NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration
Kent, Surrey and Sussex

Annual Report Summary
April 2022-March 2023

Contents

Foreword

Stephen Peckham, Director, ARC KSS

As we celebrate our fourth anniversary, I am delighted to present our latest annual report that showcases the enormous range of activity that we and our partners are engaged in.

Our work to support more staff working in health and care organisations and equip them with the knowledge of research and research methods continues to grow. Of special mention are the new National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) investments in the region, including the **Health Determinants Research Collaboration Medway**, that will support the development of public health research in the region, as well as various new funding schemes for increasing research capacity in key areas, such as mental health and dementia.

We continue to adapt the way we work, to increase our links with the Integrated Care Systems and have established a panel of staff, drawn from across organisations in the region, to support the implementation of research in practice. More recently, we have also started to develop a more responsive evidence support service for the Integrated Care Boards (ICBs). This includes a report that looks at how to reduce hospital stays, provide rehabilitation and improve the assessment of a person's long-term care needs.

Data and data analysis have become a key part of the delivery of health and care and important for developing good quality research. That's why we have been working with a team of researchers

to develop an application for a new, single data gateway for health and care, which will improve researcher's access to data sets.

As the lead ARC for the national priority on **adult social care and social work**, we embrace the NIHR's national initiatives to support social care research - including the Research Programme for Social Care, where I represented the ARCs in the development group - as well as their new social care fellowships, that will enable us to provide a national support programme for research fellows.

I feel that this year has been a coming of age for ARC KSS. I am proud of the work undertaken by our researchers, public partners, support staff, implementation team and those leading our capacity building and training. Reading this report, I am sure you will get an insight into the incredible work that has helped make the ARC so successful. It shows what can be achieved by working together across our communities.

**Professor Stephen Peckham
Director, ARC KSS**

Message from Peter Aitken

Chief Medical Officer, SPFT

As the new Chief Medical Officer for Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT) it is my privilege, on behalf of the host organisation for the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex (ARC KSS), to share some thoughts by way of introduction to our latest annual report.

We work in health and social care at a time when we have never been under such pressure. Record levels of investment struggle to keep pace with demographic change which on the one hand increases demand, whilst on the other restricts workforce. Innovation and transformation are imperative and, more than ever, we need to be driven by data and enabled by digital technology.

Data, whilst plentiful, requires organisation and analysis if to be useful as information for change. Digital holds the key to our current professional experts distributing their expertise more widely to a new health and social care workforce of experts experienced at the point of care.

As we recognise the critical importance of the social determinants of health in prevention and targeted early intervention with younger people, we work to transform service models to tackle the multiple medical and mental co-morbidity already prevalent in our ageing population.

Realistic Medicine and **value-based healthcare** guide us to listen to the voice of the expert by experience, our citizens and patients, as to the outcomes they want from their health encounters. In essence, we need to pay attention not only to what can work in a research setting, but what does work for ordinary people in the real world they live in.

Our ARC KSS program aligns well with this agenda. We have programmes for younger people's mental health and older people's dementia. We have social care research and a growing digital program. We cover public health, economics, primary and community health and most importantly, co-production. Our experts by experience are front and central to the research we do, and the research we do is applied and practical.

Most importantly, our programme is connected and growing rapidly as we pass the fourth anniversary. I look forward to SPFT continuing to host a highly successful ARC KSS and become an even more active partner in research and development in the South East.

It just remains for me to thank all of you for creating this success for the people of Kent Surrey and Sussex and I wish us all well for the year ahead.

Dr Peter Aitken MB ChB MRCGP DCH DRCOG FRCPSYCH FHEA

Chief Medical Officer, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Funding our research

Throughout 2022-2023, we were able to directly fund additional projects, due to successful grant applications and co-funding from our member organisations.

We continued to see an increase in National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) funding and grant income in 2022-2023.

More than 165

projects funded or supported, since 2019, across the region

Through collaboration with Health Innovation Kent Surrey Sussex (Health Innovation KSS) - formerly called Kent Surrey Sussex Academic Health Science Network, universities, local authorities and health providers, £5 million in external funding was secured including: awards to develop an NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaboration in Medway and a Secure Data Environment for Kent, Medway and Sussex.

And, as part of the **National Institute for Health and Care Research's** (NIHR) new £11.8 million funding, to strengthen capacity and capability in applied dementia research across the NIHR ARCs, we were able to fund **new research studies**.

This year, we secured more than £1 million in co-funding from our region's universities, health, care and voluntary sector providers to support Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex (ARC KSS) partnerships and projects. In particular, this helped to support research that is relevant, implementable and has impact on the needs of the wider system.

Over £1 million

in co-funding in 2022-2023

Co-funded PhDs enabled projects to begin in the under-researched area of children's social care and research in a place-based coastal town.

Other early career, co-funded-opportunities enabled social care and health clinicians including: nurses, a medic, several allied health professionals and a qualified social worker to begin their projects.

Providing creative solutions for health and care services

Six **Priorities for Care** and six **Towards Changing Practice** projects have been funded to address clear priorities for the region's Integrated Care Services. They involve a range of partners from across health and care settings and include academia in the region, as well as members of the public and our communities.

