

Building Primary Care Research Activity in Kent and Medway

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Background

Primary Care research activity has increased in Kent and Medway over the past 6-7 years from a historically low baseline. Links were initially built across East Kent with the aim of expansion across the whole region. Research activity has been sustained despite widescale system change and immense pressures on primary care due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges of caring for a growing and ageing population with complex health needs. In collaboration with Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB), CHSS at the University of Kent has put together a three-year programme to build infrastructure for research in primary care and grow primary care research activity in the region.

Approach

- Actively supporting GP practices to be part of NIHR portfolio research
- Building home-grown research by identifying and supporting researchers and practitioners to obtain funding and carry out research in Kent and Medway
- Education: monthly webinar series on health and social care research

Partners

We are working alongside key local research infrastructure with a track record in primary care research to achieve our goals. The key collaborators include higher education institutions, healthcare commissioners and providers, and local National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) organisations. A Primary Care Research Board oversees the programme.

Aims

Improved clinical experience/satisfaction:

1. Supporting staff to create solutions to local problems through research and evidence-based practice
2. Research to support staff recruitment, training and retention

Reducing care cost:

1. Conducting research that supports cost-effective care and reduces waste
2. Adding value through generation of research income to create solutions for improved, cost-effective care

Quadruple Aim

How research adds value

Better outcomes:

1. Delivering evidenced-based care and innovations to improve outcomes
2. Supporting COVID-19 recovery plans and the need for excellent, responsive research to support care

Better patient experience:

1. Providing access to clinical trials to offer more care options to our patients
2. Creating public awareness of research and getting them involved in the solutions

Support for practices

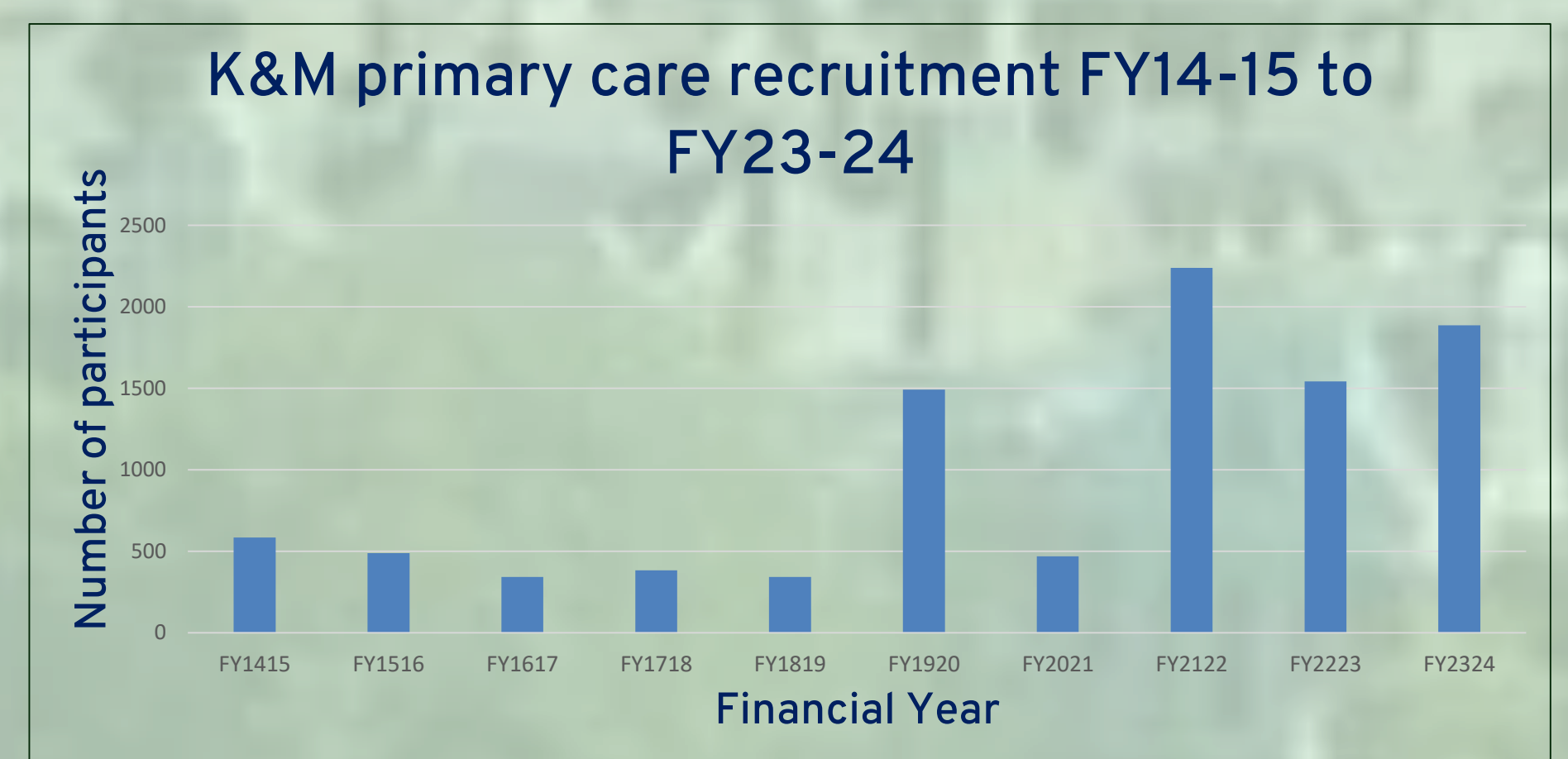
- Development of a **local research team** based in a GP practice – GP Lead, Research Nurse and Research Administrator
- **Practical advice and support** for practices starting out in research or wanting to increase activity
- Creating **close ties** with local Clinical Research Network (CRN KSS)
- **Outreach** and connecting work with practices in Kent and Medway

