

Fuse Healthy Ageing Research Programme (HARP) Strategy

Web: www.fuse.ac.uk/research/healthyageing

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Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health, brings together the five North East Universities of Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside in a unique collaboration to share Fuse's mission to transform health and well-being and reduce health inequalities through the conduct of world-class public health research and its translation into value-for-money policy and practice.

In achieving our vision, we focus on three broad aims:

1. To deliver world-class public health research that focuses on generating and translating evidence for cost effective public health policy and practice
2. To build sustainable capacity for translational public health research, both in academia and in policy and practice
3. To build effective and lasting partnerships with policy and practice for collaborative co-production of public health research.

As part of our core mission of translation of research evidence into policy and practice we launched Fuse's responsive research and evaluation facility 'AskFuse' in June 2013. With the support of Fuse researchers, we help our partners to access existing knowledge or to work in collaboration to develop new research evidence that is relevant, timely and tailored to their needs and enabled them to find answers to issues that matter. This innovative model has attracted considerable national interest.

Fuse continues to build international partnerships to share research with leading scientists and organisations across the globe. In April 2011 Fuse was the founder of the first International Knowledge Exchange in Public Health Conference. The 2021 conference is being held in Newcastle in collaboration with Cornell University, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, and Tilburg University. Plans are in place to further develop international secondment opportunities.

Fuse Communications aim to maximise the impact and effectiveness of Fuse work, to raise the profile of Fuse as a Centre for excellence in Research and Knowledge Exchange and to build a unity of purpose within Fuse, and between Fuse and our partners. This is achieved by:

1. Examining and recommending action on all issues relating to internal communications, and communications with our partners and funders
2. Having responsibility for external relations with the public and with practice & policy partners by managing the various media through which we present our message and research findings
3. Developing forms of communication which will share learning and help build research capacity.

Fuse has identified the need to develop its strategy for Public Involvement and Engagement (PIE) in research and to give members of the public an influence in the decision-making processes. Work has started to collate the PIE activity within Fuse, this will help to identify any gaps and achieve a more

cohesive approach, to ensure Fuse is in a strong position when applying for continued membership of the NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR) and future funding opportunities.

Fuse is integral to a number of newly funded public health research infrastructures both regionally and nationally, some with similar research agendas. Fuse will work in synergy with infrastructures such as the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) North East and North Cumbria (NENC) and the NIHR Policy Research Unit (PRU) by organising co-badged research meetings with shared agendas. Collaboration opportunities will also be identified within the Fuse research programmes. Work has started to capture the use of Fuse learning and any reference to the success of the Fuse model.

Our six research programmes make substantive contributions to the realisation of Fuse's mission. They also play an important role in achieving our vision. The programmes of research are complementary and collaborative, and explicitly linked together. Some projects draw on skills and expertise from two or more research programmes. The research strategies for each of the six programmes are set out below. They share common deliverables including:

1. Organising engagement events which are a key activity in delivering the Fuse strategy. In particular, Fuse Quarterly Research Meetings which are a key opportunity for research dissemination, dialogue about the implications for policy and practice, making new and strengthening existing contacts, and building a dialogue around research results and potential future projects. All Fuse meetings are free to attend making them available to all of our members.
2. Ensuring research sections on the Fuse website are kept up to date, providing material for research case studies.
3. Highlighting research which has been initiated through AskFuse and showcasing on the Fuse website.
4. Disseminating work through the Fuse blog, research briefs and social media.
5. Developing a strategy for communication with members and maintaining regular contact.
6. Encouraging members to share their relevant existing work and update on a quarterly basis, reporting back to Fuse Research Strategy Group (RSG).
7. Supporting the career development of members through the provision of training, networking, and events to showcase work specifically of early career researchers, practitioner, policy makers, and experts by experience.
8. Meeting regularly with the Fuse Manager to review programme progress and plan for future activity.

Vision

Healthy Ageing Research Programme (HARP) aims to promote collaborative public health research on physical, psychological and social aspects of well-being, ageing and extending the healthy lifespan.

Objectives

In the programme we will investigate the challenges and opportunities presented by an ageing population and the impact of age-related policies. The focus of HARP will be on the development, evaluation and translation of sustainable public health interventions to promote healthy ageing, reduce health inequalities, and enable people to maintain and improve health to live better for longer, and where possible, independently.

Specific objectives:

- To share knowledge of research and practice across academic and service partners.
- To facilitate evidence sharing from existing projects.
- To facilitate and promote cross-disciplinary working (e.g. academic disciplines, practice delivery, methodology).
- To navigate and interact with existing complimentary regional and national programmes such as, North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Applied Research Collaborative (ARC); NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR); Policy Research Unit (PRU) in Older People and Frailty.
- To develop collaborations and networks to generate new research areas in healthy ageing.
- To work with the Fuse cross-cutting programme of 'Translational Research' to identify the translational possibilities of HARP research.
- To work with other programmes across Fuse to realise possibilities for collaboration wherever possible.
- To promote research collaboration with members of the public and to facilitate public engagement activities.

We aim to address our objectives through a programme of collaborative research with researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, commissioners and people who are potential service users. Our strategy is therefore underpinned by a series of research studies and programmes that involve people throughout the life-course with a focus on older adults. Below is an outline of the research priorities as identified by HARP members in 2019. The categories are not exclusive or exhaustive and overlap with programmes across Fuse:

- **Long-term conditions and self-management:** dementia; oral health; self-management of chronic illness; frailty; multimorbidity; polypharmacy.
- **Palliative and end of life care:** ageing population; impact of caring.
- **Social factors:** loneliness; social inclusion; attitudes to ageing, impact of caring on older adults; peer support networks; strengthening communities; intergenerational relationships.
- **Prevention across the life course:** planning across the life course; social prescribing; nutrition; physical activity, sexual health.
- **Environment:** ageing in place; digital engagement and ageing; technology to support older people; whole systems approach; transport; green space, blue space; nature engagement.
- **Integration of health and social care**
- **Later life working:** retirement transition; working in later life.
- **Inequality:** social economic; ageism; rural communities; population prediction of need; access to services; disability; vulnerable groups; poverty.

Underpinning ways of working within HARP

Methods: HARP will embrace a range of methodological approaches and innovations. In the context of healthy ageing it is important to recognise whole systems approaches and evaluations of complex interventions. This will be achieved through using both qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods

approaches. Cross-disciplinary approaches will allow real world investigation of critical issues related to healthy ageing.

Knowledge translation: In keeping with the ethos of Fuse, we will generate work in collaboration with practice partners in order to be at the forefront of translational public health research related to ageing. For example, working with public sector, social care, Local Authorities, Public Health England, third sector, Centre for Ageing Better. Further knowledge translation will be promoted through the use of Quarterly Research Meetings, Fuse blog posts, and Fuse research briefs. Any meetings held will contain representation from practice partners and will be rotate around locations throughout North East England.

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI): All HARP research and events will have opportunities for PPI and efforts to achieve public engagement will be encouraged wherever possible. This will be achieved through networking with existing PPI groups such as VOICE.

Deliverables in addition to common deliverables (as listed above)

- Develop and co-produce a HARP research strategy with programme members.
- Engage with programme members on HARP and Fuse related events.
- To act as a point of contact and signpost HARP members to facilitate cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional working.