

NIHR ARC KSS Social Care Capacity Building

Embedding research into practice

Stacey Rand

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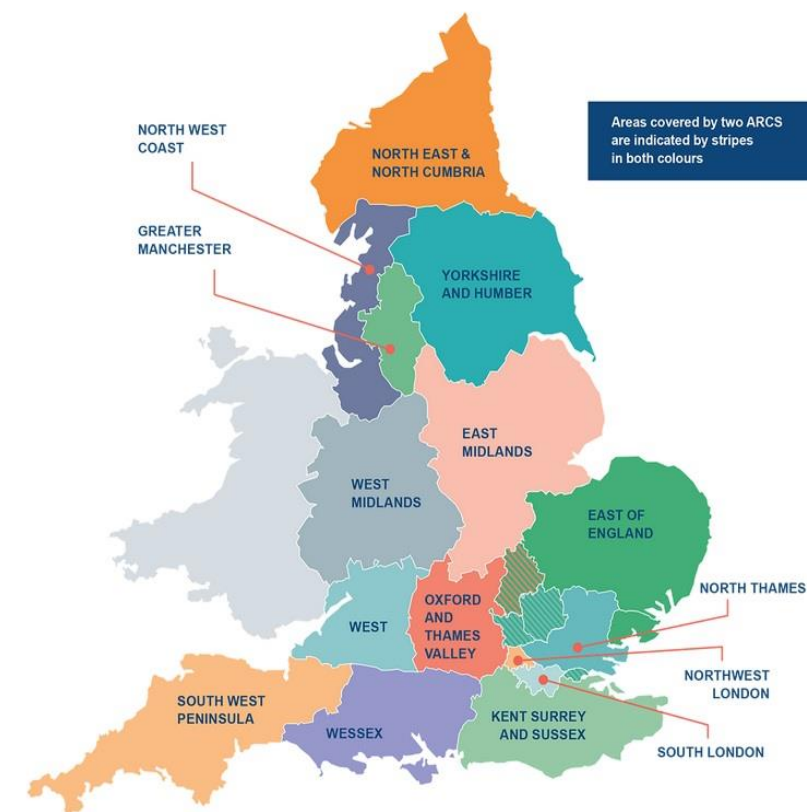
Madalina Toma

Lead Research Fellow

ARC KSS Research Week 2025

A key objective of NIHR ARCs is to support and promote **capacity building in applied health and social care research**.

- Strengthen networks and develop new links between **academia** and **practice**
- Develop the **social care workforce** to actively lead or contribute to research and apply it to inform practice
- Develop the **academic research workforce** to be experienced, skilled and confident in working in partnership with practice.



Why?

Improving care and improving outcomes for people accessing services, families, the public, and health and social care workforce.

NIHR ARC Social Care Capacity Building Programme

- Two-year programme of social care research capacity building
 - Funded from April 2024 to March 2026
- Each regional ARC has its own focus and approach to address local needs and work with local partners

ARC Kent, Surrey and Sussex chose to focus on adult social care and social work.

Why? To build on the Kent Research Partnership.



Springboard Awards

Lisa Richardson - literature review on ways to support research participation for adults with learning disability...
=> PhD at King's College London