Result

Growing numbers of practices becoming research-active and recruiting 😊

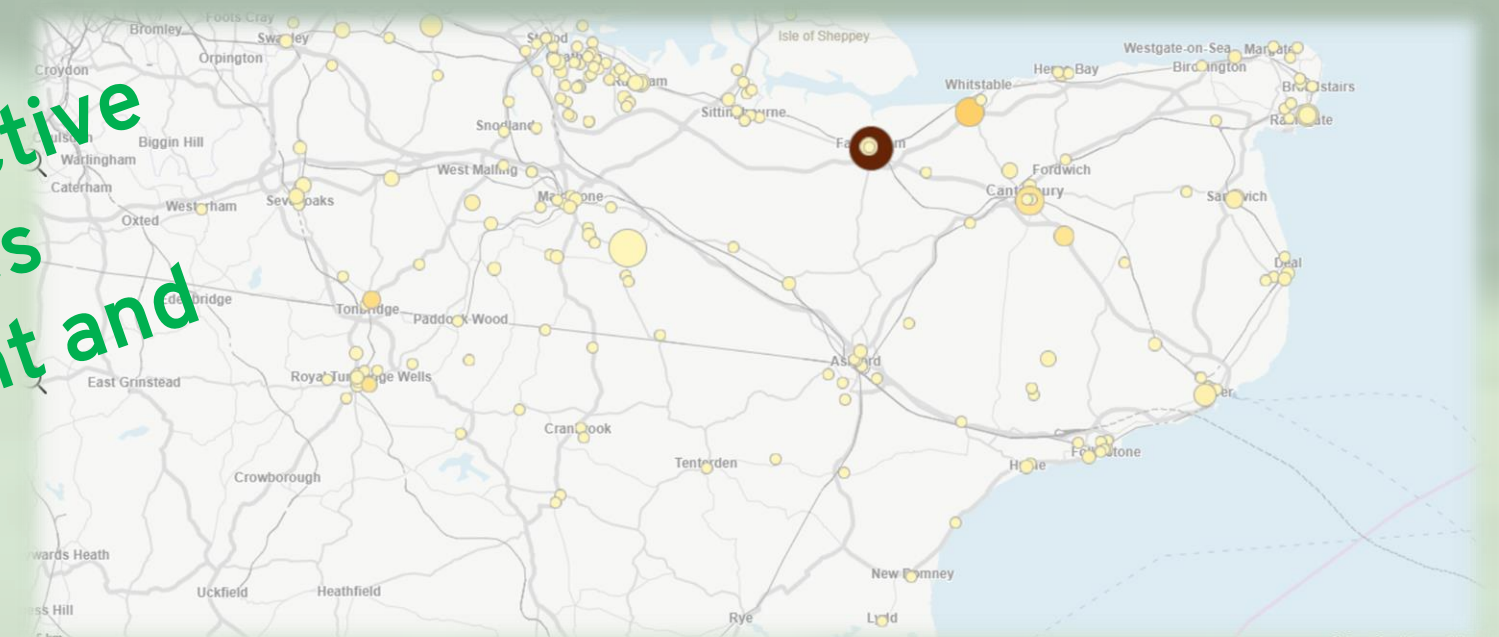
Increasing NIHR portfolio recruitment

- Active support by going out into the field and speaking to practices has led to a significant increase in the number of recruits to NIHR portfolio studies



- Dip in Financial Year (FY) 20-21 due to Covid-19 but subsequent large numbers in FY 21-22 partly due to a large survey study looking at the psychological impact of Covid-19

Research-active GP practices across Kent and Medway



Home-grown studies

- IsoFIT-BP – isometric exercise for hypertension (feasibility study)
- OPT-D – integrated mental health clinic in primary care
- PDAF – clinical pharmacists detecting atrial fibrillation
- DESCALE – opioid de-prescribing in primary care
- IsoFITTER – isometric exercise for hypertension (full trial)

Plans

- Further support for the workforce to get involved in research:
 - Continuation of webinar series
 - Development of Primary Care Research Community – online and plans for in-person annual meeting
 - Support for clinicians/practitioners to develop their own research
 - Training opportunities
- Proposal to carry out a research study examining the barriers to research involvement in primary care
- Continuing to support the growth of practices involved in research