

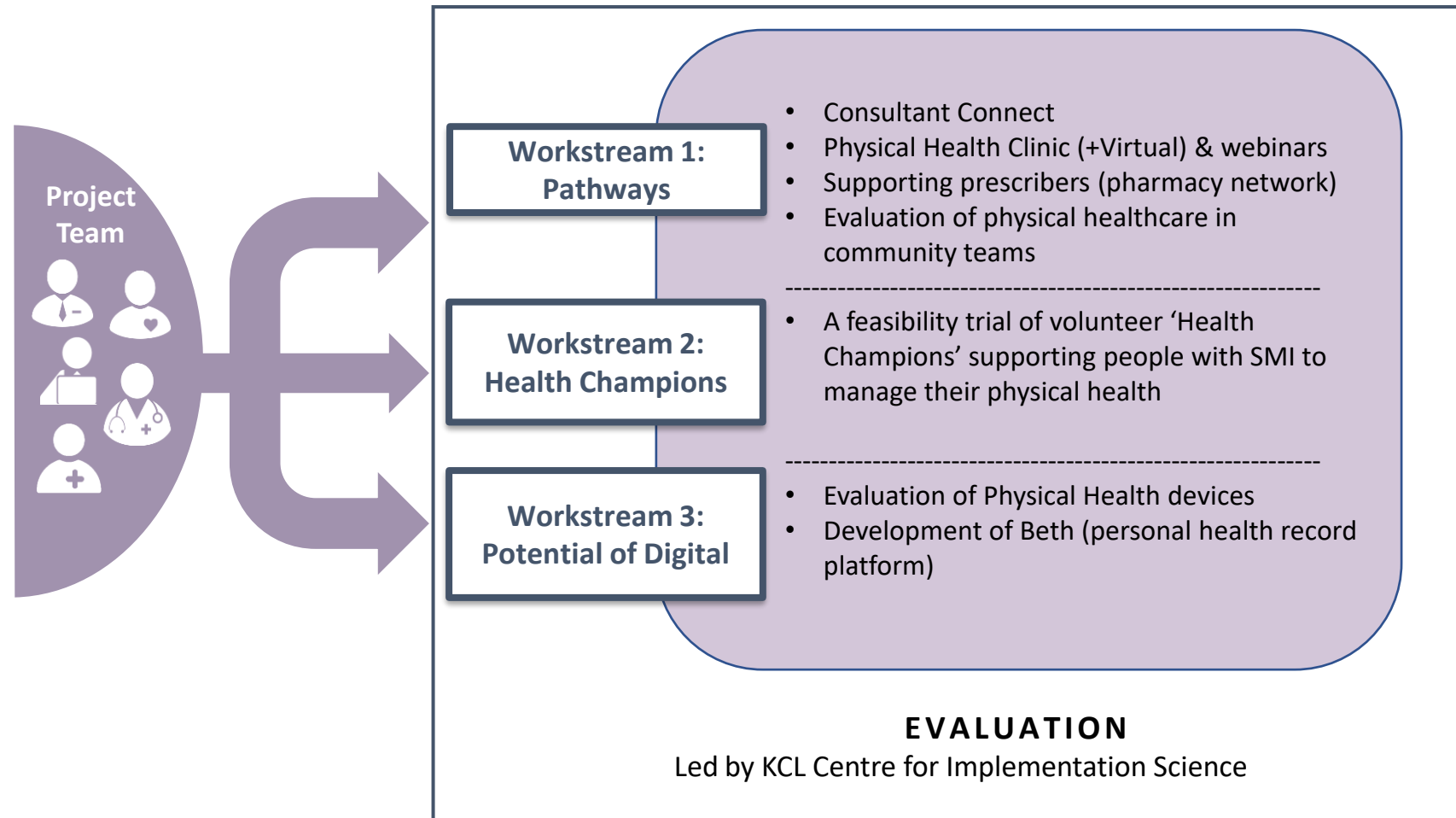
The Health Champions study

Funded by
**Maudsley
Charity**

**Backing
Better
Mental
Health.**



IMPHS programme



Introduction-Why Health Champions?