Project: Co-designing inclusive residential care for LGBTQ+ elders

At least 1.5 million people in the UK identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and other sexuality and gender identities) and approximately 300,000 are over the age of 50.

Research shows how some people often have a greater need to access social care, as they are more likely to live alone and rely more on heavily on social services. Yet many people experience discrimination when they use these services, including residential care homes. At the same time, care staff feel they lack the knowledge and skills to provide adequate LGBTQ+ inclusive care.

We funded the, **Creating Inclusive Residential Care of LGBTQ+ Elders (CIRCLE) research project**, led by researchers from the Centre for Health Services Studies at the University of Kent, to look at how residential care providers can be supported to make their care services more LGBTQ+ inclusive.

The project pilots the implementation of the UK-accredited **Pride in Care programme** in five care homes in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex - a programme designed by **Opening Doors**.

The programme offers policy reviews, a staff survey, internal training and ongoing consultancy advice. Organisations that successfully complete the programme receive a registered Pride in Care accreditation. This is the first time the programme will be used in residential care homes, and the project will evaluate what factors either help or hinder implementing and using the programme in practice.

The CIRCLE project is also supporting care providers to be more LGBTQ+ inclusive, by setting up an online community of practice to share knowledge, experience and best practice around this important issue.

Project: Supporting charities and not-for-profit organisations to demonstrate and measure impact

A new, free, easy-to-use, interactive, online resource, has been specifically developed by a team of researchers from across Kent, Surrey and Sussex, to help voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations demonstrate the impact they and their volunteers make.

The toolkit helps organisations collect and record data and information, allowing them to measure outcomes and demonstrate impact, while at the same time offering guidance on the many ways that information can be collected and presented.

CAVEAT
community and voluntary organisation evaluation toolkit

The toolkit is primarily intended for use by organisations that work with older people, however, much of the content will be useful to any VCSE organisation providing services to other groups. It was co-developed by researchers from the Universities of Kent and Surrey and Brighton and Sussex Medical School, with support from voluntary organisations, service commissioners and members of the public from across the region.

The resource was developed following the findings from an earlier study undertaken in the early stages of the pandemic - the **COL-VOL** research project. This study looked at community-based volunteering in response to COVID-19. The findings revealed how many VCSE organisations played an important role in supporting the health and wellbeing of older people self-isolating through the services they provided, such as online social activities or befriending. However, many expressed concerns over the future sustainability and the lack of knowledge, time and resource needed to demonstrate the impact of their work.

"Voluntary organisations are so important, and yet, many are concerned with sustainability and the on-going challenges of securing long-term funding. So, in response, we developed this toolkit, that we hope will support them in the valuable work that they do."

Dr Julie MacInnes, Senior Research Fellow at University of Kent and Principal Investigator for the CAVEAT study.

FIND OUT MORE

Project: Reducing hospital stays and improving patient care

During the first wave of COVID-19, the government provided emergency funding to support a new Discharge to Assess Pathway to reduce hospital stay, provide rehabilitation and improve the assessment of a person's long-term care needs.

As part of the **NHS Insights Prioritisation Programme (NIPP)**, funded by NHS England, we, together with the Health Innovation Kent Surrey Sussex (Health Innovation KSS) - formerly called Kent Surrey Sussex Academic Health Science Network - and Unity Insights, undertook an evaluation to help us understand the processes and barriers across social care, primary and community health services and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, as well as service users and their carers.

It follows discussions with directors from three Integrated Care Systems across Kent, Surrey and Sussex, that revealed how discharge from acute hospitals was a key area of concern.

Commissioners, social care staff, staff from primary and community health services and colleagues across the voluntary community sector were then interviewed. And, literature from Healthwatch organisations and Carer's UK was analysed to understand the service user and carer's experience of discharge.

