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FRESH - Facilitating Return to work through Early Specialist Health-based interventions

## **FRESH: Facilitating Return to work through Early Specialist Health-based interventions**

October 2015 NEWSLETTER

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/go/fresh>

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### What is Fresh?

Otherwise known as 'Working after Brain Injury' FRESH is a feasibility randomised control trial designed to test whether an early job retention intervention for supporting people with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to return to work that was developed in Nottingham, can be delivered in three new NHS trauma centres (Preston, London and Leeds) and whether we can measure the effects and cost effectiveness of this intervention compared to usual NHS rehabilitation. The findings will inform the design of a definitive trial.

**FRESH study progress:** The focus is now on completing the 12-month follow-up data collection and the final few interviews with employers, service providers and commissioners in each centre. Our thanks to those who have given their time to be interviewed to date. With less than 11 months remaining before the FINAL report is due all efforts are focussed on the analysis and writing up, including deciding on papers. If you've been involved in the study and would like to contribute to writing please contact Kate Radford.

**Process evaluation update:** Almost all participant interviews are now complete, exploring participants' experiences of the Early Specialist Traumatic Brain Injury Vocational Rehabilitation. One participant said,

"She's been brilliant; she's also been brilliant with my work situation because we've had to have various meetings, obviously and she's come with me and she's written great reports for them. They were most impressed; I could see they were."

"Another told us,

"She's just been very supportive in explaining about the process that I am going through with my brain and her experience. She's just helped with everything really. Not just work, but my personal life and how to deal with things after a brain injury and what thoughts I may have. Yeah, she's just been very reassuring and just very clear and straight talking. It's been absolutely fantastic really".

Interviews with NHS staff in the sites are nearing completion and interviews with

employers are ongoing (they are willing but proving hard to pin down to a date and time!) The findings will tell us what worked well and what might need to change when designing a future trial.

**Data Collection Update:** Collection of FRESH outcome data is now nearing completion. Baseline, 3-month and 6-month data collection is complete, with responses near or above 80%. There is also additional primary outcome (work status) data for a few people for whom we haven't received a completed questionnaire. This is a really good return for TBI studies, so congratulations to all involved! There are just 20 TBI participants (and 7 carers) remaining in the 12-month outcome data collection – plus a few outstanding, with whom we are still in contact.

**Outputs:** Julie Phillips, Mal Auton, Jain Holmes and Richard Morris submitted, "What are the most important outcomes of early vocational rehabilitation following traumatic brain injury? A qualitative study." to the Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation and to the 11th World Congress on Brain Injury to be held in The Hague, in March 2016, where Kate has been invited to speak in a symposium on 'Return to work after acquired brain injury: An overview of the vocational rehabilitations interventions'. Outcomes awaited.

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National Institute for Health Research

This project is funded by the NIHR HTA Programme (project number 11/66/02). The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the HTA programme, NIHR, NHS or the Department of Health.

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