

RESEARCH SPECIFICATION

Getting the Measure: An evaluation of AI (alcohol intervention) training and resources for frontline staff working in the homelessness sector.

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1. Introduction

The Edinburgh Cyrenians would like to invite you to tender for a piece of research to evaluate a recently developed package of alcohol intervention (AI) training and resources. This is a new approach developed for key-workers who work with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The training and resources have been piloted with 5 key-workers but in 2010 we plan to extend this to all 33 of our key-workers and would like to evaluate the impact of this new approach both on our key-workers and on our clients.

2. Background

Edinburgh Cyrenians is a homelessness organisation which works with over 1000 vulnerable people each year in a range of projects across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Falkirk. Our projects have a wide scope and include; homelessness prevention, tenancy support, outreach and resettlement support for people with drug or alcohol issues, access to the private rented sector, residential care, employability projects and social enterprise. With an overall staff team of nearly 70 people, the organisation employs 33 key-workers who provide one to one support to adults and young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Our key workers provide a mixture of short term support (up to 6 months) and also engage in longer term relationships, supporting service users to make significant life changes over a two year period. Further details are available on our website www.cyrenians.org.uk.

The links between alcohol and homelessness are well documented. People who are homeless are particularly vulnerable to both the causes and consequences of excessive alcohol use. Edinburgh Cyrenians have developed an alcohol intervention model in response to extensive learning about good practice in this field, as well as the needs of Cyrenians service-users and key workers. This model will ensure that the alcohol use of all Cyrenians clients is assessed accurately at the start of a working relationship, and that staff have the confidence and skills to motivate clients to make positive changes. The model is evidence based and makes use of theories around brief intervention, stages of change and motivational interviewing. A website containing information, resources and tools has been designed to help key-workers to talk about alcohol with those using their services, and to keep the topic 'live' through the duration of their support.

NHS brief interventions offer a framework for providing training and resources to key-work staff. The strategies and methods proposed by the NHS have been acknowledged in our AI model, but a number of changes have been made to reflect the differences in the working relationship which exists between key-workers and their clients, in contrast to primary care workers. Our alcohol interventions will not be delivered as a one-off, opportunistic encounter with a patient, but as part of an ongoing support package and will address

implications of risky drinking which may not always be health related. Cyrenians offer holistic support to service users and deal with a wide range of issues including housing, finances, employability and substance use.

Ensuring that key-workers have the confidence and skills to include alcohol within the support they offer is the primary aim of our intervention model. Key workers can find it difficult to talk about alcohol with service users, especially given the established drinking culture in Scotland and the complex range of concerns and issues which most service users present with. Hazardous drinking is rarely acknowledged as a concern within wider society and identifying the 'potential' problems of alcohol use can sometimes seem like adding to an already extensive list of 'known' problems.

Cyrenians key-work model includes standard systems for identifying needs and aspirations, goal setting and measurement of distance travelled and outcomes. Our initial assessment form will provide self-report information on alcohol consumption; our personal plans detail clients' feelings about their alcohol use and intended changes; and our review and matrix documents will demonstrate any progress. These documents will enable key-workers to record the impact of their alcohol interventions and we will be able to collate this information from across the organisation to provide the researcher with an additional source of information.

3. Key-worker training

Cyrenians' intervention model has been developed as the result of a capacity building post funded by Comic Relief. It has been piloted with 5 key-workers within the organization and during 2010 all 33 key-workers will receive 1 day (7.5 hours) of training in this model. They will then have ongoing access to the resources, and support as required.

The training sessions will take place between May and September 2010. The 33 key-workers (KW) have been split into 4 groups.

Group	Training 1	3 month follow up	6 month follow up	10 month follow up
1 (8 KW)	May 5th	August	November	March 2011
2 (8 KW)	May 7th	August	November	March 2011
3 (8 KW)	August	December	March 2011	n/a
4 (9 KW)	August	December	March 2011	n/a

4. Aims and objectives

Cyrenians wish to commission an independent researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of alcohol interventions training and resources developed for frontline staff working in the homelessness sector.

The objectives of the research will be to:

- Assess the effectiveness of the training and resources in encouraging frontline workers to discuss alcohol use with their clients.
- Assess whether the interventions are effective in changing levels of alcohol consumption amongst service users.
- Draw conclusions as to the effectiveness of the alcohol intervention model for wider use.

The report should offer recommendations in relation to:

- The appropriateness and utility of the AI training and resources.
- Future efforts to train frontline staff in the homelessness sector to deliver alcohol interventions.
- How the AI training and resources could be improved.
- Best practice in the delivery and application of the AI model.

