**Developing Our Responses to Stigma**

**1 What do we want to do?**

**Develop new responses to stigma**

Through a **research study** in south London the KCL research team have been learning about how stigma is experienced by people impacted by homelessness, and also what drives and maintains stigma within different care and support systems.

In doing the research we have been working with a **network** of committed and caring people from south London, already full of ideas and taking action on stigma. This network includes research participants, people working in homelessness and health services, researchers and policy makers.

We now want to work with this **network** and use the **research findings** to identify **social responses to stigma**: things that can be done across south London that target policies, institutions and systems for change.

The networkwill develop two linked outputs:

1 a **Stigma Action Toolkit** – the toolkit will describe the range of individual responses already being done or that could be done by individuals and organisations across south London to challenge stigma. The toolkit will enable as many people as possible to take action in their own way and own time targeting the institutions and policies they use or work in.

2 a **Plan for Systems change** – this plan will build on the ideas in the toolkit and suggest how these individual responses could be coordinated and combined to seek system wide change. We hope this plan will be the focus for future coordinated action in south London.

Our goal is to have the **toolkit** and **plan for systems change** drafted by the end of 2025/early 2026.

Taking action with the toolkit and plan will need **resources**. The process will include exploring where **existing resources** can be reallocated and we will facilitate others in **fundraising** and making **funding applications**.

Depending on progress with action and the views of study partners we will reconsider the toolkits and plans for system change at the end of 2026.

**2 What will the finished Toolkits and Plan for systems change be like?**

**Tackling stigma will take more than one thing**. The idea of a **toolkit** has come from study respondents. It will have a range of individual to make change at different levels. This will range from what we do as individuals, to what we do in frontline homelessness and health services, to what we do to try and change national policy and society wide assumptions.

The **stigma action toolkit** should be a **flexible and open guide** for people. One way we think it will be like is like a cookbook of recipes. Instead of lots of recipes there will be lots of responses to stigma. And like a cookbook, you can choose what you would like to do, when to do it, and how you adapt it to the specific context you are in.

The **plan for systems change** will involve people choosing to come together and coordinate themselves around specific responses in specific contexts. The process is ongoing, but we anticipate that many of the responses in the toolkit could – if done collectively and in certain ways – lead to much bigger change.

The **toolkit** and **plan for systems change** will keep on changing as we learn and experiment. Throughout 2025 both documents will be online so people can comment and input. Eventually, when there is consensus on their content, we will find ways to have these published. If opportunities come up to turn ideas in to action – e.g. funding is available – we will take them (rather than waiting for all ideas to be finished).

The toolkit and plan for systems change will be developed to change things in south London. We hope it will be valuable for people elsewhere in the UK and beyond; we will work to share insights and experiences to help others.

**3 Who will make the Toolkit and Plan for system change?**

**Changing stigma will need a wide range of experience, knowledge and expertise**, especially experience of homelessness and of working at different levels of care and support systems.

**KCL researchers will facilitate a participatory process** seeking input from as many people as possible.

**Ideas for responses to stigma will come from many people**, and especially from people who have contributed to the study and shared their experiences. Ideas will come from i) the imagination and creativity of study participants, ii) existing good practice in south London that could be scaled-up, adapted or formalised, iii) other places in the UK or the world where work to challenge stigma could be adapted to south London, iv) the KCL research team and the findings from the study.

**Ideas for responses to stigma will be co-produced**. By co-production we mean i) there is sharing of power and people work together to achieve a joint understanding, ii) there are a range of perspectives and skills, iii) and all of these perspectives and skills are recognised as equally important, iv) with all benefiting from working together, v) and all working to build relationships. Using these ideas we will develop a range of ways for people to work together to develop responses to stigma. Together we will think through how responses could work, what resources are needed and what is feasible.

**The research study will support developing responses to stigma.** The research study will give a detailed insight to how stigma is experienced and how stigma works. These research findings will help think about what may or may not work, and explore how to adapt responses.

We will have a **responses group** made up of study participants and stakeholders from south London. That group will make decisions through consensus on what responses to develop, and then what gets included in the final toolkit and plan for system change. **Spin off groups** from the **responses group** will look at specific ideas in-depth. We will host **events and consultation processes** for the wide network of people involved in the study to engage with and give input to the work of these groups.

**The process needs to be inclusive, flexible and transparent.** What people need to enable them to contribute varies. Our processes will be flexible and have different options so people can do what works for them. As a network we will constantly seek to learn what works best. This could be regular meetings and spaces for discussion, or sharing of ideas in other formats (e.g. recording of podcasts, talks put on youtube, or written documents). A study advisory group will give ongoing support to try and make sure the process is participatory, transparent and equitable process.

**We need to credit contributions and value people’s time.** We will seek for as many people as possible to ‘own’ the plan, and publicly acknowledge all contributions (unless people prefer not to be named). Everyone’s time is valuable, and everyone should be compensated for the time they contribute to the project.

**4 What is the process and timeline?**

February-April 2025

Publicise and discuss the process with as many study participants as possible, and refine the process for developing responses to stigma as described in this document with the feedback we get

Form a **responses group** to guide the process; host first meeting

Publicise to study participants and network this process and seek more ideas on possible responses to stigma that seek to change systems

May - July 2025

Ensure new ideas for responses to stigma are regularly sought from study participants and stakeholders

Meeting of the study **advisory group** to get advice to ensure we are doing everything we can to have a high chance of impact, and to ensure the process is participatory and transparent, including ensuring the advisory group membership reflects a range of experiences that meets the responses being devised and the locations where they are focused.

Further meetings of the **responses group** including to form **spin off groups** to work on the detail of specific responses to stigma.

Small workshops across multiple venuesto feedback and discuss latest research findings and ideas for responses

August-Oct 2025

Further meetings of the **responses group** including to form **spin off groups** to work on the detail of responses to stigma.

Drafting of the contents of a toolkit and plan for systems change

Nov-Jan 2026?

If needed, further meetings of the **responses group**¸including to form **spin off groups** to work on the detail of responses to stigma.

Feb-Apr 2026?

Final collective deliberations on the **Stigma Action Toolkit** and **Plan for system change**, focused on all possible responses being explored and discussed, and assessed for their impact and feasibility. Linked to agreeing strategies for getting resources.

Final drafting of plan

Meetings and workshops to discuss and resolve issues (linked to multiple media formats – podcasts, short reports, recorded presentations, webinars)

**5 What do we do with the Toolkit and Plan for Systems change once we have it?**

We want change. We want stigma to be challenged and overcome. We want to stop stigma getting in the way of people moving out of homelessness and towards good health.

The plan will be made available as a public resource for everyone to work with and take action on as they choose.

We will also facilitate groups to take collective action. This will include identifying resources and supporting applications whether through accessing existing resources or through fundraising and writing funding applications.

If people want, they can join a process to share experiences and insights, and lessons of what works.

Where people think it is useful to know more, we will co-produce plans for future research and evaluation.

Depending on the action that results and views of project partners, we will reconsider the toolkit an plan at the end of 2026, to see if any changes or additions are needed.