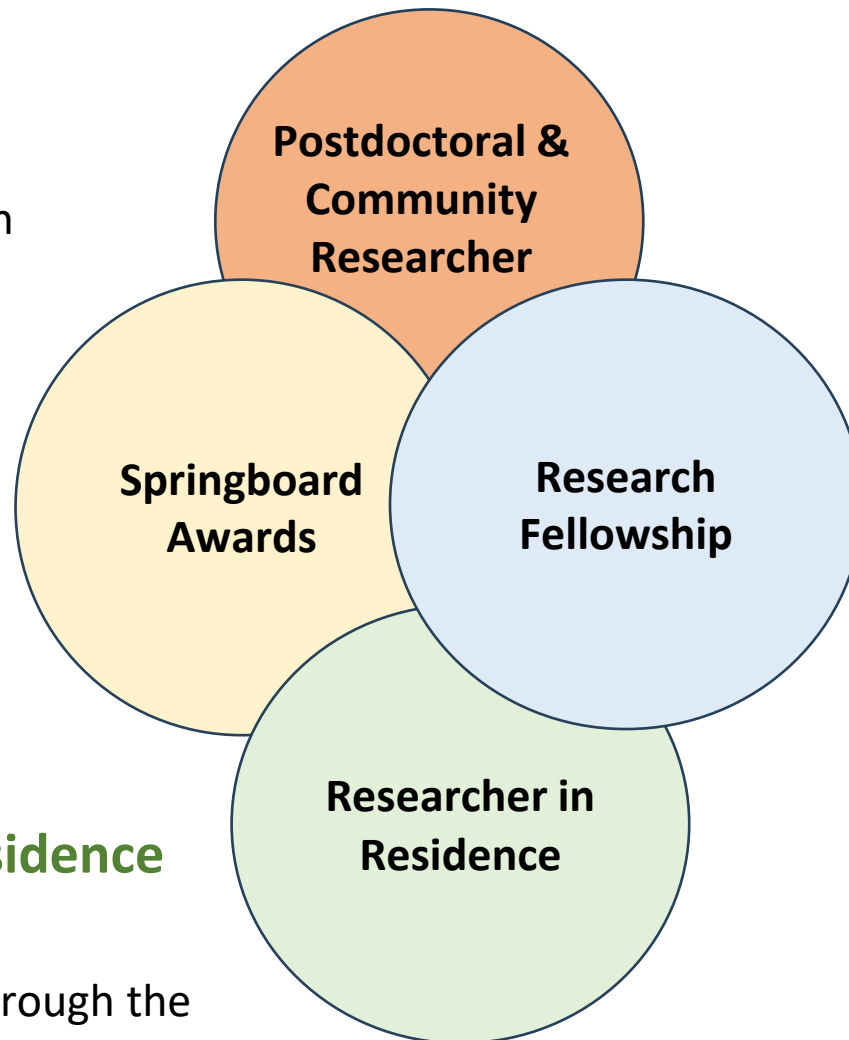
Lucinda Kalupka – A local service evaluation of Hatha Helpers.

An opportunity to develop research skills, knowledge and confidence for future working with researchers and to apply in routine evaluation of services.

Researcher in Residence

Lilly Trapp

Role at KCC funded through the Kent Research Partnership
Extended funding with a focus on embedding and consolidating



Postdoctoral Researcher
Dr Madalina Toma

Community Researcher
Erica Ferris

Support the regional cohort of fellows and award holders

Research Fellows

Lilly Trapp – Kent County Council

Dr Alison Charles – University of Kent

Sophie Jones – East Sussex CC

See next slides for further detail

Supervision

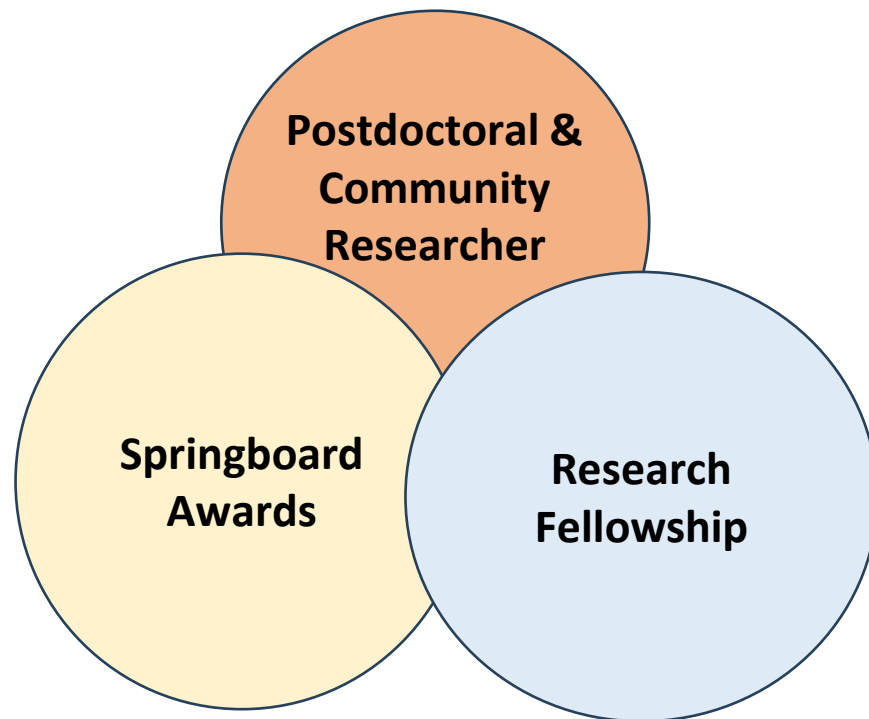
One-to-one support and space for reflection/learning focussed on project or activity

Mentoring

One-to-one relationship to support professional development

Training Resources and Programme

- Individual programme of training
 - Existing courses
 - Bespoke training
- Regional cohort meetings for peer support
- Honorary researcher role (if applicable) to allow access to journals, IT and library resources



Community Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

- Social Worker and Honorary Research and Training Fellow
- I am completing a research project supported by the University of Kent while continuing to practice within Adult Social Care.
- Community Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards is a subject relevant to social care and aligns with the ARC Social Care themes and priorities.



