

Fuse Translational Research (TR) Programme Strategy

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

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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.

Strategic aims and objectives

The programme *aims* to:

- Explore what translational activities work under what conditions;
- Develop methods to explore these issues;
- Inform theory and;
- Work with policy and practice partners in the NHS, local and regional government and other public, private and voluntary organisations to facilitate evidence-informed practice and policy, and practice and policy informed research agendas.

We are building a portfolio of translational projects that look at the push, pull, exchange and sharing of knowledge (of all kinds) across professional, organisational and sector boundaries. We propose that a blend of professional know-how and research evidence will help make the most of contextual opportunities for impacting on public health.

The programme *objectives* are to:

- Examine the range of approaches to knowledge exchange (KE) currently used, to discover how and why KE may work in certain circumstances, and assess any impact on practice.
- Understand the successful mechanisms, and the ‘active ingredients’ in translational processes.
- Work with policy and practice partners to facilitate evidence-informed policy and practice, and a more policy and practice informed research agenda.
- Provide expertise and capacity to develop and sustain AskFuse: the responsive research and evaluation service for public health, which will provide a source of researchable translational case studies.
- Develop embedded research as a key mechanism for translational research in North East England and beyond.
- Create opportunities to bring together academics, practitioners and policy-makers in discussion to build relationships and provide the foundation for collaborative work. This includes working closely with existing networks and infrastructures, such as the NIHR School for Public Health Research and the NIHR ARC NENC.
- Support the building of research capacity (e.g. Masterclasses and workshops) and foster career development for early career researchers in relation to translational research (e.g. applying for NIHR Knowledge Mobilisation Research Fellowships).
- Contribute to the Fuse Communication Strategy by supporting the Fuse website, Quarterly Research Meetings, research briefs and blogs.

We consider the TR programme to be cross-cutting and therefore anticipate working collaboratively with all other Fuse research programmes, supporting members to identify opportunities for translational research activities at the earliest opportunity in the research process. We will promote and facilitate the use of the SPHR Knowledge Sharing principles and encourage other programmes to frame their translational activities with the four steps of the Fuse Knowledge Exchange model (Van der Graaf et al., 2019).

The TR programme involves regional and national collaborations with partners from Fuse, NIHR SPHR (in particular, the SPHR Knowledge Exchange Broker), and the ARC NENC (in particular the Science of Knowledge Implementation and Mobilisation (SKIM) theme), and

international collaborations supporting the Fuse International Conferences on Knowledge Exchange in Public Health, including the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research in Canada, Cornell University in the USA, and Tilburg and Erasmus Universities in the Netherlands.

TR programme projects

Due to the cross-cutting nature of this research theme, the programme covers a range of topics that is largely shaped by the academic interests and membership of the theme and other themes and include local government evidence use in decision making, embedded research, professional peer support in early years services and how policy makers and health practitioners engage with knowledge brokering services (e.g. AskFuse) and collaborative research grant schemes (e.g. SPHR Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme (PHPES)).

Timeline and deliverables

Over the 3 year period (up to March 2022), we plan to achieve the following:

- Year 1 (up to March 2020)
 - Support inaugural events from other research programme meetings to identify translational research opportunities.
 - Develop a strategy for cross-cutting work with the other research programmes (e.g. designated TR contacts in each programme).

- Year 2 (April 2020 to March 2021)
 - Collaborate on at least two new TR projects (from different research programmes) with policy and practice partners.
 - Produce at least one research paper on translational research within Fuse.

- Year 3 (April 2021 – March 2022)
 - Collaborate on at least two new TR projects (from different research programmes) with policy and practice partners.
 - Produce at least one research paper on translational research within Fuse.
 - Final TR event to synthesise and disseminate TR knowledge and tools developed within Fuse.