5. Research Methods

We would like the research to include pre and post evaluations for each of the 4 training sessions, and follow up sessions to take place 3 and 6 months after the training. The first group should also be included in the evaluation during March 2011, providing a 10 month follow up. The evaluation should measure attitudes, confidence, knowledge and skills amongst key-workers and also the perception of any change from the service users' perspective, using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data. At the 3, 6 and 10 month follow up stage we would like to include an evaluation of any changes in practice. This could include evaluating reporting mechanisms and actions taken by key-workers and any changes experienced by service users in support or interventions delivered.

Researchers are expected to describe the methods that they propose to use to address all aspects of the evaluation, including a discussion of the rationale for choosing each method and demonstrating how they will ensure that the aims and objectives of the evaluation are met.

Ideally the data should be gathered through a number of different methods. We anticipate that the following methods might be included:

- A short review of the evidence base for alcohol interventions and examples of good practice within the UK.
- Face-to-face interviews
- Phone interviews
- Electronic questionnaires
- Focus groups

6. Research outputs

Anticipated outputs include:

- Literature review to be produced by month 3 of the project – also for inclusion in the final report.
- Interim report to be produced by October 2010.
- Final report to be produced by April 2011.
- Summary of final report – no more than 6 pages.
- Verbal presentation at a dissemination event may be required in the future; this would be financed separately by Cyrenians.

7. Ownership and publication of outputs

The ownership of the research material, including the final report and any data produced as a result of the research, lies with Edinburgh Cyrenians.

8. Responsibilities of the contractor

The contractor will be responsible for the design, fieldwork, data analysis and preparation of the final report to a standard agreed with Edinburgh Cyrenians.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that the proposed methodology does not contravene the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 or any other relevant legislation. Contractors must also agree to abide by appropriate professional guidelines, for example the Social Research Association's Code of Ethics (www.the-sra.org.uk/ethical.htm). Additionally the contractor would be responsible for clarifying whether or not ethical approval would be required for this research.

9. Project management

The project will be managed by Cyrenians development worker, Jenny Ziltener. The project manager will be responsible for the day-to-day liaison with the contractor and for agreeing final versions of all research outputs. We are hoping for a 'critical friend' whose findings and research will help to guide and shape the implementation of alcohol interventions within Cyrenians over the year.

Contractors should clearly outline their own arrangements for the management of the project, including the steps to be taken to ensure timely submission of quality work, and quality control procedures for fieldwork.

10. Timetable

The dates in the following table are designed as a guide only and may be subject to change.

Submission of CV and note of interest	March 15 th 2010
Shortlisting (may include an informal discussion before decision is made)	Week of 15 th March 2010
Appointment of agency/ consultant	March 29 th 2010
Commencement of work	12 th April 2010
Interim report	October 2010

Final report	April 2011
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11. Costs

It is anticipated that up to £12,500 (including VAT) will be available for this research, which should be completed by the end of April 2011. Research organisations are asked to submit a fully costed proposal based on their experience of conducting similar work. In calculating costs, they must ensure that they have made adequate provision for all costs associated with the project over the full period of the research.

12. Criteria for appointment

The following criteria will be used to make the decision about who will be appointed to complete the evaluation

Criteria	Weighting
Previous experience of research and evaluation work both by the organization and by the person/ people undertaking the work.	30
Understanding of the requirements and the research brief including understanding of policy area.	20
Experience and understanding of alcohol interventions.	15
Ability to work sensitively alongside existing staff team.	15
Assessment of methodology and research ethics including compliance with data protection.	10
Quality control mechanisms and value for money.	10
Total	100

13. Contract conditions

When designing their project proposals, contractors should outline potential risks to successful completion of the project within timescale and budget. These risks could be organisational (for example, staff moving or difficulties with IT systems), specific to the project (AI training not taking place, or inability to contact service users) or general. Tenders should outline strategies to tackle potential risks, general contingency arrangements and disaster recovery plans as appropriate.

14. Submitting a CV and note of interest

Please include the following information in your note of interest (no more than 4 pages of A4):

- i. Name, organization (if appropriate) and contact details.
- ii. Previous experience of research and evaluation work both by the organization and the person/ people undertaking the work.
- iii. Evidence of examples of previous relevant pieces of work.
- iv. Understanding of the requirements and the research brief.
- v. Experience and understanding of alcohol interventions.



- vi. Approach to working closely alongside a small, busy staff team.
- vii. A brief overview of the proposed approach to completing the research including methodology.
- viii. A clear statement of the tender price and costs.

Please send CV's and notes of interest by 12 noon, Monday 15th March.

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Please note that any queries between 18th February and the submission date should be directed to amy@cyrenians.org.uk

Commencement of work 12th April 2010
Interim report 4th October 2010
Completion of report 4th April 2011