

Building public health research capacity and culture in local government



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Local authorities are responsible for the health of the public (since 2013)

The building blocks of health



Source: Medway Council Health Determinants Research Collaboration

Why should local authorities build research capacity and culture?

- Better informed decisions about investment or disinvestment
 - Better value for the public
 - Better justification for how public money is used
 - Better outcomes for the public
 - Better recruitment and retention of staff
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- Richer evidence base for interventions to promote and improve health

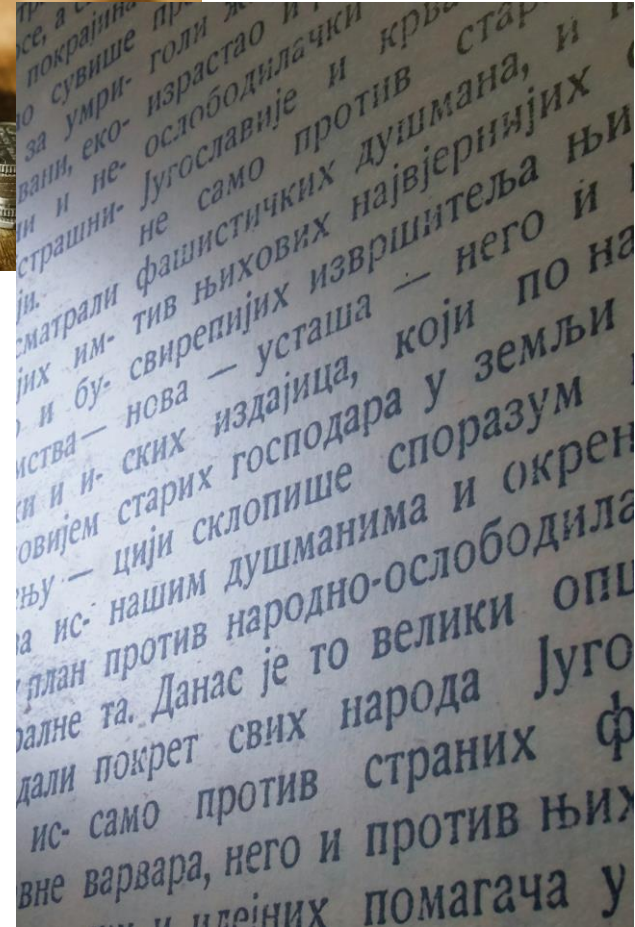
What does a local authority with a strong research culture look like?

- acknowledges organizational value of using and doing research
- supports and encourages council officers
 - to use research evidence
 - to develop ideas about innovation
 - to seek funding for research
 - to deliver research

Local government research assets

- Workforce has lots of research experience
- Public support for evidence-based decision-making
- Councillors eager for evidence about how to make best use of limited funds

