Title Is self-determination theory useful in developing interventions to improve wellbeing in people with multiple chronic conditions?

Supervisor/s Dr Cindy Gray, Prof Stewart Mercer, Prof Sally Wyke

Outline Chronic disease management is the major challenge facing international health systems. Multimorbidity of both mental and physical conditions is very common in young adults living in socio-economically deprived areas, and is associated with poor wellbeing and quality of life. Promoting wellbeing in young adults with mental-physical multi-morbidity has potential to prevent or delay high burden multimorbidity in later life.

The MRC Framework for the Development and Evaluation of Complex Interventions promotes the use of theory as the starting point in intervention development. However, interventions to improve wellbeing in multimorbidity have lacked theoretical foundation to date. Self-determination theory (SDT), a theory of motivation and psychological wellbeing, which has been used in chronic disease management, has the potential to guide intervention development in multimorbidity, but its use has not yet been investigated.

Study aim To use SDT to develop a novel intervention to increase eudaimonic wellbeing in young adults (25-40 years) with mental-physical multimorbidity, living in areas of high socio-economic deprivation.

Research methods A mixed methods approach involving a literature review, definition of the needs of the target population, co-development of the pilot intervention and evaluation design with potential users and key stakeholders, and preliminary testing and optimisation of the intervention.