



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Report: West Midlands research workshop

Birmingham

November 2017

About Public Health England

Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct delivery organisation with operational autonomy. We provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific and delivery expertise and support.

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Introduction and overview

The Research, Translation and Innovation (RTI) division has been working with PHE centres to strengthen links between public health academics and others across the public health system via research workshops to explore public health research needs and priorities in their local areas.

Over the last 18 months, we held 4 such meetings:

- North West Research Workshop – Manchester – 4th October 2016
- East Midlands Research Workshop – Nottingham – 13th March 2017
- East of England Research Workshop – Cambridge – 3rd October 2017
- West Midlands Research Workshop – Birmingham – 14th November 2017

There are 2 more planned for the 17/18 financial year; in the Yorkshire & Humber and South East and discussions are underway with other areas in the hope to cover each of the 9 PHE centres by the end of 18/19 financial year.

These regional workshops have included an overview of research priorities from different stakeholder perspectives; PHE Centre, Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Groups, along with an opportunity for discussions, workshops and a Dragon's Den session with pump priming funds available to enable local research projects to be further developed.

Each of the workshops has been developed with input from a lead in the PHE Centre, the Head of Academic Public Health Support in the RTI division and an academic or other public health professional colleague(s).

In addition, the RTI division has supported the PHE national teams of the Dental and Oral Health team and Chief Nurses Directorate in creating and supporting meaningful academic networks. Further information about these workshops is available on request and this work will continue in future years.

This is the report for the West Midlands Research Workshop; which was developed by Soili Larkin, Consultant in Public Health (Healthcare Public Health and Workforce), PHE West Midlands, Andrea Shilton, Research Delivery Manager, NIHR Clinical Research Network West Midlands, Nathan Smith, NIHR Clinical Research Network West Midlands, Professor Tony Stewart, Clinical Research Specialty Lead for Public Health, NIHR Clinical Research Network West Midlands and Nicola Hodgkiss, Head of Academic Public Health Support, Public Health England.

Attendees

There were 70 attendees, made up of academics and public health practitioners from the West Midlands region along with some voluntary sector and patient representatives. Appendix 1 shows the list of attendees with their employing organisation.

Research needs and priorities in the region

We heard about research needs and priorities for the region from 4 different perspectives:

- Professor Antony Stewart, Clinical Research Specialty Lead for Public Health, NIHR Clinical Research Network, West Midlands
- Professor Rod Thomson, Director of Public Health, Shropshire County Council
- Dr Kiran Patel, Medical Director, West Midlands, NHS England
- Dr Jane Moore, Director of Prevention and Wellbeing, West Midlands Combined Authority.

A table at the end of the document gives a summary of the research needs highlighted.

Themes

Reassuringly and perhaps unsurprisingly there were some common themes in the presentations. These are as follows:

- Better collaborations; making best use of all available resources, including skills and knowledge as well as funding
- Increased community/public engagement
- Translational research to ensure research is relevant and accessible to practitioners.
- Consideration on how fit for purpose current research activity is and how the hierarchy of evidence should be considered.
- Health economics (Return on Investment) was seen a particularly important in order for research to make a difference to the pressures the system is facing
- Better utilisation of existing data
- Utilisation of behavioural science

Presenters and an overview of content

(copies of the slides can be found on phe.gov.uk as an appendix to this document)

Dr Sue Ibbotson, Centre Director for the PHE West Midlands welcomed everyone to the event and introduced the day's vision for bringing people together from across the region to explore the PH landscape in West Midlands and understand more about local research needs.

Dr Felix Greaves, Deputy Director for Science and Strategic Information at PHE gave an overview of PHE and where it sits in the public health landscape as well as providing a high level summary of PHE's Research Strategy: '*Doing, supporting and using public health research: the Public Health England strategy for research, translation and innovation*'. He also introduced the concept of 'ResHubs' which are part of PHE's response to the Health of the Public 2040 report that recommends the development of regional hubs of engagement between practitioners and researchers to integrate health of the public research and health and social care delivery; events such as these research workshops are part of that work.

Dr Andrea Shilton, Research Delivery Manager at NIHR Clinical Research Network West Midlands outlined the work of the Clinical Research Networks (CRN) with a focus on how the CRN West Midlands can support researchers across the region with their research proposals.