Community Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

- **What are Community Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards?**
- **Why are they important?**
- **What does the project include?**
- **Learning journey**
- **What we hope to achieve from the project and the future...**



Community Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

Project Design

Research Events

Bespoke Training

Cohort Support

Supervision

Access To Resources



Dr Alison Charles

NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex

Well-being in care homes: implementation of (outcomes-based) care planning



Public Summary

Around 400,000 older adults live in care homes in England. However, there is currently no systematic way of measuring or reporting care home residents' Quality of Life (QoL).

Working with stakeholders, this research project aims to further develop and pilot approaches to care planning in older adult care homes which focus on the QoL of residents.

There are two phases to this work:

Phase 1:

The research team undertook a scoping review of published literature on care planning interventions for older people in care homes and identified, mapped and summarised relevant studies.

They also conducted interviews with social care professionals involved in care planning in English older adult care homes to explore their views on how the process is conducted and could be improved.

The researchers then developed a framework to understand what person-centred care planning (PCCP) requires (including barriers and facilitators for implementation).

Phase 2:

The team undertook a consultation exercise with stakeholders, in the sector, to develop a set of best practice principles for care planning within older adult care homes.

The project is currently supporting three care homes to use the ASCOT in care planning tool as part of a small pilot and evaluation of this specific quality of life approach to care planning in older adult care homes.

Public and Community Involvement

The project team includes two independent patient, carer and public involvement and engagement advisors with lived experience of caring for a relative living in a care home.

NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex

Alison Charles, Nick Smith, Yuri Hamashima, Hugh McLeod and Thais Caprioli
Universities of Kent, Bristol and Liverpool
August 2023

INTRODUCTION
Around 280,000 older adults (65+) live in care homes in England and Wales, but there is no systematic way of measuring or reporting their Quality of Life (QoL). Yet validated QoL measures exist, including The Adult Social Care Outcomes Toolkit (ASCOT) and ICECAP CAPability measures for Older people (ICECAP-OP) and those approaching end-of-life requiring Supported Care (ICECAP-SCoL), all of which have been chosen for this feasibility study.

OBJECTIVES/1
To pilot the ASCOT and ICECAP approaches to care planning in a small number of older adult care homes via:
• recruitment of 4 such homes willing to participate in the study (completed)
• working with the care homes to train staff about ASCOT and ICECAP theories and methods (completed)
• provision of in-person and online support, feedback and resources to enable staff to use the tools in their care planning processes and understand the data generated over 3-6 months (ongoing).

ACHIEVEMENTS
• 7 older adult care homes (from 4 providers) have been enrolled in the pilots after recruitment delays.
• ASCOT and ICECAP care planning tools are being and/or will be implemented into routine practice by care home staff and data collection and evaluation is underway.
• Bigger picture learning from the pilots has led to team contributions to the debate about how to respond to the challenges of undertaking research in older adult care homes through conference participation and outputs.

FELLOWSHIP LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Active participation in the ASCOT care homes pilots is core to my ABC KCS Social Care Themed Project Fellowship. This unique and valuable opportunity has:
• solidified my knowledge and experience of social care research and practice, especially in older adult care homes;
• expanded my understanding of the reality of doing research in complex care settings and the support, people skills, patience and flexibility required to achieve results;
• supported my development as an applied social care researcher in numerous ways.

FURTHER INFORMATION
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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR, NIAG or the UK Department of Health and Social Care.

TWO STEPS FORWARD: NON-LINEAR PROGRESS LEADS TO BIGGER PICTURE LEARNING IN THE ASCOT AND ICECAP CARE HOMES PILOTS

AIM
The final phase of the ABC NIPP Well-being in Care Homes: Implementation of (outcomes-based) care planning project aimed to pilot ASCOT and ICECAP approaches to care planning in a number of older adult care homes in England, including one each in Kent and Surrey. The aim was to explore the feasibility of using both approaches by examining the effectiveness, acceptability and use of the tools by care home staff and residents, thus building and mobilising evidence of their impact for practice.