This led to the development of a new service improvement toolkit to help NHS commissioners, Integrated Care Boards and health and care providers improve their discharge to assess pathways, help reduce hospital stays, provide rehabilitation and improvement the assessment of patient's long-term care needs.
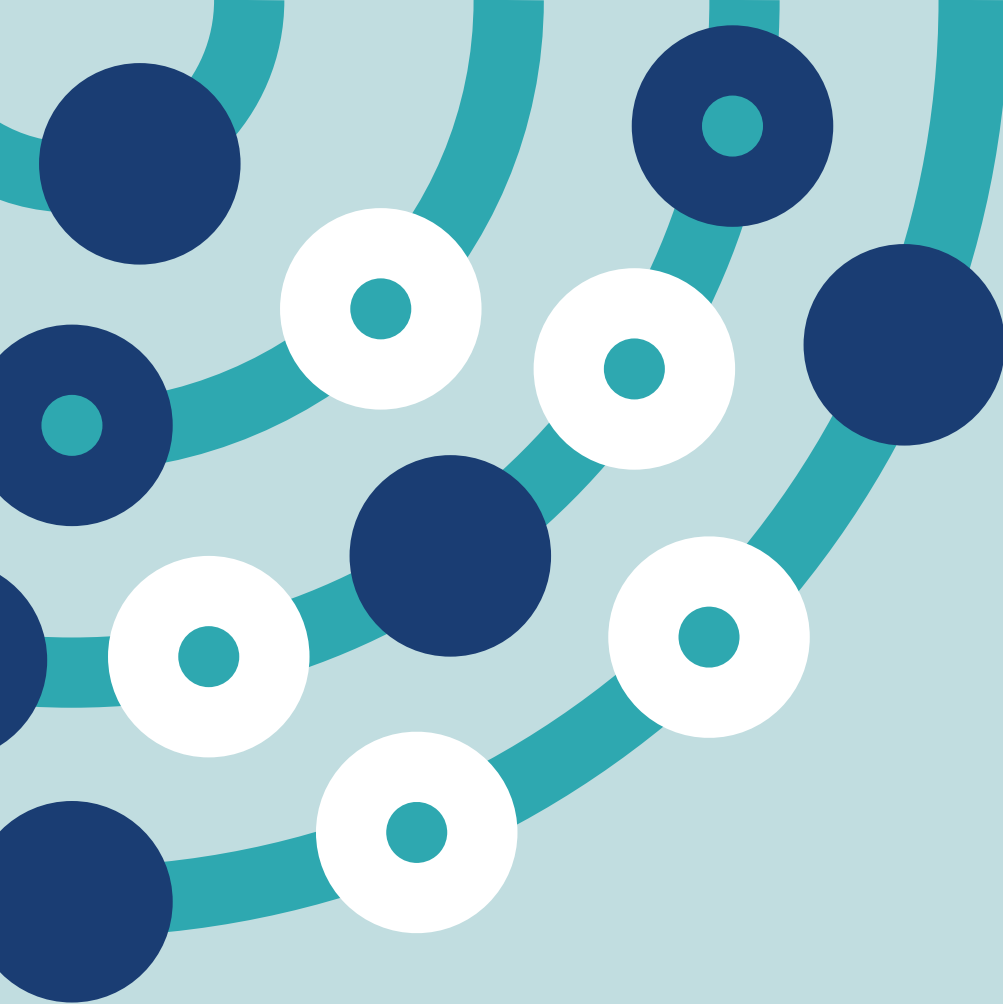

> *"Central to our evaluation, we recruited a patient advisory panel to provide support for the co-production throughout the evaluation and to make sure that the service user and carer voice was heard and understood."*
>
> **Stuart Jeffery, Senior Research Fellow ARC KSS and University of Kent**

FIND OUT MORE   WATCH VIDEO

Investing in our region's researchers

The Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex (ARC KSS) Academy continues to work with other organisations, including local authorities, to maximise opportunities for individuals including the social care workforce to develop their research career through fellowships, supporting researchers to apply for NIHR opportunities, through funded PhD scholarships and learning and development opportunities.

New funding to help next generation of dementia researchers

New funding from the **National Institute for Heath and Care Research (NIHR)**, in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Society, to support early career researchers to pursue dementia research and build up their skills, has given us the opportunity to support four postdoctoral positions including two clinical academic posts focusing on under-researched areas of wellbeing in dementia and dementia care pathways.

"Health and care services in our region face the challenge of an ageing population and increasing demand to support people who live well with dementia, particularly in East Sussex and Kent, where there is a high number of people living with dementia but relatively very little research."

Professor Naji Tabet, ARC KSS Living Well with Dementia Theme Lead

Supporting local services to undertake research

"As one of the largest voluntary sector mental health providers in Sussex, we are committed to working in partnership with children and young people in the design of services, and this is a fantastic opportunity to meaningfully engage young people in an issue that they tell us is really important to them."

Shaun Polley, Head of Therapeutic Services YMCA DownsLink Group

Embedded researchers in practice

Four health and care practitioners, developing research careers, who work with children and young people's service in the region, including: autistic children, care leavers, children who are delayed in their readiness to write or with complex communication needs, were funded to undertake a research project within their own organisation.

Youth Research Partnerships

Five new research projects that provide support for young people to engage, get involved with, co-produce and co-design health and care research, in relation to children and young people's mental health, were funded to help improve the way mental health services are delivered and run.

Our PhD Students

37 PhD Students, across seven Higher Education Institutes and health and care providers, work across all our themes.

Gillian Eaglestone

Gillian, is a student at the University of Greenwich. **In her interview**, Gillian outlines the journey that led her to her current research project that looks at the cost effectiveness of non-pharmaceutical community interventions for people living with dementia.

Rachel Lawrence

Rachel is a student at the University of Surrey. **In her blog**, Rachel talks about the importance of involving collaborators and providers in research, particularly within the health and social care sector.

Brontë McDonald

Brontë is a teacher, student at the University of Sussex. **Her study** aims to develop a psychological intervention for primary school attendance problems, aimed specifically for families affected by 'emotionally based school avoidance'.

Patrick Nyikavaranda

Patrick is a student at Brighton and Sussex Medical School. **His study** investigated the impact of ethnicity and clinical care on involuntary admission under the Mental Health Act, that explored the mediation effects of clinical care prior to the first admission.