Dr Christopher Parker CBE, Managing Director of West Midlands Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) talked about the work of AHSN nationally as a catalyst for bringing together academic and service to adopt innovative practice. He highlighted some areas of work that the West Midlands AHSN is focussing on at present, namely:

- Wellness and prevention
- Long term conditions
- Mental Health
- Genomics and personalised medicine

Professor Kate Jolly, Professor of Public Health and Primary Care, University of Birmingham provided information about the Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care West Midlands (CLAHRC WM). This included background to the CLAHRC WM but also a summary of their current work which covers:

- Maternal and child health
- Youth mental health
- Prevention and detection of diseases

- Chronic diseases

These are then supported by 2 cross cutting themes; Implementation and organisational studies and research methods.

The day also had 2 parallel workshops:

1. Barriers to research and how to overcome these; facilitated by Professor Kate Jolly, Professor Public Health and Primary Care, University of Birmingham and Professor Antony Stewart, Clinical Research Specialty Lead for Public Health, NIHR CRN West Midlands
2. How to translate research into practice and a showcase of local translational public health research; facilitated by Judy Kurth, Centre for Health and Development, Staffordshire University and Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council. Dr Katherine Brown, Reader in eHealth and Wellbeing Interventions, Coventry University and Public Health Warwickshire

The discussions again highlighted the importance of making academic research more accessible for frontline practitioners.

There was also an honorary contract surgery with Nicola Hodgkiss, Head of Academic Public Health Support, Public Health England for anyone with questions relating to honorary contracts with PHE.

Dragon's Den session

As part of the day, we invited researchers to pitch ideas to a panel in a Dragon's Den type exercise. We advertised this opportunity on the event website and asked interested parties to submit an abstract of their proposals. There were three pitches made to the panel:

1. Helen Pitsson, Harper Adams University in collaboration with Jude Bailey at Fit4All Exercise and Sports Therapy: *Chair-based exercise classes: Positive steps towards increased independence in our older generation*
2. Maria Clarke, University of Birmingham in collaboration with Birmingham Community Healthcare Foundation Trust and Women's Aid: *Abused Women: Awareness, Recognitions and Empowerment (AWARE)*
3. Maria Murphy, University of Warwick in partnership with Coventry City Council: *Development of a healthy menu labelling scheme in schools*

The panel was made up of Dr Felix Greaves, Deputy Director for Science and Strategic and Information, Public Health England, Professor Antony Stewart, Clinical Research Specialty Lead for Public Health, NIHR CRN West Midlands, Professor Rod

Thomson, Director of Public Health, Shropshire County Council and Dr Jane Moore, Director of Prevention and Wellbeing, West Midlands Combined Authority.

The £5,000 prize money was awarded to Marie Murphy and the project will provide a progress report in 12 months' time to PHE's pump priming panel.

Next steps and conclusion

It was clear from speakers and comments on the day that there is already a well-developed infrastructure in the region but that better use of those infrastructures could be made to have a bigger impact public health in the region. Questions on the day covered whether some of the approaches to public health more generally are too rigid and/or no longer fit for current purpose and maybe more innovative thinking how we work in this area would be beneficial.

The working group that came together to help set up this workshop will work on an action plan to take some of the emerging themes forward.

Summary of research priorities from different perspectives

Academic	Local Authority	STP	Combined Authority
Recognition of public health research in all funding schemes – many set up for NHS research	More collaborations – making better use of all resources (funding/skills/knowledge) available	Increased collaborations – working together, using all expertise to achieve a single aim	Economic growth that will benefit all parts of the West Midlands
Large population based studies	Relevant research that makes a difference to local government	Translational research	Healthy workforces
Increased awareness of the Clinical Research Network and support that it can offer	Translational research that impacts policy and practice	Better use of data and information to target healthcare interventions – explore use of data by other sectors, can we replicate this in the NHS?	Vibrant communities
	Better access to data	Return on Investment – Making the economic case for research/interventions	Prevention and early intervention
	Increased public involvement	Whole system approaches	Mental Health
			Engaging communities to understand the inequalities
			Evaluation of interventions
			Building collaborations

