC) and refugee children. He promotes a multiagency approach, finding the most effective way to utilise resources whilst ensuring organisations work together for the child. Focusing on early-intervention, preventative and trauma informed care. Considering how children and young people could be affected by their experiences in childhood, whilst responding to those complex needs to achieve the best outcome and make a difference in their lives.

Although Dr Majumder didn't win the award announced at the end of November in the House of Parliament, we are extremely proud of his shortlisting as it recognises the incredible work he has done and will continue to do across the field. Dr Majumder said 'I am delighted to be shortlisted for this award. I want to make a difference in the field of child and adolescent mental health, and mental health of the population in general. I shall continue on this endeavour with my love and commitment for the speciality, and energy and enthusiasm to improve child mental health.'



PsychStart Awards Event 2023

PsychStart is a career-centred mentorship initiative that was created for medical students interested in Psychiatry at the University of Nottingham. Through this scheme, aspiring students are connected with the passionate network of psychiatrists in Nottingham to gain a well-rounded and informed perspective about working in the field of mental health. Students are also given opportunities to take part in projects to enhance their personal and professional portfolios.

The PsychStart awards event took place on Wednesday 11th October 2023, and is an annual event to celebrate the success of the mentorship programme and spotlight mentors and mentees that have demonstrated exceptional dedication and excellence. Dr Pallab Majumder, Dr Shweta Mittal, Dr Roopa Rudrappa and Professor Martin Orrell received nominations for their outstanding mentorship guidance and support. These mentors were acknowledged for not only being a source of inspiration and motivation but also for their crucial roles in shaping the success of the scheme. Furthermore, Jade McHenry, Ashika Shah and Georgina Shajan were nominated for their exemplary resilience, commitment, and dedication as mentees of this programme and for going above and beyond their academic pursuits to demonstrate their passion for psychiatry.

Professor Wendy Burn, former president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, received a heartfelt expression of gratitude for being a keynote speaker at the event and for providing valuable insights into the challenges faced in the field of mental health. This talk touched on topics such as the health and research services being underfunded,

mental health having a history of being considered less important than physical health, and mental health patients being stigmatised. This left a lasting and inspiring impression on attendees, especially the younger years at the medical school. A mental health raffle was also organised by the PsychStart student committee which raised a total of £52 for the charity Mind. This raffle featured a range of prizes, including gift vouchers for cafés and pottery painting, mental health booklets and an assortment of chocolate sets.

The PsychStart committee and all its members would like to express gratitude to the Institute of Mental Health for their exceptional support throughout this initiative.

PsychStart Committee 2023. From left to right: Karnika Senthilkumar (External Communications Officer), Heather Gunn (Finance Officer), Dr Tom Hewson (Founder), Jesmine Dhooper (President), Megan Smith (Vice President), Georgina Shajan (Early Years Representative) and Dr Nikki Thomas (Founder).



Written by Georgina Shajan
*Medical Student at the
University of Nottingham*

OPEN PhD APPLICATIONS:

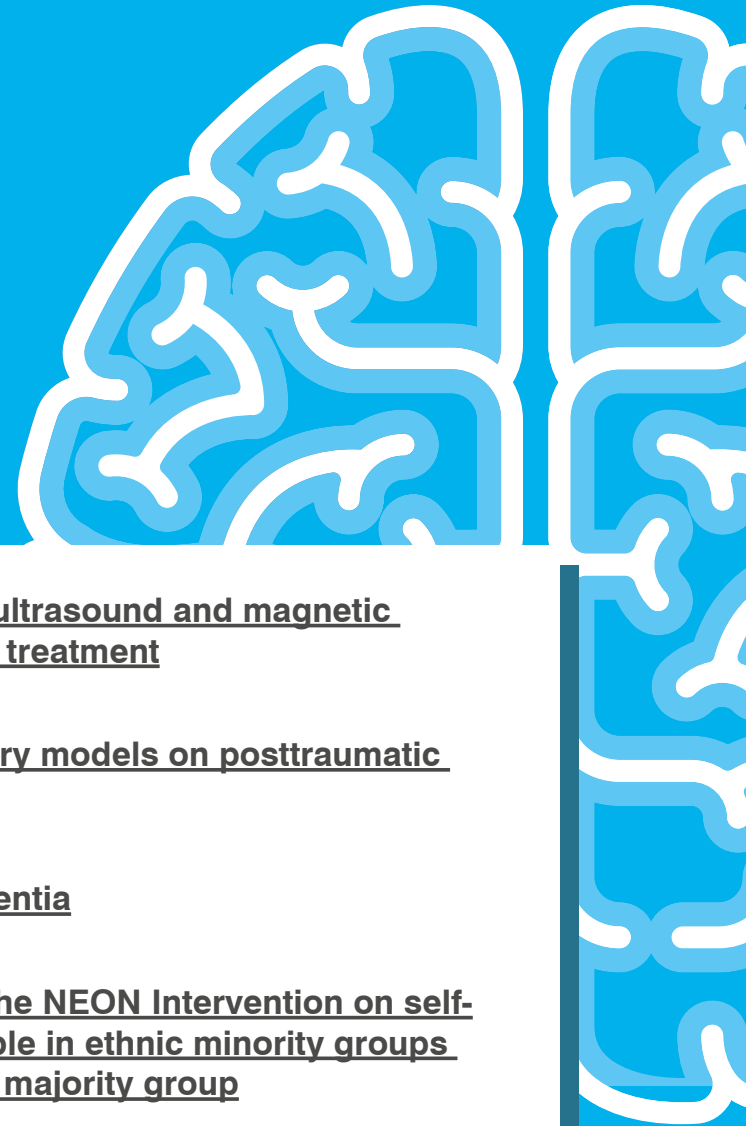
PhD applications for 2024 Midlands Mental Health and Neurosciences Programme

