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University of Glasgow receives £1.9m in funding for work to address place-based inequalities for struggling families

The University of Glasgow has received a share of £9.7 million of funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to tackle regional disparities across the UK.

The funding of nearly two million pounds (£1,927,873) over the next 35 months will support the Partnership for Change trial, a randomised controlled trial of 'Infant Parent Support,' a coproduced poverty and neurodiversity-aware mental health intervention aiming to support struggling families.



The funding is just one of 17 funded projects announced by UKRI aimed at ensuring everyone in the UK has a path to economic success and personal wellbeing, regardless of where they live.

The Partnership for Change trial, co-led by Professor Helen Minnis and team at the University's School of Health and Wellbeing and Matt Forde, UK Partnerships and Development Director at the NSPCC, will involve around 180 families in Glasgow and London with children aged 0-5, and aims to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect.

Through the team's parent-practitioner-community (PPC) partnership, the researchers have coproduced Infant Parent Support teams (IPS) in Glasgow and London to offer mental health support to struggling families whose children are supported by social work or other family support services.

In this study, the researchers plan to further develop the place-sensitivity of IPS teams and test the clinical and cost-effectiveness of IPS in a definitive randomised controlled trial (RCT).

Helen Minnis, Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, said:

"We are so pleased to receive this funding, which will fund a trial of huge importance for struggling families. We know that place-based inequalities in health begin early in childhood, with young children experiencing poverty and/or racism being much more likely to develop physical and mental health problems earlier in the lifespan than their peers. We also know that children in the most deprived 10% of small UK neighbourhoods are over 10 times more likely to be in care or on child protection plans than children in the least deprived 10%. These social determinants of health and child welfare are systemic and intergenerational, and health and care structures are vulnerable to structural inequalities. In our study, our novel aim is to redress this – by reducing place-based inequalities in a variety of ways through the knowledge, relationships and interventions we have developed to date."

The study hopes to reduce place-based inequalities by measuring whether the trial has recruited a trial population that demographically mirrors the target population and is therefore able to inform recommendations for local community/services that will target families who are likely to benefit the most.

Professor Alison Park, head of UKRI's creating opportunities and improving outcome's strategic theme, said:

"Across the political spectrum, there is agreement that the regional disparities that exist in the UK do real social and economic damage. Policymakers and researchers have tried various ways of addressing those disparities, but we often don't truly know how effective they are – or if there are better ways of achieving our goals. The projects announced today will help to fill this knowledge gap by evaluating the effectiveness of these interventions. That way, we can ensure policymakers focus their efforts on the best ways to improve lives and opportunities across every part of the UK."