OBJECTIVES/2
To undertake a process evaluation of the pilots to explore perceptions, understandings and experiences of the ASCOT and ICECAP care planning approaches, their implementation and operation via:
• surveys of staff participating in the ASCOT and ICECAP training and/or subsequent care planning conversations with residents;
• interviews with care home residents, together with family members and staff who were involved.

FUTURE IMPACT
Through this cross-ABC evaluation of the use of ASCOT and ICECAP measures in a small number of older adult care homes, the team hope to shed new light on their applicability for residents and staff in such settings. If appropriate and with additional funding, study findings could lead to a larger, national roll-out and evaluation.
• Care home homes/providers choosing to continue using ASCOT and ICECAP tools after the project ends, will be supported to do so. This would further embed approaches to person-centred care planning which focus on the QoL of older care home residents.

FELLOWSHIP PROJECT OUTPUTS SO FAR ...
• Conference paper and Three Minute Thesis (3MT) presentation
• Research posters.
(For details, please scan the code to view the project summary.)

REFERENCES
1. An. (n.d.). <https://www.nhs.uk/healthcare-quality/quality-improvement/quality-improvement-approaches/ascot/>.
2. <https://www.nhs.uk/healthcare-quality/quality-improvement/quality-improvement-approaches/icecap/>.
3. <https://www.nhs.uk/healthcare-quality/quality-improvement/quality-improvement-approaches/icecap-sol/>.
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9. <https://www.nhs.uk/healthcare-quality/quality-improvement/quality-improvement-approaches/icecap-op/>.
10. <https://www.nhs.uk/healthcare-quality/quality-improvement/quality-improvement-approaches/icecap-op/>.

My Social Care Themed Project Fellowship journey

FELLOWSHIP LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



This unique and valuable opportunity has:

- widened my knowledge and experience of social care research and practice, especially in older adult care homes
- expanded my understanding of the reality of doing research in complex care settings and the support, people skills, patience and flexibility required to achieve results
- supported my development as an applied social care researcher in numerous ways, including through access to:
 - tailored training and development opportunities, including conferences and other events
 - ongoing support and encouragement from my project PI, Fellowship Academic Mentor and the ARC KSS Social Care Capacity Building Team and peer cohorts.

FELLOWSHIP OUTPUTS SO FAR ...



- Conference paper and Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) presentation
- Research posters and presentations
- Webinar contributions (for project and research capacity building/peer support)
- Knowledge and resource sharing within and beyond peer cohorts (e.g. AI, NVivo).

(For details of project outputs, please scan the code to view the project summary.)



Next steps



Complete and communicate research from the pilots/project:

- Data collection and analysis (interviews and surveys)
- Writing up and dissemination (including journal articles).



Undertake outstanding training:

- Information design and data visualisation
- Implementation science
- Systematic reviews.



Career planning:

- Develop key behaviours and attributes:
 - Be curious in my research
 - Continue to build my academic self-confidence
 - Broaden my horizons and be responsive to opportunities
 - Aim to achieve a more effective, productive and healthy work-life balance.*
- Submit funding applications to undertake own research
- Apply for social care research roles to use learning and skills gained during the Fellowship.

Lilly Trapp

Have you worked as a care worker while you were seeking asylum?



Join our research project!

You can participate if you worked in social care - for example as a Support Worker, Care Assistant or another role in a care home - because you had permission to work from the shortage occupation / Immigration Salary List while you were claiming asylum.
You do not need to still be an asylum seeker or still be working in care to take part!

Why Participate?

- Share your voice and experiences - your responses will be anonymous and confidential.
- Contribute to important research that aims to make a difference.
- **£25 shopping voucher to thank you for your time.**

Register here!



CHSS University of Kent | **NIHR** Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex

Are you involved in recruiting and/or managing care workers?

You are invited to join a co-design group to develop practical resources to support the recruitment and integration of **refugees and asylum seekers** in the care sector.

Why Participate?

- Hear about the experiences of people working in care roles while seeking asylum, and the potential to recruit from this group of people.
- Share your experience and learn from others facing similar challenges and opportunities in recruiting refugees and people seeking asylum.
- Help create resources to support a more inclusive environment for refugees and asylum seekers in the workforce.
- Certificates available to evidence your participation and demonstrate your organisation's commitment to research and innovation.

Who Should Join?

- Care home managers and staff involved in recruitment who are interested in hiring, or currently employing, refugees and/or asylum seekers.