Appendix 1: Attendees

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Lola Abudu	DD for Health and Wellbeing	PHE West Midlands
Peymane Adab	Professor of Chronic Disease Epidemiology & Public Health	The University of Birmingham
Neeraj Bhala	Consultant	UHB
Amber Bhatti	Senior Researcher	Herefordshire council
Paul Bird	Head of Programmes (engagement)	NIHR CLAHRC West Midlands
Sally Bradshaw	Senior Research Fellow	University of Birmingham
Katie Breheny	Research Associate in Health Economics	University of Birmingham
Anne-Marie Brennan	Head of Programme Delivery (Operations)	University of Warwick
Katherine Brown	Reader in eHealth & Behaviour Change	Coventry University and Public Health Warwickshire
Rishi Caleyachetty	Assistant Professor	University of Warwick
Helen Carter	Deputy Director Healthcare Public Health & Workforce	Public Health England, West Midlands Centre
James Chipwete	Consultant in Communicable Disease Control	Public Health England
Maria Clark	Lecturer	University of Birmingham
Michelle Crosbie	Senior Lecturer	University of Wolverhampton
Robert Davies	Public Health Registrar	PHE West Midlands
Valerie DeSouza	Consultant in Public Health	Sandwell MBC
Gordana Djuric	Consultant in Public Health	warwickshire health communities
Lucy Doos	Research Fellow	University of Birmingham
Fran Fahy	Health Promotion Lead	South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Qulsom Fazil	Lecturer	University of Birmingham
Amit Gaokar	Regional Lead for NHS England (M&E)	Public Health England
Christopher Gidlow	Associate Professor	Staffordshire University
Felix Greaves	Deputy Director	Public Health England
Matthew Greenhill	Research Portfolio	The Royal Wolverhampton

	Manager	NHS Trust
Shamil Haroon	Public health registrar	University of Birmingham
Carl Harris	Director	CHPC
Nicola Hodgkiss	Head of Academic Public Health Support	PHE
Sue Ibbotson	Centre Director - West Midlands	Public Health England, West Midlands
Sally James	Public Health Workforce Specialist	Health Education England West Midlands
Catherine Jolly	Professor of Public Health & Primary Care	University of Birmingham
Geetinder Kaur	Speciality Registrar	PHE
Judith Kurth	Director	Staffordshire University
Soili Larkin	Consultant in Public Health	PHE West Midlands
Margaret Liburd	Advanced Health Improvement Specialist: Research & Development	Wolverhampton City Council
Antje Lindenmeyer	Lecturer	University of Birmingham
Jason Lowther	Assistant Director	Birmingham City Council
Ross Mander	n/a	n/a
Lina Martino	Specialty Registrar in Public Health	Warwickshire County Council
Kanika Marwaha	Band 6 Physiotherapist	City Physio clinics ltd
Rachel Massie	Research Officer	Staffordshire University
Tamara Millard	Regional Lead for Quality	Public Health England
Jane Moore	Director of Prevention and Wellbeing	WMCA
Alice Munro	Registrar	Sandwell Council
Marie Murphy	Research student	University of Warwick
Paulette Myers	Consultant in Public Health	Walsall Council
Oyinlola Oyeboode	Associate Professor in Public Health	University of Warwick
Miranda Pallan	Senior Clinical Lecturer	University of Birmingham
Tanith Palmar	Public Health Specialty Registrar	Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG
Chris Parker	Managing Director	West Midlands Academic Health Science Network
Kiran Patel	Medical Director	NHS England
Helen Pittson	Senior Lecturer	Harper Adams University
Mark Porcheret	Primary Care Clinical	CRN West Midlands

	Research Lead CRN West Midlands	
Chris Ramsden	Consultant Clinical Scientist	Medilink West Midlands
Siobhan Roche	Research Support Facilitator	Clinical Research Network West Midlands
Elaine Russell	Prevention and Self-care Lead	WMAHSN
June Sampson	Snr Lecturer Public Health	Staffordshire University
Andrea Shilton	Research Delivery Manager	NIHR
Janet Simpson	Executive Support Officer	Public Health England
Nathan Smith	Administrator	Clinical Research Network West Midlands
Tony Stewart	Clinical Research Specialty Lead for Public Health	NIHR CRN
Sarah Stewart-Brown	Prof of Public Health	University of Warwick
Dana Sumilo	Senior Public Health Specialist/ Research Fellow	University of Birmingham
Julie Taylor	Professor of Child Protection	University of Birmingham
Beck Taylor	Clinical Research Fellow	University of Birmingham
Rod Thomson	Director of Public Health	Shropshire Council
Kate Thomson	Associate Professor & Director of PG Research	Birmingham City University
Olga Vikhireva	Research Fellow	University of Birmingham; Research Design Service West Midlands
Susan Waigwa	Doctoral researcher	University of Birmingham
Sue Wild	Lead Commissioner Health Improvement	Warwickshire County Council
Carol-Ann Woolley	Clinical Research Project Assistant	NIHR