Early and Mid-Career Researchers

We have 66 members in our early career research group.

Last September, early career and mid-career researchers from NIHR Applied Research Collaborations Kent, Surrey, Sussex and North Thames came together for the first, cross-ARC, researcher's networking event.

Individual Development Awards

We support individuals who are at the early stage of their research journey, in particular, those who struggle to find the time to develop their ideas because of time constraints, by offering them a bespoke programme of support and a mentor.

20
Springboard Awards supported by ARC KSS and Health Education England

The Springboard Individual Development Awards (IDAs) provide applicants with the financial support to build their research skills and take their ideas and projects forward.
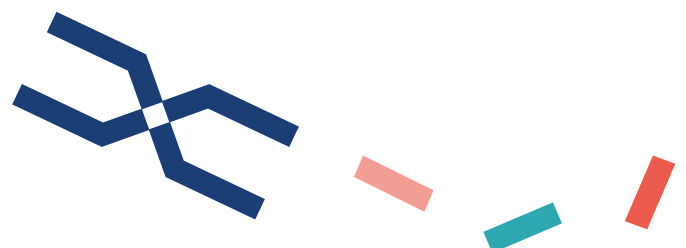
During 2022-23, seven individuals, employed by health and care organisations in the region, received a **Springboard IDA** to help build their research skills in children and young people's mental health.

The Future Leaders Individual Development Awards (IDAs) are projects funded for one year, that are closely aligned to one of more of our **research themes.**

21
Future Leaders funded

To date, we have funded 21 individuals, from our **member organisations,** to develop their research leadership skills by conducting a small scale applied health or social care research project.

Project: Peer Emotional Labour

DOWNLOAD SUMMARY

Peer Emotional Labour (PEL) provides evidence that peer workers may experience a greater emotional impact from their job, due to 'the emotional work of using and embodying lived experience, and from aspects of the work environment.

Dr Sam Robertson, Involvement Lead, Lead AIR (Approaches to Involvement and Recovery) Research Theme and Peer Research Fellow, at Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, was awarded an IDA Future Leader Award in April 2022, to undertake a PEL study to explore the experiences of the different groups of peer works in SPFT, with a particular focus on emotional labour and the aim of developing a Good Practice Guide for Peer Working.

Project: Supported Loving

WATCH VIDEO

Dr Claire Bates, Supported Loving Leader at Choice Support, received an IDA Future Leader Award to support her research project that involves working with autistic people who use social care, to find out what support they would like with sexuality and relationships, as well as design of staff training.

Claire has since secured further funding to disseminate her findings and develop national collaborations across England.

Future Leader Projects

Tangiball: Toy finds motor issues in young children with autism
Dr Will Farr, Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust

Planning for future care during the COVID-19 pandemic
Dr Jo Bayly, St Barnabas Hospice

Exploring the acceptability and perceived impact of Together Project resources, co-produced to support the delivery of good maternity care for people with learning disabilities

Dr Anna Cox, University of Surrey

The Hospital to Home study: Hospital to Home digitally enabled exercise pathways to improve older adult's post-operative outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic

Luke Hodgson, Worthing Hospital.

Short Placement and Local Authority Awards

The Short Placement Award for Research Collaboration (SPARC) is a scheme offered by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and supported by the Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex (ARC KSS) to support early career researchers.

Daniel Huggins

Daniel, an ARC KSS PhD student, at the University of Kent was awarded a SPARC Award and has been working on a project with ARC North East and North Cumbria that will look at the use of ARC research with NHS commissioning.

"The learning opportunities and potential this award offer will be immensely helpful to both my current and future research."

The Local Authority Short Placement Award for Collaboration (LA SPARC) was launched by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), to help the next generation of researchers to address this generation's public health and social care challenges.

The scheme supports individuals working in local authority settings, and NIHR Academy members, to design and apply for funds to undertake short placements.

Two individuals have been placed with us to work on their research projects: Fay Blyth, Headteacher at the Virtual School for Looked After Children in Waltham Forest, London, for her research project on: What do we know about the impact of The Personal Education plan?

And, Teresa Salami-Oru, Consultant in Public Health, East Sussex County Council, for her research project that will look at this impact of digital creativity on young people's emotional wellbeing.

"I'm delighted to be one of the first recipients of this award. The placement will provide me with the opportunity to be part of a new, active, supportive and vibrant research community, with access to webinars conferences and further research opportunity. This is particularly important to me as I prepare for undertaking a PhD."

Teresa Salami-Oru

Training, Development and Support

Grant-writing and development retreat

Around 40 people from across the region attended our three-day residential.

The aim of the retreat was to give researchers, from across the region, the dedicated time to progress and develop their National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) grant applications - with hands on support and advice from a number of different experts.

READ MORE

Mentoring our researchers

Our **mentorship programme** has been available to all applied researchers within our **member organisations**, since it was launched in 2020.

