



University  
of Exeter

SPHERE CPD Workshop  
2026

# Housekeeping...

## WiFi

Choose 'University\_WiFi' and 'Login as Guest'

## Photos

Merin will be taking some photos throughout the day, some of which might be used on social media.

Please do let Merin, or one of the other staff, know if you'd prefer not to appear in any of our photos.



- Nurture room located in the Forum building – please ask for the code
- Seating areas: the Hub, the café, outside picnic benches (lots of green space)
- Feel free to move about if you need to during sessions
- There is no requirement to socialize during breaks
- Room 2.1 / 2.2 is a quiet space - please don't use for phone calls!
- Sensory map of the space with these spaces marked is available at the badge desk



## The SPHERE Team (in the red lanyards)

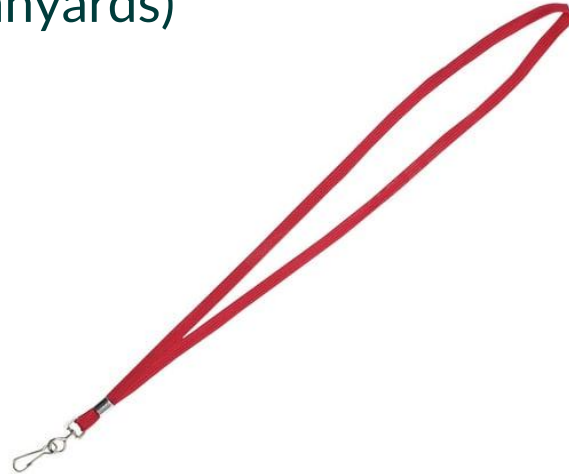
Emma McFadyen

Merin Cox-Davies

Kirsty Tooke

Charlotte Bardell

We're here to help!



# NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

School for Public Health Research (SPHR)

Public Health Review Team

Research Support Service Specialist Centre  
for Public Health SW Satellite

Public Health Intervention Responsive  
Studies Team (PHIRST)

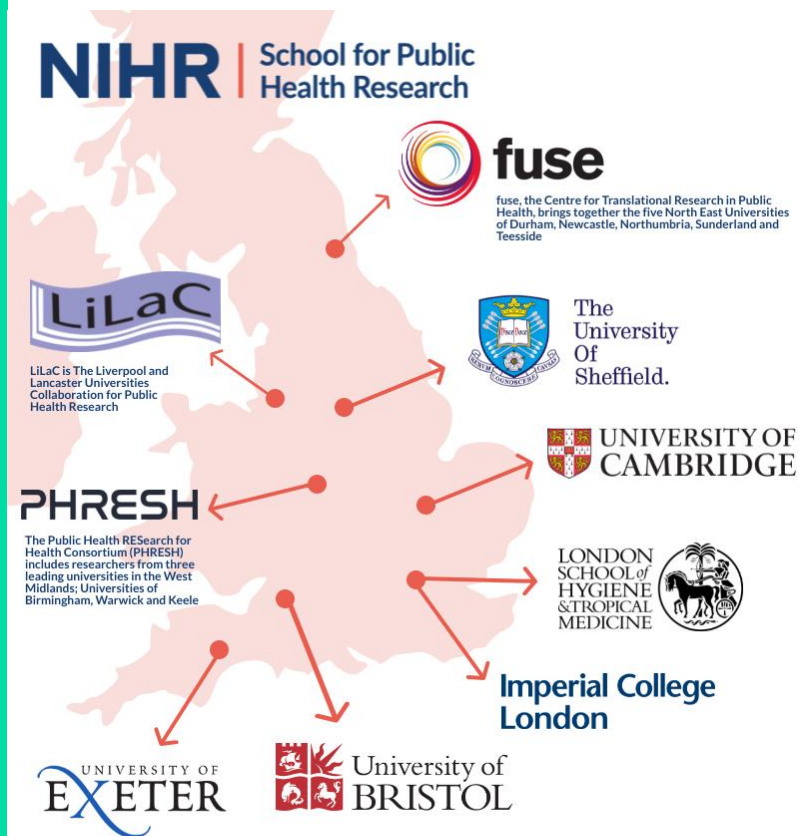


20  
Years

Powering  
life-changing  
research



- University of Exeter joined in 2022; SPHERE (School for Public Health Environments Research at Exeter)
- Public health research – with emphasis on useful evidence on cost-effective interventions
- Research focused on the needs of the public (strong public involvement theme)
- Support local public health practitioners and policy makers to engage with research
- Build research capacity



