

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What does Talking With Voices involve?

It involves a maximum of 26 sessions of up to an hour and we'll aim to make these appointments as convenient as possible for you.

The first part involves time for you and a therapist to get to know one another; the therapist will discuss different ways of understanding the voice hearing experience and suggest strategies that can be helpful for coping. The second part involves the therapist learning about your voices, such as what they say, what was happening in your life when they first started, and how they may relate to events which have happened in your past. When you and your voices feel ready the next stage begins, which involves the therapist 'talking' with your voices.

The therapist will ask questions out loud then ask you to listen to what the voices say and repeat their responses back. The aim of this is to understand more about how you and your voices feel about things and to use this information to help you work together to develop a more peaceful relationship. Finally, time will be spent at the end of therapy reviewing the work that you and your therapist have done together and how you might move forward with it in the future.

It is very important that you and your voices feel safe and comfortable with this process, and the therapist will spend time to help make this happen.

### Would it cost me anything?

No. You will be compensated £20 at the initial appointment and at the two follow up appointments (a total of £60).

### What if I don't want to be part of the study anymore?

You can leave the study at any point if you change your mind without having to give a reason why. It will not affect the usual care you receive and no one will be angry about your decision.



# TALKING WITH VOICES

Have you heard voices for at least a year and sometimes find them hard to cope with?

Are you currently in mental health services but not receiving individual therapy?

Are you interested in an approach where a therapist engages directly with your voices?

Are you aged 16 or over?

## FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US

*For more information, or to discuss taking part in this study, please contact:*

Emma DePaola (Research Assistant) - 07990 344 865 - emma.depaola@gmmh.nhs.uk

Hannah Sowery (Research Assistant) - 07342 068 076 - hannah.sowery@gmmh.nhs.uk

Dr Eleanor Longden (Co-Chief Investigator) - 0161 3581 395 - eleanor.longden@gmmh.nhs.uk

talkingwithvoices@gmmh.nhs.uk

**IF YOU THINK THE ANSWER IS YES TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, THE 'TALKING WITH VOICES' TRIAL MAY BE OF INTEREST TO YOU**

## BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Talking With Voices (TwV) is a new form of therapy for voice hearers that comes from the work of the International Hearing Voices Movement. It is based on the idea that voices often reflect conflicts and difficulties and can draw attention to problems in the person's life that may have happened in the past or be reoccurring in the present.

TwV believes that understanding more about the links between voices and negative emotions can provide useful information for helping the person make sense of their experiences. In the long-term, this can also be helpful for learning new ways to cope with the voices and become less distressed by them.

TwV involves a therapist 'talking' to the voice by asking it questions. The voice hearer then listens to the responses and repeats them aloud to the therapist. Over time, the therapist learns more about the voice(s) in order to support the voice(s) and voice hearer to develop a more peaceful, constructive relationship. In addition, the therapist and voice hearer work together to try and understand how the voices may relate to particular problems in the person's life.

We have already run a small study amongst 50 voice-hearers which showed that TwV was seen as an acceptable form of support and could be delivered in the NHS. However, we now want to run a much larger trial to understand whether TwV is an effective treatment and, if so, what aspects of it may be particularly helpful for people.

## WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We are looking for (1) adults aged 16 and over, (2) who have heard voices for a minimum of one year of at least moderate severity (we will assess this using the Psychotic Symptom Rating Scale (PSYRATS-AH)), (3) who have been in mental health services for at least 6 months and are not receiving individual psychological therapy, (4) who are actively help-seeking in relation to distressing voices, and (5) who have the ability and inclination for a therapist to engage with their voices using dialoguing techniques.



## WHAT HAPPENS IF I MAKE A REFERRAL?

When receiving a referral, we will:

- Send the potential participant some information and organise a visit at a place that is convenient for them.
- If the potential participant consents to the study, we will carry out a baseline assessment to determine their eligibility and administer an additional series of clinical questionnaires.
- Eligible participants will be randomly allocated to one of two trial arms:

### Psychological Intervention (treatment group)

Up to 26 sessions of TWV plus the participants' usual mental healthcare.

OR

### Treatment as usual & monitoring (control group)

People will receive standard treatment," whilst the new version says, "People in this group will receive their usual mental healthcare.

- All participants will be invited to two follow-up research assessments at 8 and 14 months after randomisation. They will be compensated £20 for each assessment (£60 in total).
- Referrers will be informed of the outcome of the baseline assessment and allocation, and we will keep in touch over the course of the trial.

## EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Individuals are not eligible to participate if they are (1) at immediate risk of harm to self or others, (2) are non-English speaking, (3) have a primary diagnosis of alcohol/substance dependence or autism spectrum disorder, (4) have a moderate/severe learning disability, (5) report voice hearing related to organic brain injury or illness, (6) are homeless and/or of no fixed abode.