45
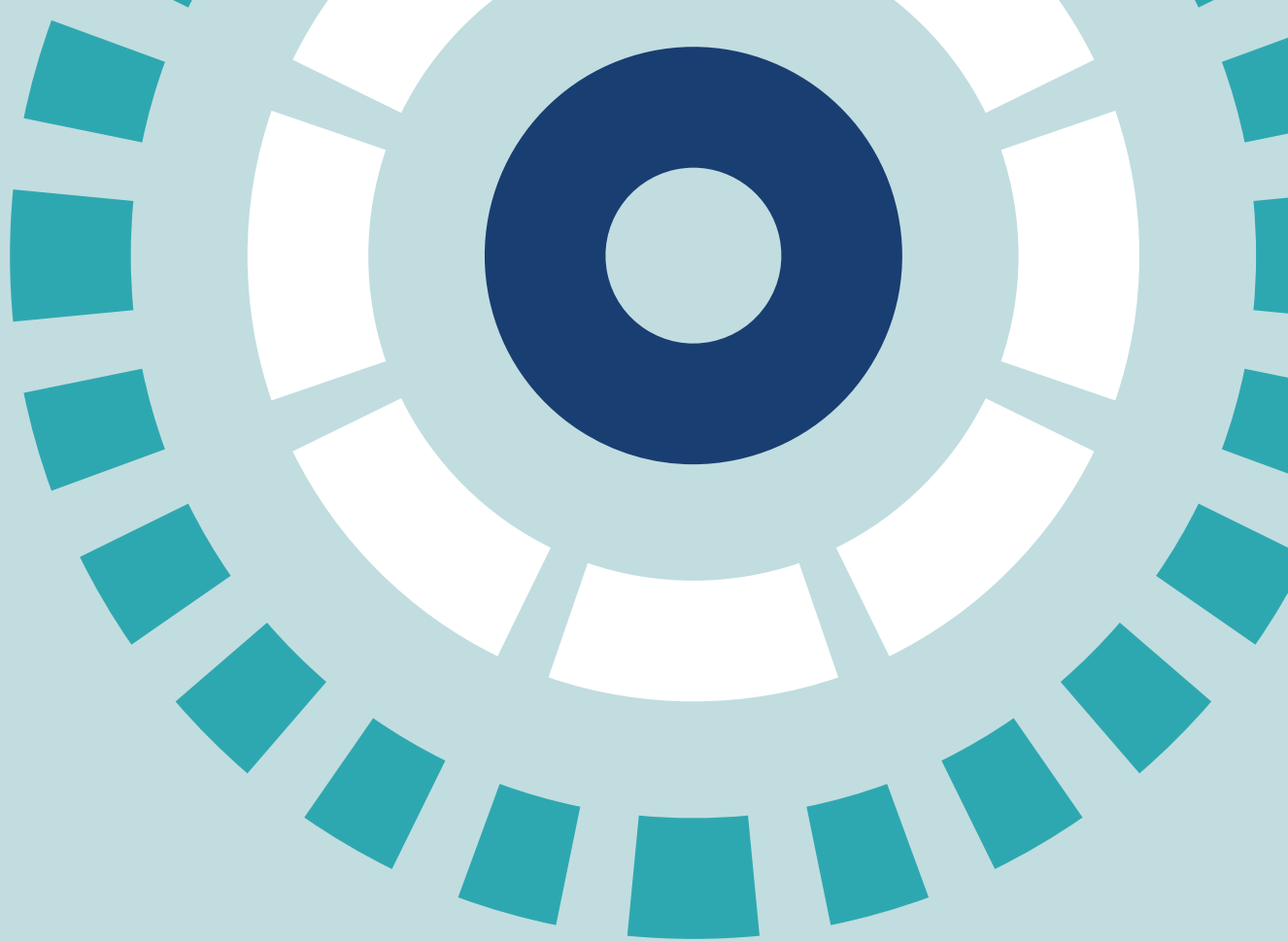### *Mentors have been trained*

The aim of the programme is to provide inclusive opportunities to support the development of academics, health professionals and social care or social work professionals pursuing an applied research career. To date, 45 mentors have been trained and we are currently in the process of evaluating our mentorship scheme.

Equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of research week

Our annual, research week, held to support the learning and development of applied health and social care researchers, from across Kent, Surrey and Sussex, focussed primarily around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and the importance of engaging with the public when carrying out applied research.

With a blend of online sessions and a whole day, in-person symposium hosted at the University of Sussex, the week attracted more than 400 registrations to our events.

READ MORE

Involving members of the public

During the year, we continued to build a community of public members who have expressed an interest in working with us to make research more meaningful to local communities, more representative and bringing a public perspective that is often complementary, but different, to the academic viewpoint.

Involving Members of the Public

Together with the Academy, we have also been working to develop opportunities for developing researchers; scoping the potential for cross-regional, face-to-face training and networking for public members, in collaboration with other NIHR partners; and working with colleagues and public members to review project proposals from funding applications and reporting, right through to final outputs.

As at 31 March 2023 we had:

13
Public theme advisors

22
Public contributors

3
Board advisors

The voice of our public members

This year, we co-produced two videos to promote the role of our public members.

The **first video** is aimed at researchers and themes to encourage them to think about how they could use their public members more frequently in their work.

