



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**02/12/15**

### **Health Happiness and Wellbeing: Supporting the Transition from Adolescence to Adulthood**

'Health, happiness and wellbeing' (HHWB) is a new programme of research supported by the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) Scotland Foundation. The programme aims to examine the factors that enable young people to make successful transitions from adolescence to adulthood.

This transition has been highlighted as a particularly critical stage where a number of influences can have a profound impact upon mental health, physical health and general wellbeing.

Recognising the importance of interventions and suitable support for young people during this life stage, an expert advisory group formed of RSE fellows has identified this as a key area for further research with particular relevance to young people, communities and institutions in Scotland today.

The HHWB programme will progress in 3 phases. In phase 1, grants have been awarded to fund two literature reviews which empirically evaluate interventions intended to improve health, happiness and wellbeing.

A recipient of one of the grants, Dr Kathryn Skivington of the Social & Public Health Sciences Unit at University of Glasgow will review interventions targeted at individuals with complex needs who are at higher risk. She commented, "The team and I are delighted to be starting this project which will allow us to identify evidence on what works in improving the mental health and wellbeing of adolescents who are most at risk of poor health outcomes and face the biggest challenges in their transition to adulthood. We will gather evidence from around the world and identify the strategies that appear to be the most promising to pursue in Scotland."

The second grant has been awarded to Dr Joanne McLean who works for the Mental Health Foundation. Her research will review broader population interventions designed to improve the health and wellbeing of 'average' populations of young people. She commented, "Successful transition to adulthood is vital for young peoples' mental health and wellbeing and as such is a key public health issue for them and those who care about them. We will review international evidence to define what works at a population level to reduce inequalities and equip all young people

with the skills, characteristics and resilience to successfully navigate their transition experience. A panel of Scottish adolescents will work with us to ensure our work takes account of the outcomes that indicate successful transition from the perspectives of young people in Scotland today.”

To maximise the impact of the HHWB initiative, it is planned that Phase 2 will use the findings from the literature reviews to develop novel approaches to improve the successful transition to adulthood. This will influence the development and delivery of an intervention study in Scotland in Phase 3.

Professor Marie Johnston from Aberdeen University is a member of the RSE Expert Advisory Group who consulted on the HHWB programme. Speaking about the initiative, she commented, “This exciting new programme tackles a question of importance to individuals and society; are there interventions that can enable young people to become happier, healthier adults? The phase 1 grants will use electronic search methods to find and then integrate available but scattered evidence. Later phases will build on this evidence to develop and evaluate interventions that might be effective in improving the future lives of young people in Scotland.”

ENDS.

For more information contact Hannah Smith: [hsmith@royalsoced.org.uk](mailto:hsmith@royalsoced.org.uk), 0131 240 2792.

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **RSE Scotland Foundation**

The RSE Scotland Foundation is a charitable body connected to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Its Scottish Charity Number is SC024636.

#### **RSE**

The Royal Society of Edinburgh is a leading educational charity which operates on an independent and non-party-political basis to provide public benefit throughout Scotland. Established by Royal Charter in 1783 by key proponents of the Scottish Enlightenment, the RSE now has over 1600 Fellows from a wide range of disciplines. The work of the RSE includes awarding research funding, leading on major inquiries, informing public policy and delivering events across Scotland to inspire knowledge and learning.

#### **Information on research consortiums**

Individual Intervention: This consortium is led by Dr Kathryn Skivington of the Social & Public Health Sciences Unit at University of Glasgow and includes the following researchers:

**Project Lead:** Dr Kathryn Skivington (University of Glasgow)

**Project Team:**

Hilary Thomson (University of Glasgow)  
Candida Fenton (University of Glasgow)  
Mhairi Campbell (University of Glasgow)  
Helen Sweeting (University of Glasgow)  
Daniel Wight (University of Glasgow)  
Stewart Mercer (University of Glasgow)  
Michael Green (University of Glasgow)

Population Intervention: This consortium is led by the Mental Health Foundation and includes the following researchers:

**Project Lead:** Dr Joanne McLean (Mental Health Foundation)

**Project Team:**

Dr Jo Williams (University of Edinburgh)  
Dr Nuno Ferreira (University of Edinburgh)  
Prof Margaret Maxwell (University of Stirling)  
Dr Pauline Campbell (Glasgow Caledonian University)  
Dr Alex Pollock (Glasgow Caledonian University)  
Claire Torrens (Glasgow Caledonian University)  
Hannah Biggs (Mental Health Foundation)  
Dr Anna Macintyre (University of Strathclyde)  
Amy Woodhouse (Children in Scotland)