# Research

Emphasis on useful evidence of cost-effective interventions.  
Focussed on the needs of the public (strong PPIE theme)

4 research main programmes:

- Public mental health
- Children, young people and families
- Healthy places, healthy planet
- Health inequalities

Additional research funds:

- Areas for Research Interest
- Emerging Public Health Priorities
- Voluntary Sector Evaluation Scheme (VoySES)

[Research - NIHR School for Public Health Research](#)



# Capacity Development

Transdisciplinary placements & Fellowships

PhD Studentships

Pre and Post Doctoral Fellowships

Undergraduate summer interns

[Training - NIHR School for Public Health Research](#)

NIHR Research Career Development Funding Programmes

[Research career development funding programmes | NIHR](#)



## NIHR Public Health Review Team



Commissioned to undertake public health evidence reviews



Working with the NIHR Public Health Research Programme to identify gaps in current knowledge



Universities of Exeter, Cardiff and Birmingham

Info on current and past projects:

[NIHR Public Health Review Team | ESMI | University of Exeter](#)



## Research Support Service Specialist Centre for Public Health

Building capability for local authorities to embed research in public health practice through resources and support:

- training and development
- research governance and ethics
- direct funding to local authorities to embed research in everyday practice

Providing expert advice on study design in settings outside the NHS including local authorities, the education and voluntary sectors.



# Five pillars

Local authority support and resources



Fund Public Health Engagement Leads, Local Authority Research Practitioners, Grassroots Awards, Public and community partnership awards to support research in local authorities.

Research design advice



Provide researchers at all career stages with advice on research design and funding applications for public health research outside NHS.

Training and development



Increase capacity and capability to undertake research that can provide evidence on the interventions likely to be effective in improving population health.

Research governance and ethics



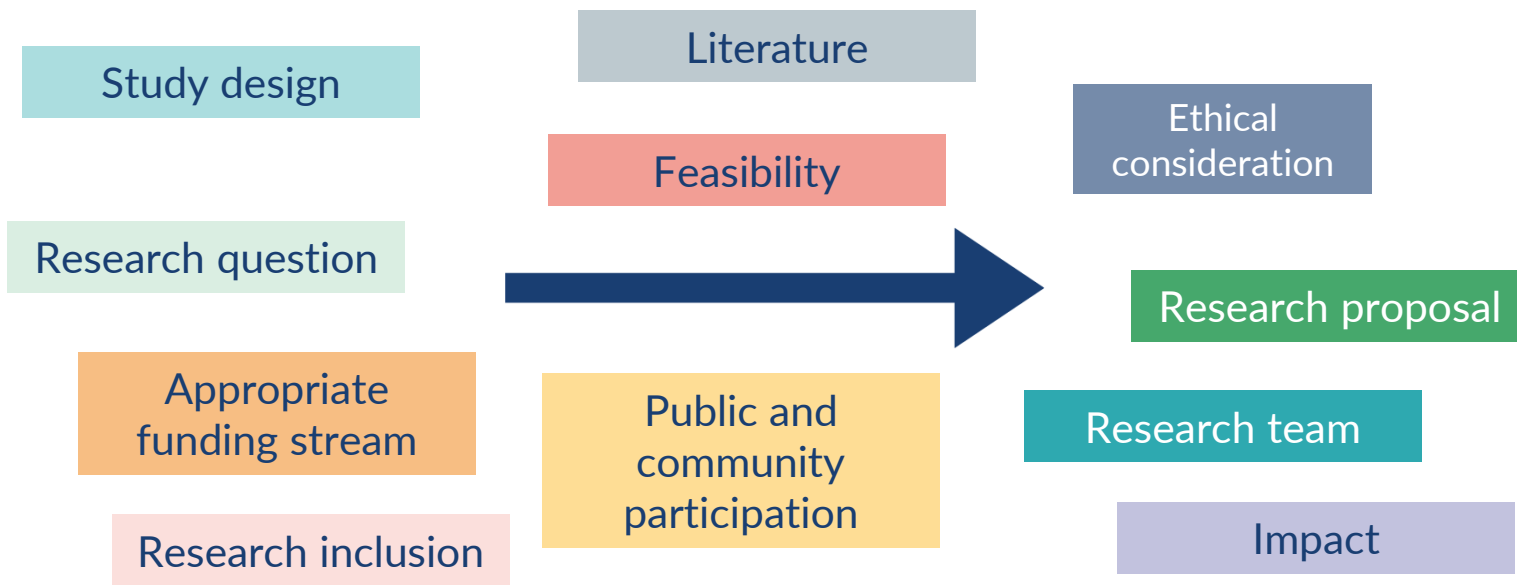
Scope current and emerging systems around ethics and governance. Foster shared learning, develop guidance, templates and a repository of examples of best practice.