The **second**, is aimed at members of the public to inspire them to think about getting involved in research.

Both videos were the brainchild of one our public members who suggested collecting the experiences and motivations of being involved in research, in their own words, to help promote public involvement. Feedback, so far, has been positive from those involved in the creation and those viewing them.

In conversation: Experiences of equality, diversity and inclusion

The Public and Community Involvement and Engagement (PCIE) team, delivered an 'in conversation' session, with a panel of clinicians, researchers and public members to talk about their experiences of the barriers and facilitators to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in public involvement and engagement in research.

WATCH VIDEO

Public Involvement Network

The Public Involvement Network's role is to provide a public perspective, to reflect and give critical feedback on Public and Community Involvement and Engagement (PCIE) practice.

Meetings are held quarterly and chaired by public members, at various times of the day, to allow for inclusivity. During the meetings information is shared, challenges raised and problems solved. The PIN reports findings to the executive committee.

ARC KSS public members at their away day

READ HER STORY

Public members act as 'critical friends'

Jo Bayly, lead researcher in a study that explored the implementation of an advance care planning intervention, to help patients on the end of life pathways to plan for their care with their health and social care practitioners, explains how public members bring expertise to research.

"Our public members support with everything. They added new questions that I hadn't thought to address, to elicit information on issues that they thought were important to the topic."

Jo Bayly

Our public members

Jayne Simpson

As a mum of a young autistic daughter, with lots of experience of using health and social care services, Jayne decided to apply to become a public contributor, and use her experience to work with the ARC research community.

Read Jayne's account of her experience of taking part in the children and young people's mental health community of research practice.

"It felt good to know that my family's experiences and those of others like us could help to inform future research within our area and lead to better lives for all of us."
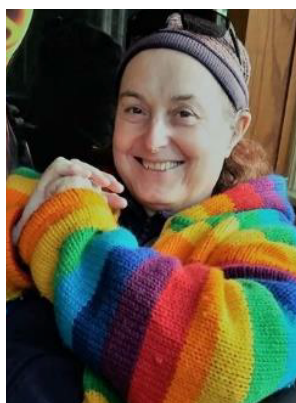
Sarah Giles

Having been a carer to her mother with vascular dementia and undertaking a BSc in Computing, Technology and Design, Sarah decided to use her experience to help those living with dementia.

Read Sarah's story about why and how she became a digital innovation theme public advisor for the ARC KSS.

"Every person with dementia should have the opportunity to benefit from technology that is appropriate for their needs."

Eleanor Levy

Public Advisor to the ARC KSS Board, Eleanor offers her personal, professional and lived experience from a public perspective to many areas of our work.

Read Eleanor's story about what she gained from her involvement in the Organisation for Research Capacity (ORCA) group.

" Working with the ARC KSS adds purpose and meaning to the other work I do nationally and regionally, as well as the country where I live."

Co-production

Our co-production team continues to develop an evolutionary co-production research programme that helps support our core themes to bring about positive changes for our local health services.

A new guide, looking at evidence for co-production processes and how co-production enhances research and other outcomes, has been published.

Assessing processes and outcomes of co-production research, presents a selection of reviews all assessing processes and outcomes of co-produced health and social care research, from the last five years. It contains clear messages about the facilitators and barriers to involvement, co-design and co-production, which are helpful for any researchers in co-production.

DOWNLOAD GUIDE

A public member's perspective of co-production

Hasu Ramji

Hasu Ramji, is an ARC KSS Theme Public Advisor for Primary and Community Health Services. In this blog, Hasu shares his experience of a Primary and Community health Services Priority Setting exercise that he took part in.

READ BLOG

Beginning the journey of co-production

Lisa Richardson, Research Associate, Co-production at ARC KSS, gives some tips on how to begin and plan your journey in co-production.

> *"We must shift from our usual ways of doing things and take on a different way of being and doing, one that requires curiosity and a 'not knowing stance'."*

Lisa Richardson

Resource: A virtuous cycle of co-production: Reflections from a community priority-setting exercise.

READ BLOG

Research, implementation and impact

As set out by the **National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)**, we have a responsibility to make sure that we are making the best use of our funding and have a duty to demonstrate progress in the difference we are making to the wider society.

Research, implementation and impact

In the past, the assessment of research impact has all too often focused on academic outputs, such as number of publications written, or conferenced presented at. However, impact is now measured by indicators of change outside universities and research institutions, in the real world.

The implementation team at the NIHR ARC KSS and the Health Innovation Kent Surrey Sussex (Health Innovation KSS) - formerly called Kent Surrey Sussex Academic Health Science Network, have been working together with our researchers and their projects to help deliver research impact that goes far beyond its contribution to academic research.

"One of our core aims is to deliver 'real world' impact that will make a meaningful difference to people's lives through the research we fund and support."