Expressions of interest are now open for the Midlands Mental Health and Neurosciences PhD Programme for Healthcare Professionals for the upcoming October 2024 intake. Open to healthcare professionals seeking to combine a clinical and academic career, this Wellcome-funded doctoral training programme is strongly encouraging applicants from diverse backgrounds and professions, with an interest in mental health or translational neurosciences, to apply. Several of the PhD's on offer will be supervised by colleagues from across the Institute:



Full information on the 2024 recruitment round is available on the MMHNP website, with online applications open until 1st March 2024.

- **Brighter Mind: Combined ultrasound and magnetic stimulation for depression treatment**
led by Prof Marcus Kaiser
- **The influence of explanatory models on posttraumatic growth in psychosis**
led by Dr Fiona Ng
- **Needs in people with dementia**
led by Prof Martin Orrell
- **Comparing the impact of the NEON Intervention on self-compassion between people in ethnic minority groups and people from the white majority group**
led by Prof Mike Slade
- **Sonic biofeedback to promote autonomic and attentional control in ADHD**
led by Dr Elizabeth Liddle



Art at the Institute

Current exhibition:

**‘Anxiety: A creative response’
by Catherine D’Arcy-Saunders**

**Open weekdays, 10:00–16:30
until December 12th**

Catherine D’Arcy-Saunders is an early-stage artist and practicing psychotherapist exploring the complex interface between anxious thoughts and feelings, using bold, abstract and expressionistic artwork.

Anxiety is described in a series of blue grey paintings using familiar motifs represented by a worry tree, worry chains and the traversing of worry lines. There is a further reflection offered by the artist which interprets the psychological response when anxiety dissipates. This is translated in a series of six black and white paintings entitled ‘Uplift’ and followed by a luscious finale offered in white and buff titanium which represents the experience of ‘Transformation’ when we are free from anxious manifestations.

Catherine D’Arcy-Saunders is open to creative collaborations centred around aspects of mental health. Please contact the artist directly to discuss. She is currently working on a new body of work focused on grounding.



For more information about the artist, visit their website: www.catherinedarcysaunders.co.uk

Upcoming exhibition:

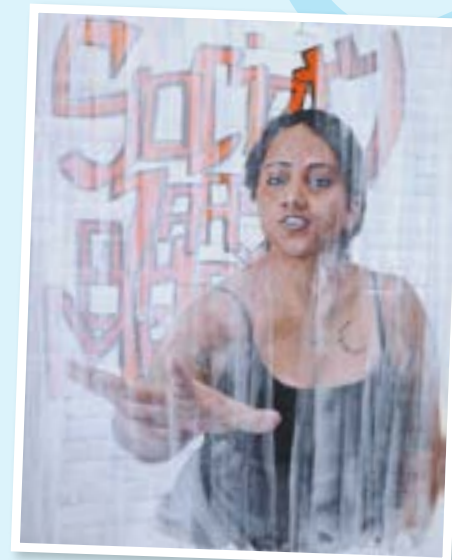
**‘Inside Out: Portraits of
Emotional Resilience’
by Andy Farr**

**Open weekdays, 10:00-16:30
from January 5th 2024**

Andy was commissioned to work with a group of people from across the Black and South Asian communities at the University of Nottingham (UoN). He explored their experiences of mental health and emotional wellbeing. The paintings reflect the feelings and stories they described in conversations with Andy.

The project was a collaboration between UoN, NCVS and The ICCA (The Indian Community Centre Association). It is part of an NHS and NCVS drive to raise awareness of mental health in the Nottingham BAME community, and better promote access to NHS Talking Therapies.

Andy Farr has exhibited with us previously at the Institute and we’re excited for him to return with a new series of artworks titled ‘Inside Out: Portraits of Emotional Resilience’. The paintings are currently being exhibited at The Indian Community Centre Association and will be on display at the Institute from January 5th until February 16th.



For more information about the artist, visit their website: www.andyfarr.com

Centre for Dementia seminar: Psychosocial evaluation of informal carers of people with dementia from Romania

Online via MS Teams

Presenter: Dr Andrea Bronescu

The role of informal caregivers for people with dementia (PwD) is vital in providing support and maintaining the quality of life for individuals with the condition. However, the experiences and needs of informal caregivers vary across different cultural contexts, necessitating tailored strategies for intervention and support. This study focuses specifically on informal caregivers of PwD in Romania, aiming to understand their unique challenges and develop targeted interventions to assist them in their caregiving endeavours. This presentation will provide an overview of the research design, highlight the findings from the qualitative analysis, and present partial results from the quantitative studies. Additionally, a glimpse into the experimental versions of a psychoeducational brochure for carers and the curriculum for the intervention groups will be provided, offering a comprehensive understanding of the ongoing efforts to support informal caregivers of PwD in Romania.

**Please register prior to 9.00am Tuesday
12th December 2023 to watch this event,
contact toi-fan.choi@nottingham.ac.uk**



**11:30AM-
12:30PM
Wednesday
13th December
2023**