Barriers to research activity in local government



Support for research for local government public health role

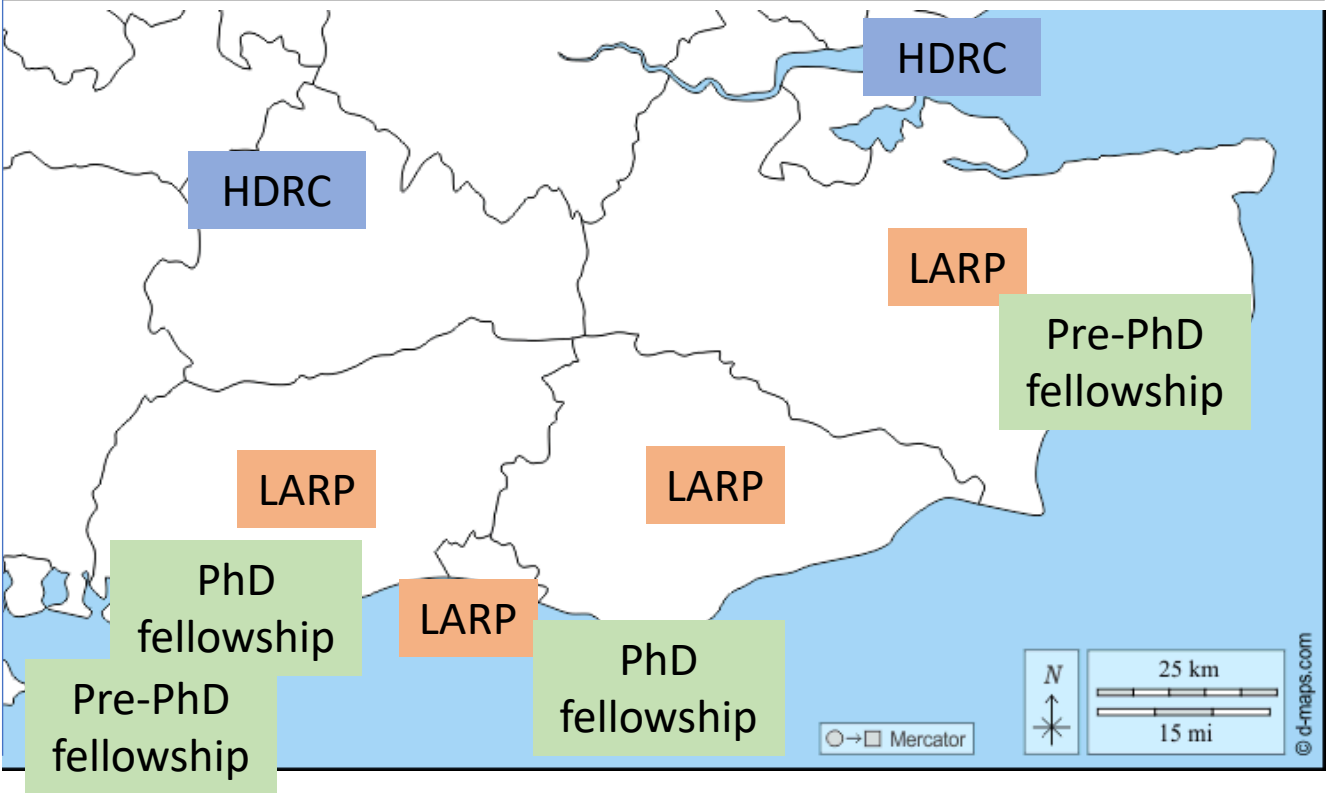
- 2008 NIHR Public Health Research Funding Programme launched
- Research funding did not reach local government
- 2020
 - Department of Health and Social Care funding for 15 x embedded public health researchers and consultant time
 - NIHR Clinical Research Networks increasing support for local government research
 - NIHR funding to understand assets and barriers (13 projects funded around England including Kent and Medway*)
 - NIHR Research Design Service more aligned to public health research
- THEN, much more!

*Building a health and wellbeing research system in Kent and Medway <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/106031/>

Opportunities available now, all since 2021

- [NIHR Local Authority fellowship programme](#)
- [NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaborations](#)
- [NIHR Public Health Interventions Responsive Studies Teams](#)
- [NIHR Research Support Service Specialist Centre for Public Health](#)
- [NIHR-HEE Integrated Clinical/Practitioner Academic Programme](#) (people employed by local government now welcome)

NIHR funding for research capacity and culture development in KSS



NIHR Research Support Service Specialist Centre for Public Health

- Specialist support for developing research projects in local government
- Local Authority Research Practitioners
- Developing governance frameworks and support for research delivery
- Local Authority Engagement Practitioners soon to be appointed

Support for research for local government public health role – NIHR ARC Kent Surrey Sussex

- Public Health Theme focuses on development of research capacity and culture in local government
 - Navigating NIHR
 - Facilitating collaborations
 - Public Health Research Network
 - Community of Practice for RSS Local Authority Research Practitioners
 - Limited resource and lots to do!

ARC KSS Public Health Research network - purpose

- Forum for
 - building collaborations
 - sharing and testing research ideas
- Professional development resource
- Information about research funding and training opportunities

ARC KSS Public Health Research Network

- Mailing list
 - Information about opportunities and NIHR updates
 - Invitations to meetings
- Approx monthly virtual meetings, all welcome

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Thank you
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