

## **North East Medsoc Launch Event**

**8<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

### **Post Event Report**



The North East Medical sociology launch event was held at Trevelyan College Durham, on the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2012. This inaugural event proved to be a real success, attracting approximately 50 delegates; consisting of researchers, academics, PhD students, as well as some representatives from policy and practice and the third sector. Individuals had predominantly travelled from the North East region; however some had come from further afield.

Alongside presentations, and structured discussion sessions, delegates were given the opportunity to network over lunch and meet others with an interest in the critical sociology of health. Representatives from the British Sociological Association (Elaine Forrester, Events Officer, and Gregg Cummings, Membership Services & Communications Officer), also hosted a stall at the event to advertise BSA membership, as well as other up and coming conferences and events. Delegates were also given the opportunity to bring along flyers and other paraphernalia to advertise relevant events/articles/books etc. with which they were involved, and distribute this information among tables.

### **Presentations**

Full presentations supplement this report, and can be found on this webpage. Presentations covered various health related topics (in order to give the event a broad flavour), and encouraged lively debate and discussion. An interesting and engaging keynote entitled 'Weighty Matters: Health or Identity Promotion?' was given by Professor Rose Barbour, who considered a number of weight management projects she had been involved with.

Following this, members of the steering group presented details of their research. Dr Sally Brown (Senior Research Fellow, Durham University) discussed a series of qualitative research projects carried out in Hull, around teenagers and sex. Sally's presentation included consideration of key findings, as well as discussion of methodological challenges around engaging young people in this research. Dr Mick Hill (Northumbria University) and Oliver Wood, (Service User / Researcher), discussed service user led research. In particular they highlighted a current piece of research exploring what constitutes 'effective' care coordination and 'recovery' with service users, carers, professionals and academics as researchers. Dr Fiona Cuthill (University of Sunderland) then gave a presentation on the work of health professionals across cultures. As part of this presentation Fiona discussed her own research with health visitors, which explored their experiences of working with clients from cultures different to their own.

## **Discussion sessions**

In the final part of the event delegates were given the opportunity to discuss ways forward for the North East Medsoc group. Delegates were split into pre-allocated discussion groups, and asked to consider the format, frequency and venue of future events, as well as indicate whether they would like to be involved in the steering group. Discussion sessions were lively, and generated a range of useful ideas, which will be taken on board by the steering group when setting up future events. Groups were encouraged to feedback at the end of the session, and their suggestions included;

- Not constraining events to themes as this could potentially alienate/ exclude people. Although launch event topics were broad everyone took something away from the presentations
- 'Baby-steps' into sociology for those new to the field to promote discussion around sociological theory
- Special student sessions, where students are given the opportunity to present: perhaps one student presentation per meeting rather than a completely student-led event.
- Events could be used as a forum to discuss methodological issues
- Events should be rotated around the different geographical areas
- Quarterly meetings with flexibility around days/times should be held
- Evening meetings/ half day events could be held as a mix to try and suit different needs
- Social opportunities could be offered after events
- More 'web presence' i.e. a North East Jisc mail list, Facebook page or Twitter account.