- Health inequality-people with severe mental illness have more physical health conditions
- How do we address this?
- Can support from volunteers help?


Introduction-Why Health Champions?

STUDY PROTOCOL

Open Access

A feasibility hybrid II randomised controlled trial of volunteer 'Health Champions' supporting people with serious mental illness manage their physical health: study protocol



Julie Williams^{1*} , Elliann Fairbairn^{2,3}, Ray McGrath^{2,3}, Ioannis Bakolis^{1,4}, Andy Healey^{1,5}, Ubong Akpan², Isabel Mdudu², Fiona Gaughran^{2,6,7,8}, Euan Sadler⁹, Zarnie Khadjesari¹⁰, Kate Lillywhite^{2,3} and Nick Sevdalis^{1,8}

The Health Champions Intervention

- Health Champion were matched with someone using community mental health
- Intervention lasted nine months, meeting once a week
- Their role was to support the person with what they wanted to achieve

We evaluated

1. Did having a Health Champion make a difference to someone's life? (using outcome measures and asking people why they wanted a Health Champion)
2. How was it implemented and how did people experience it?

Health Champions-our findings

48 participants recruited	
Had a Health Champion	27
Had usual care	21

Demographics	
56% female	
47% White	35% Black
Age range 20-65	Average (median) age 39

Health Champions-our findings

1. Making a difference to someone's life

There was no difference on outcome scores but people reported that they:

- Lost weight
- Were no longer pre-diabetic
- Made positive lifestyle changes
- Did more exercise
- Went out more
- Felt more confident

What people said

'I did lose a bit of weight, I did change my lifestyle eating wise and stuff.'

'developing a much more positive attitude to exercise and nutrition, and feeling motivated'

'I'm happy because I've made a lot of changes to my lifestyle'

Health Champions-our findings

2. How it was implemented

Most people had a positive experience

Facilitators

The relationship with the Health Champion
Trust, regular contact, someone 'independent'

Barriers

COVID, barriers to goals

What people said

'I knew I had something that I had to do, rather than sitting at home feeling unmotivated'

'It's helpful to have the support, someone there to talk to'

'It didn't feel like no burden or no pressure on me, and I felt like it was nice'

Health Champions-our findings

The experience of Health Champions

- The vast majority found it a good experience
- They enjoyed meeting people they would not have met
- They gained understanding of how people manage with mental and physical health conditions
- They increased their knowledge of mental illness
- For some, balancing being a Health Champion with other things in their life was difficult

What people said

‘challenging, rewarding and astonishing’

‘I learnt more about mental health illness, I learnt about how people cope with it’

‘The fact that we got on and looked forwards to seeing each other and always had a good laugh, really, it was uplifting for me as well as her.’

Charlie's experience

Health Champions-what have we learned and what next?

- Having a Health Champion can make a big difference in people's lives
- How do we use this model more widely for people with severe mental illness?
- Can this model be adapted for use with other groups?

What were the barriers?

COVID

- Had to do everything remotely which impacted on recruitment and the initial experience people had with their Health Champion

Reluctance to take part in research

- People not wanting to take part-either because they did not want the 50/50 chance of getting a Health Champion or because they did not want to take part in research

Thank You to all of the people who took part and who helped us with the project

- All of our service user participants
- All of our Health Champions
- The staff in SLaM who supported us
- The IMPHS team
- The Maudsley Charity

To get in touch about Health Champions please contact Julie Williams

Email: Julie.Williams@kcl.ac.uk

Twitter: @JBWjw2011

Keep in touch

IMPHS is delivered as part of the **King's Health Partners Mind and Body Programme**.

This programme is committed to joining up mental and physical healthcare, training and research to improve health outcomes for patients accessing services across South East London and beyond.

Find out more about what we do, and how you can work with us via:

- **Email:** impchs@slam.nhs.uk
- **Twitter:** [@mindandbody_khp](https://twitter.com/mindandbody_khp)
- **Website:** www.kingshealthpartners.org/our-work/mind-and-body