**Dr Rowena Merritt
ARC KSS Impact Lead and Research Fellow at University of Kent**

READ OUR CASE STUDIES

Prioritising implementation and monitoring impact

Top tips for implementation and impact in health and social care research
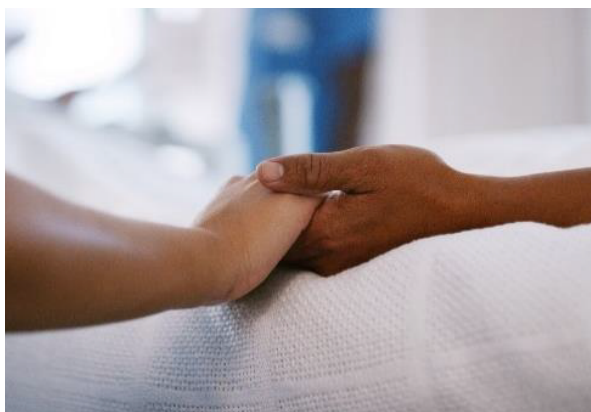
Katherine Sykes
Implementation Manager, Living well with Dementia
Research week 2022

DOWNLOAD VIDEO

In 2022-2023, we set up the ARC KSS implementation panel to help prioritise implementation of research evidence and monitor impact.

The panel meets quarterly with representation for health and social care providers, commissioners, local authorities and Integrated Care Systems.

Case Study: Improving end of life care through hospice to home services

The Hospice at Home (HAH) service provides support to patients, across the UK, who wish to die at home. A national evaluation of this service recommended creating an implementation toolkit to guide HAH services to address the variation and poor practice experienced in some areas.

We funded a research project that involved the co-production and implementation of an interactive toolkit to help providers optimise services in areas such as sustainability, support directed at family carers, integration and coordination and marketing of the service.

Following significant level of engagement and responses from healthcare professionals, family members and others, including voluntary sector and faith representatives, we developed the Hospice at Home toolkit.

Currently available for pilot testing, the toolkit offers HAH services the opportunity to map their strengths and areas that they can improve. It covers topics such as: how the service works with volunteers, healthcare professionals inside and outside the team and their families and includes best practice guides, videos, podcasts, and top tips to help services optimise what they offer to both patients and their family members and carers.

"The toolkit is a user-focused approach, enabling the various parties in any hospice at home service to make best use of the research findings. It gives opportunities to identify improvements and influence other stakeholders."

Graham, lay co-applicant

Our next steps are to recruit providers who can pilot the toolkit and work with them to assess and develop their services.

FIND OUT MORE

Case Study: Virtual memory assessment (one year on)

Memory Assessment Services (MAS) that assess and diagnose people with dementia were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This left many people waiting for assessments and unable to access the support they needed.

As the pandemic continued, some services adopted a virtual MAS service to enable people to get assessed and receive the support they needed. However, there was little or no evidence to support these new pathways.

We funded a research study, in collaboration with the Health Innovation Kent Surrey Sussex (Health Innovation KSS) - formerly called Kent Surrey Sussex Academic Health Science Network, to understand the satisfaction of people accessing and delivering the MAS services.

Overall, the study found that people accessing or delivering the service were satisfied. To support these services, we developed a virtual memory assessment toolkit, with additional funding from the Sussex Higher Education Innovation Fund.

Co-designed and co-produced by clinicians, researchers and people with lived experience of dementia, including carers, the **virtual memory assessment toolkit** is aimed at clinicians who assess and diagnose dementia.

It was developed by researchers at Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Brighton and Sussex Medical School. The resources include: a toolkit, a patient video and an information leaflet that set out a series of recommendations to enhance virtual memory assessment pathways, rather than recommend a particular pathway.

Those who fed back about the toolkit said, 'it helped embed choice and flexibility into new and existing memory assessment pathways, helped build confidence and support conversations about virtual services wit all stakeholders, including clinicians.'

FIND OUT MORE

Case Study: Connecting children and young people digitally to improve mental wellbeing

Children and young people's (CYP) mental health (MH) services moved online during the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects of this was that young people struggled to find the information they needed and practitioners were concerned about safe, online provision of services.

Together with Health Innovation Kent Surrey Sussex (Health Innovation KSS) - formerly called Kent Surrey Sussex Academic Health Science Network and YMCA DownsLink Group, we worked to develop the **e-wellbeing website**, a resource, to help children, their families and those working with them, to navigate mental wellbeing services across Sussex, by providing podcasts, directory of services, tools, information and advice.

The most popular pages were information and advice on low mood and anxiety, and almost all (96%) said that the e-wellbeing platform helped than with their problems.

A review of CYP's digital services across Sussex, carried out in partnership with Health Innovation KSS and YMCA DownsLink Group showed how 85% of children and young people found online mental health support useful and more than two-thirds (66%) said they had accessed online support for the first time during the pandemic.

Some of the 'digital ambitions' the children and young people told us were needed include: to embed creativity, prioritise diversity and inclusion within digital solutions, and simplify online referral processes.

96% of people
that used e-wellbeing said it helped them deal with their problems.

The Sussex Children and Young People's Mental Health Digital Review Report, and a summary version, have been shared across Sussex health and care system and internationally through European Mental Health Conference. The CYP's digital 'ambitions' are now fully embedded within the Sussex CYP's mental health plans and strategies. The e-welling platform has now been extended to support over 18-year-olds and became a Finalist in the 2020 'Children and Young People Now' national awards.