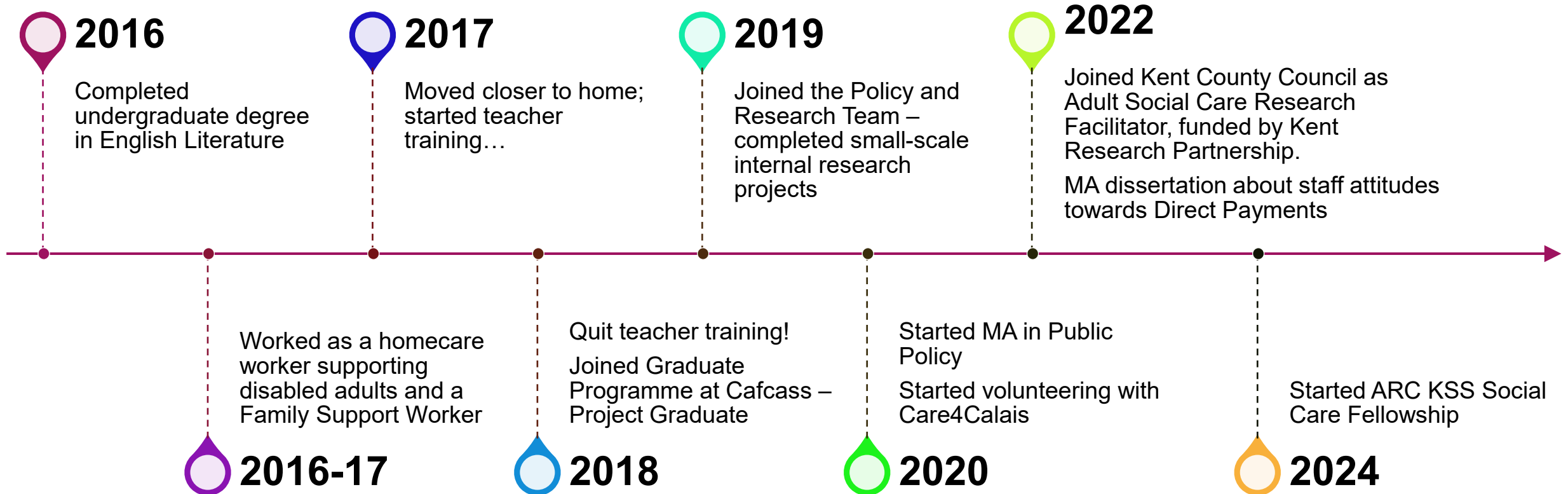
What to Expect

- 2 interactive co-design sessions:
 1. Introduce learning from in-depth interviews with people seeking asylum who have been working in care (the first phase of this project).
 2. Collaboration on draft resources to support understanding about ethical recruitment and integration of people seeking asylum and refugees.
- Sessions will be scheduled for October and December 2025 and will take place online.

How to Get Involved

- Register your interest by contacting Lilly – O.Trapp@kent.ac.uk
- Bring your ideas, experiences, and enthusiasm!
- Enjoy a £75 gift voucher to thank you for your participation.

How did I get here?



How has the Fellowship helped me and supported RCB?

Research skills gained through training, supervision, mentorship and doing the project

Career development and credibility in my role – opens new possibilities

Opportunity to meet others – regionally and nationally – and **build valuable networks**

Unique opportunity to work on something important to me – **building specialist knowledge**

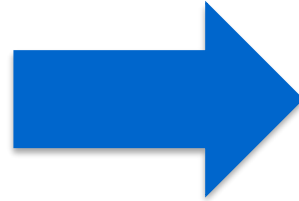
Generous support from the ARC, academics, advisory group members etc to help with **project management, budgeting, other skills and knowledge** as well as research

Dr Madalina Toma – Lead Research Fellow

Connecting Regional learning to a more comprehensive National Picture

Regional Focus:

- Local ARC delivery of fellowships and other individual awards, training, mentoring, peer-support, targeted resources, CoP etc.
- Progress shared via regular meetings (national)



This work will bring together unique delivery models and varied award holder perspectives to create a national picture, highlight key patterns, and generate a shared evidence base to inform further research capacity building strategies.

National Focus - Critical Insights and Reflections:

Purpose

- Map capacity building implementation across the 15 ARCs, nationally
- Explore impact on award holders' skills, knowledge, confidence
- Capture transferable learning

Design (Sept 2025 – Mar 2026)

- Programme mapping-regional and national
- Participant survey (~30 responses)
- Qualitative interviews (up to 15)
- Triangulation & synthesis

Dissemination

- Summary report, blogs, social media, academic paper
- A 'celebration event' to showcase individual projects and collective learning

Any Questions?

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