Research delivery pilot



Research delivery support for public health research outside the NHS as part of a 2-year pilot.

## Research design advice: areas of support



## Training resources

Available on our [intranet](#);

[explainer animations](#) - what is research and how does it fit into a local authority context

[glossary of research terms](#)

a range of [resources](#) covering public health, the wider determinants of health, public and community engagement, methods, and governance and ethics

[series of training webinars](#)

[learning stories](#) from local authorities

bespoke [public and community involvement and engagement](#) resources



## Public Health Intervention Responsive Studies Team (PHIRST)

- Provide timely and accessible evaluations of public health interventions to local authorities
- Work driven by our local government partners, mainly Directors of Public Health and their teams
- Nine PHIRST teams across the UK. Each PHIRST is funded for five years (10 evaluations)
- [PHIRST EMPOWER](#) (Exeter); unique collaboration between the University of Exeter and the McPin Foundation







## How does it work?

- Local authorities (and their local partners) submit expressions of interest for programmes they want evaluated
- Competitive process – twice a year (usually September and Jan/Feb)
- Each PHIRST team allocated 1-2 projects in each round
- Evaluations generally take around 12 months.
- Budget included for Embedded Researcher(s) to work with us, as well as knowledge transfer activities (local and national)



## Find out more on the NIHR PHIRST website:

-  Browse outputs from previous [evaluations](#)
-  Explore [further details of the programme](#)
-  [Sign up](#) to the NIHR PHIRST newsletter
-  Watch evaluation webinars via the [NIHR PHIRST YouTube channel](#)



## What does all this mean for you?

Information overload!



First point of call: RSS Public Health Specialist Centre (not just for local authorities), including NIHR training opportunities



Help us understand how to best share the right information for you via the poster boards



Here to work with you – joint research projects (Farm Well), evaluations (One Northern Devon), training (Exeter City Community Trust)



09:45-12:00	<b>Concurrent workshop sessions. Workshops will run concurrently – and then be repeated.</b>		
09:45 - 10:45	<b>Workshop 1 – Quantitative Evaluation Methods</b>	Led by Prof. Obi Ukoumunne, Professor of Medical Statistics	The Green Lecture Theatre
	<b>Workshop 2 – Systems Mapping</b>	Led by Daniel Mutanda, Graduate Research Associate	The Collaborative Lecture Theatre
10:45 – 11:00	<b>Coffee break</b>		PCC Hall 2
11:00 – 12:00	<b>Workshop 1 – Quantitative Evaluation Methods</b>	Led by Prof. Obi Ukoumunne, Professor of Medical Statistics	The Green Lecture Theatre
	<b>Workshop 2 – Systems Mapping</b>	Led by Daniel Mutanda, Graduate Research Associate	The Collaborative Lecture Theatre