

TITLE OF REPORT: **Health Determinates Research Collaboration (HDRC)**

REPORT OF: **Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing**

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks the support of Cabinet on the Council submitting a final stage application for the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Health Determinates Research Collaboration (HDRC) initiative to bid for up to £5 million over 5 years.

Background

2. National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is seeking to award up to £5 million, per local authority, totalling 5 awards nationally to enable innovative research collaborations between local government and academic sector that focus on reducing inequality and improving the wider determinants, or drivers, of health.
3. The health of the public is fundamentally influenced by the wider determinants, or drivers, of health.
4. The work of local government profoundly impacts on these drivers, but there is a paucity of evidence available, to support policy and practice. It is vital that local government is better supported to become more research-active and further build this evidence base and act as an enabler towards the Council's long term aims associated with Thrive and the operationalisation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
5. Research activity demands infrastructure within and owned by local government, mirroring the culture of research that has taken many years to develop in the NHS.
6. This funding will enable the Council to develop a research infrastructure and culture, which will drive high quality evidence based decision making, in turn significantly improving long-term inequality and health outcomes for our residents.
7. First stage applications were invited by NIHR in September 2021 for submission in November 2021.
8. A project group was established September 2021, to assess viability and consult both internally and externally with partner organisations. The outcome was significant support for 1st round bid and establishing the Council's academic partner as being Newcastle University.

9. Following the successful 1st stage bid, the Council has been invited to submit a final stage bid by end of April 2022.
10. If successful it is expected funds will be made available in October 2022 to initiate and operationalise HDRC within the Council.

Proposal

11. What will HDRC do?

- (i) Focus on wider drivers of population health and health inequalities, explicitly addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups and areas within the relevant geography.
- (ii) Foster a culture of research and development
- (iii) Build local authority research capacity and resource
- (iv) Enable and facilitate local authority research activity, partnerships, and collaborations
- (v) Lead a systematic and structured approach to research and evidence use throughout the Council
- (vi) Enable effective and timely dissemination of research evidence
- (vii) All with appropriate governance via CMT, HWBB, NIHR and ethics committee

12. What will HDRC funding cover?

- (i) Funding for the Council would be at 100% Full Economic Costings and include reasonable overheads
- (ii) ALL Core staff costs (e.g., Director, HDRC manager, R&D practitioner posts, IT support, administrators etc
- (iii) Training and development.
- (iv) Materials and consumables for core HDRC facilities.
- (v) Communication and dissemination activity costs.
- (vi) This funding cannot be used to fund interventions/ initiatives or council services.
- (vii) Activity for applying for research costs from funders.

13. What will HDRC look like?

- (i) Directed by Alice Wiseman DPH, with operational lead by HDRC manager (senior council officer)

- (ii) Team of officers trained in research; each being aligned to specific directorates key priorities (similar to business partners), with a remit to lead of evidence cocreation & collaboration as part of HDRC on behalf of the directorate.
- (iii) Research activity supported by Data Scientist, Finance officer, Communication and knowledge dissemination officer and Administration officer
- (iv) Drawing support from our academic partner (Newcastle University) and other academic organisations e.g., The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health (FUSE), Clinical research network (CRN), The National Health Service (NHS)
- (v) With strong and very visible links with community and third sector organisations e.g., Edberts House and Connected Voices
- (vi) Gateshead Council HDRC will become a centre of excellence locally, regionally, and nationally driving change, tackling health inequalities and addressing the wider determinates of health and their drivers.

Recommendations

14. It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Council and Newcastle University final stage bid for up to £5 million, to host the HDRC over 5 years.

For the following reason

A successful bid will enable Gateshead Council to become a centre of excellence in research locally, regionally, and nationally. Enabling a long lasting culture of high quality evidence based decision making cocreated with the communities and people that have the greatest need. All for the purpose of tackling inequality and addressing the wider determinates of health in order to significantly improve health outcomes for all our residents.

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APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. As outlined in the Council Strategic Approach, Thrive, we want to help our communities not just survive, but to flourish, prosper and succeed. We have committed to five pledges to help and guide us when we make decisions. These are:
 - Putting people and families at the heart of everything we do.
 - Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance.
 - Support communities to support themselves and to support each other.
 - Invest in our economy to provide opportunities for employment, innovation and growth.
 - Work together to fight for a better future for Gateshead
2. The Health Determinates Research Collaboration, will underpin all areas by developing a body of high quality evidence, co-created with residents and partner organisations. For the purpose of embedding a culture of evidence based decision making at all levels of the Council driving effective policy and practice to address inequality and the wider determinates of health

Background

3. UK public health research is undergoing substantial evolution following the publication of the Academy of Medical Sciences report 'Health of the Public 2040' and establishment of the Strategic Coordination of Health of the Public Research (SCHOPR) Committee. SCHOPR has recommended future priorities for public health research to the four CMOs in the UK. More recently the new Office for Health Promotion (OPH) was announced, which will lead national efforts to improve and level up the health of the nation by tackling wider preventable risk factors and working across government departmental boundaries.
4. There is a push to build on existing strengths to make the UK a world leader in public health and prevention research. This will centre on co-producing research with the public, policymakers and practitioners to ensure it helps answer the most important research questions facing policymakers and services at local and national levels.
5. Work to understand the research and evidence challenges facing local authorities started before the COVID19 pandemic, with external reports from sources such as NETSA, SOLACE and LACoR. In 2018/19 Professor Chris Whitty visited local authorities within England, to hear, first-hand, about the public health challenges local authorities face and how research can help address them. A round table event with local authority leaders was hosted by Professor Whitty and Dame Professor Anne Johnson at the Kings Fund in 2019.
6. In recognition of the challenges faced by local authorities, the NIHR has begun to widen its initiatives aimed at strengthening the research culture within local government, aiming to build and strengthen capacity and capability both within councils and academic institutions.

7. The fourteen NIHR Local Authority Research Systems projects commissioned in the summer of 2020 are of particular note. These projects were tasked with rapidly reviewing how research systems and structures within local authorities across the UK could be developed and enhanced should they be provided with the tools to do so. This learning helped lead to the development of the Health Determinant Research Collaborations (HDRCs) concept.

Consultation

8. The following People and Groups have been consulted in the preparation of this report:
- Supported and endorsed by Leader and Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities
 - Supported and endorsed by Cllr Caffrey, Chair, Health & Wellbeing Board
 - Supported and endorsed by Edberts House
 - Supported and endorsed by Connected Voices
 - Supported and endorsed by NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC)
 - Supported and endorsed by Gateshead Foundation Trust

Alternative Options

9. There are no alternative's available at the present time

Implications of Recommended Option

10. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that there are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. Should the application be successful HDRC is fully funded by NIHR.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – No Human Resource implications arising from this report.
- c) **Property Implications** - No Property Implications arising from this report.

11. **Risk Management Implication** - No Risk Management implications arising from this report.

12. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - No Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report.

13. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – No crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

14. **Health Implications** - Potential for significant long-term health benefits for Council residents, by addressing inequality and the drivers of wider determinates of health in a robust and scientific manner leading to increased effectiveness of policy and practice.

15. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - No climate emergency or sustainability implications arising from this report.

16. **Human Rights Implications** - No human rights implications arising from this report
17. **Ward Implications** - No ward implications arising from this report

Background Information

18. Full background documents are located on the following link -
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/nihr-health-determinants-research-collaborations-hdrc-specification/28341>