The project also received funding from Health Education England (HEE) to co-produce, with YMCA Downslink and the youth e-ambassadors, a training programme and toolkit for the workforce on how to connect with young people digitally to improve their mental health. The first phase of the training has been rolled out to over 200 members of the workforce.

READ MORE

Case Study: Growing Health Together

The **Fuller Stock Take (2022)**, highlighted the need to reform and integrate primary care, to improve outcomes for both our communities, and for those delivering health and social care.

The report called for locally led, nationally enabled change, and a recognition that one size does not fit all.

Our own **Priority-Setting Exercise**, which involved public advisors as collaborators, asked local communities what their needs were in terms of areas of focus, research and service development.

Primary Care Network (PCN), **Growing Health Together** (GHT), that extends across five PCNs in Surrey, gives clinicians protected time to work with local citizens to create evidence-based solutions for their own communities, promoting health and wellbeing and meeting specific local needs. Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS) invited GHT to assist groups of PCNs, to collaborate with community members and local organisations to improve health and prevent disease across East Surrey.

We then supported the project to secure evaluation funding, considering the implementation and target audience from the outset - with support from our partners at Health Innovation Kent Surrey Sussex (Health Innovation KSS) - formerly called Kent Surrey Sussex Academic Health Science Network.

The African Community in Surrey & Sussex participating in an intergenerational group event, supported by GHT.

Together, we established a wrap-around project team, including: academics; NHS colleagues; local authorities; the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector; and public health and service users.

The project team are currently 'mapping' the GHT ecosystem to better understand who it involves, their individual organisational involvement and the relationships between them. It aims to capture what works well, for who, in what context and why?

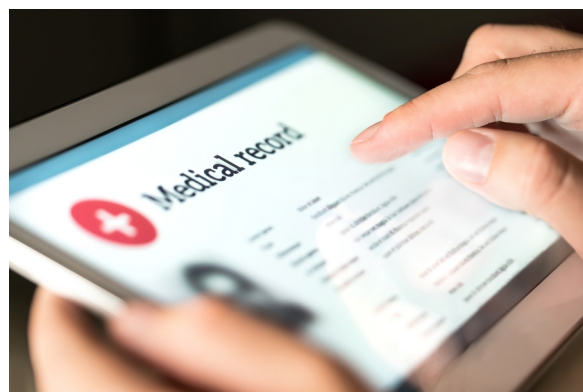Once completed, we will look to pilot the learning framework in other PCNS across and beyond.

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Case Study: Unlocking Health Data

The Unlocking Data project aims to inform public health policy and practice in Kent, Surrey and Sussex by exploring the barriers and creating solutions for public health intelligence using data integrated sets.

Researchers from across Kent, Surrey and Sussex (KSS), led by Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS), asked citizens their views on: how they would like these datasets of their health records to be protected; what sort of projects they hoped they would be used for, and how they would like to be involved in ongoing decision-making.

The project team, funded by the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR), and supported by the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex (ARC KSS), through the use of focus groups, were able to find out what people thought about the use of health and other data to improve service, how to be clear and trustworthy about data use and how to suggest ways the public can be included in decision-making around using data.

"I'm very, very comfortable about my health data being shared. The connection between health, social education, work, these all impact and impinge on a person's wellbeing. And, this is why it's so brilliant that unlocking the data and to try and link with other services, it's just massively important."

Focus group participant

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READ CASE STUDY

In this short video, researchers and participants in the project discuss their view about sharing health data and what this means to them.

Public members not only took part in this project, but they also had a very active role in shaping its design and the rollout.

Championing social care research

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex (ARC KSS) leads the **National Priority Programme for Adult Social Care and Social Work**, a collaboration between **nine ARC partners**, to support and stimulate the implementation of evaluated service change.

Last year's **prioritisation exercise**, helped us identify five projects, plus a national evaluation of public involvement, and commissioned over two years.

Project: Digital Technologies to support social wellbeing

The Digital Technologies to support social wellbeing project, has produced its first briefing summary, based on the research that explores how digital technologies, in adult social care and social work, support the wellbeing for older community-dwelling adults.

The summary sets out the findings from interviews with professionals who work in policy with local authorities and community-based organisations who support older adults or as technology developers focussed on social wellbeing and older adult care.

It identifies key themes from the data and sets out its recommendations, including: tighter digital guidance and regulation; more robust evaluation and better sharing of information; further consideration to digital inclusion/exclusion; and the need for more co-production of digital technologies with older adults.

DOWNLOAD SUMMARY

Social care at the top of the national agenda

With the support from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) School for Social Care Research, we brought around 60 researchers and leads in social care research from across the country, together, including all 15 ARCs, to listen to national leaders and discuss how we can support social care research more in future.

A summary of the event has been published and will continue to be developed to make sure that the areas identified will enable robust and necessary research over the coming years.

It is anticipated that this work will not only help ARCs to develop their social care plans - by engaging with the care sector, including care providers and care staff, as well as with people with lived experience - but it will also help shape future funding proposals.

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