

Lord Mayor of Birmingham – opening speech



“I am very pleased to have the opportunity to open this event as Lord Mayor of Birmingham and Chancellor of Birmingham City University

This event brings together two important pieces of research on the Irish community in Birmingham specifically looking at the mental health of the Irish community.

There is very little research on the mental health of the Irish communities living in the UK so these pieces of research are quite significant. More understanding and knowledge about the Irish communities, who are now classed as an ethnic minority, is needed to further promote inclusion and equality and provide outreach to those in need.

Both projects have looked at the mental health of the Irish community; the first report to be presented has covered a wider spectrum of Irish mental health in general and the second report has focussed on older Irish adults.

It is very encouraging to see so many types of organisations working together in these projects. From the public sector, there is Birmingham City University and University of Central Lancashire.

Statutory providers are represented by Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust, Balsall Heath Health Centre, and Care Services Improvement Partnership.

Wide range of important voluntary organisations too: Midland Heart, Federation of Irish Societies, and working on both projects were the Irish Welfare and Information Centre, and Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Both of these projects hope that the research will influence current service provision by looking at how services are provided and how people access them and how they could be improved to ensure those who are in need feel comfortable and confident in accessing services.

I am hopeful that the two projects will encourage a wider and more valuable engagement between statutory and voluntary services, with each sector bringing their expertise and knowledge together; to work in partnership to meet the mental health needs of the Irish community.”

Councillor Chauhdry Abdul Rashid J.P