

## **New Intervention for Individuals who have Deliberately Set Fires Shows Positive Impact**

Until recently, very little research had been carried out into understanding people who have deliberately set fires and even less attention had been paid to understanding their treatment needs and how to reduce their risk of repeating this behaviour. A new intervention for men and women who have set deliberate fires was developed as part of a collaboration between Professor Theresa Gannon and Dr Lona Lockerbie at the University of Kent and Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (The FIP-MO; Gannon & Lockerbie, 2011; 2012; 2014). The FIP-MO is a 28 week cognitive behavioural group treatment programme designed to target key psychological factors that the research literature suggests are related to deliberate firesetting (e.g., problematic interest, beliefs and attitudes about fire, offence supportive attitudes, social competency, self-management/coping skills, and safety planning for the future). Patients referred to the intervention attend both weekly group and individual sessions and engage in reflective work to help them understand the factors associated with their firesetting as well developing skills to manage these factors in the future.

The FIP-MO was initially developed to meet the clinical need of patients in the Kent region. However, due to a lot of interest, it was decided that a national multi-site research evaluation was needed. This was led by Dr Nichola Tyler and colleagues from the University of Kent and Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT). To evaluate the effectiveness of the FIP-MO treatment, patients at hospitals who had been trained to offer the programme were assessed before and after attending the FIP-MO treatment using a set of standardised questionnaires, which were selected to tap into each of the core areas targeted as part of treatment. At hospitals where treatment was not available, patients with a history of setting fires were recruited to take part in the research as a comparison group and completed the same set of questionnaires at similar time points to those who attended the FIP-MO treatment.

Twenty-six secure forensic mental health services across England participated in the research, eleven as treatment sites and fourteen as comparison sites. The final sample consisted of fifty-two participants in the FIP-MO treatment group and forty in the comparison group. The results of the research showed that patients who completed the FIP-MO treatment programme showed greater improvements following treatment on their problematic interest, beliefs and attitudes about fire, and in their ability to express anger, relative to the comparison group who did not receive the FIP-MO treatment. Further, effect size calculations showed that those who completed the FIP-MO treatment made larger improvements following treatment on the majority of questionnaire measures compared to the comparison group. Patients who completed the FIP-MO treatment also reported feeling that they had benefitted from attending the programme. In particular they felt they had benefitted from, learning about fires and how they spread, learning about the potential effects of fire on others, understanding their triggers and risk factors for firesetting, and learning about how to create a more satisfying life for themselves.

This study is the largest evaluation to date of specialist group treatment for men and women with a mental illness who have engaged in deliberate firesetting. The findings from the research suggest that the FIP-MO treatment is effective for reducing some of the key factors associated with deliberate firesetting and support the development and delivery of specialist interventions for men and women with a mental illness who have set deliberate fires. To read the full article by Tyler, Gannon, Lockerbie and Ó Ciardha (2017) please go to <http://rdcu.be/DYyz>

The FIP-MO evaluation was part of a body of work which won the Economic and Social Research Council's Outstanding Impact in Society award in 2016. As part of this a video was prepared with service users and practitioners discussing how the new treatment had benefitted them <https://youtu.be/Y6VW4ISh-HU>