

CAPACITY BUILDING, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2019 – 2022

SPHR Capacity building, training and development plan 2019-22

1. Aims

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) School for Public Health Research (SPHR) is a unique collaboration between leading academic centres in England. Established in 2012 NIHR SPHR aims to conduct high quality research to build the evidence base for effective public health practice. Our research looks at what works practically to improve population health and reduce health inequalities, can be applied across the country, and better meets the needs of policymakers, practitioners and the public.

The benefit of the NIHR Research School model is that it brings together leading academic centres, with excellence in applied research, in a collaborative working relationship greater than the sum of its parts and with a strategic, long-term programme of work that allows the ‘big issues’ in the field to be tackled. The School provides a setting where PhD students and Fellows can benefit from the leadership of researchers at the top of their field and our extensive networks with public health policy and practice and where supplementary training, networking, mentoring, guidance and collaboration between members are part of the added value that the School environment brings.

The School is committed to building capacity in public health research by providing a range of multidisciplinary training and development opportunities.

We focus here on what SPHR will offer within the current contract, to the end of March 2022. What we offer will add value to and be synergistic with current fellowships offered by the NIHR Academy and other funders. In the longer term there is potential for a more ambitious and cohesive plan to be supported within SPHR.

2. Mission and activities

The SPHR research capacity building programme is aligned with the overall mission of the School.

Public health research is entering a phase of transformation following the publication of the Academy of Medical Sciences report ‘Health of the Public 2040’. There is a drive to build on existing strengths to make the UK the world leader in public health and prevention research, and to meet the substantial public health challenges we face. We want to see more research that is useful, timely and accessible to those responsible for delivering policies and services that ultimately protect and improve the health of the population. We need research that helps answer the most important questions facing policy makers, Local Authorities and service providers. To do this we need to inspire the next generation of academics into public health research with the option to combine academic research with practice as a career pathway.

SPHR has [31 PhD students](#) (appendix 1), 15 of these are funded from member budgets (some are part-funded with leveraged funding from member institutions and two are part funded by the CLAHRC North Thames). Funding for an additional 16 studentships was awarded to SPHR from DHSC in 2018/19.

SPHR has been awarded further funding for up to 16 pre-doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships to begin from January 2020 and 16 summer studentships to start in summer 2020.

These studentships and fellowships target gaps in the academic public health career pathway identified by SPHR and colleagues in the NIHR Academy (appendix 2).

Each SPHR PhD Student and Fellow will have an individualised training plan and regular progress reviews within the host institution. The SPHR trainees automatically become members of the SPHR Researchers Network (ResNet). ResNet was established in 2014 and aims to link researchers working on SPHR projects across the eight members of the School. It is a forum for communication, peer support and networking to aid the professional development of researchers of any level, through virtual meetings and bulletins, researcher events and networking at the SPHR Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM). ResNet members have their own meeting preceding the ASM. The programme is planned by the ResNet group and facilitates peer support, cross department collaboration, training and learning. From 2019/20 there is the potential for SPHR to provide additional training events and meetings for ResNet members as the funding for our fellowships included some funding to support training.

By virtue of being part of SPHR, PhD students and Fellows are also NIHR Academy members and have access to a number of unique training opportunities including the placements in partner departments, the ability to participate in other NIHR opportunities (e.g. SPARC, IVSA, the NIHR Infrastructure Training Camp and NIHR Academy Annual Conference).

Objectives:

1. each SPHR PhD student and Fellow's work will align with, and contribute to the SPHR research programmes and themes which will include involvement in programme and theme meetings and activities.
2. each SPHR PhD student and Fellow will have a personal training plan developed with supervisors and reviewed by the SPHR training lead Prof Rona Campbell, within 3 months of commencement.
3. PhD students and Fellows will be expected to undertake a placement in a public health policy or practice setting (e.g. Local Authority, Public Health England).
4. each SPHR trainee will draft a public involvement and engagement plan 3 months after the commencement of their award that will be reviewed by their supervisor and the PI&E lead Prof Jennie Popay.

5. each SPHR trainee will draft a knowledge exchange plan 3 months after the commencement of their award that will be reviewed by their supervisor and the SPHR Knowledge Exchange Broker.
6. all SPHR PhD students and Fellows will present a poster of their research at the SPHR ASM, annually.
7. eligible SPHR PhD students and Fellows will be encouraged to attend the NIHR Academy Annual Conference at least once during their award.
8. eligible SPHR PhD students and Fellows will be encouraged to apply for NIHR Academy SPARC/IVSA funding to visit another part of the NIHR Academy infrastructure and we will have an internal competition within the School to identify the two PhD candidates who will be nominated to join the NIHR training camp each year.

3. Management and governance

The School Directorate is hosted by Newcastle University with Professor Ashley Adamson (Fuse, Newcastle University) as SPHR Director. The SPHR Deputy Director, Professor Rona Campbell (University of Bristol), has been appointed to the role of Training Lead for SPHR. Each School member will identify a training lead with the relevant experience, interest and capacity who will have oversight of PhD students and Fellows within their membership.

Training in SPHR is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Training Lead, the School Manager (Dr Susan Bowett) and the SPHR Director. We will appoint a Training Manager to the SPHR Directorate (to be in post by early 2020). Funding decisions for studentships and fellowships are ratified by the NIHR SPHR Executive Group and operationalised by the School Manager working with member leads in each host institution.

Capacity building and training will be a standing item on quarterly SPHR Executive meetings and will be a substantive agenda item bi-annually at which members will be required to report on the PhD students and Fellows in their membership. The ResNet Chair or a representative currently attends the SPHR Executive; this will be extended to include two representatives bi-annually from the cohort of PhD Students and Fellows.

The aims of the standing agenda item will be:

- to disseminate and promote excellence in training and capacity development;
- to contribute to the development of bespoke training events, resources and materials;
- to provide a platform for sharing best practice and progress in training methods;
- assist with the timely collection and reporting of information on PhD students and Fellows;
- be proactive in sharing local good practice across the School contribute towards the training and development available within the School; and
- to support arrangements for the annual ResNet meeting.

NIHR SPHR is committed to recruiting talented individuals via national competition. All applicants are asked to complete a modified NIHR standard application form based on those used by other national funding bodies. Applicants are shortlisted for interview by the School members and selected by a panel of representatives from across the School. The NIHR Academy's commitment to equality of opportunity is an inherent part of the SPHR recruitment processes including the conduct of the selection committee.¹ Independent references are taken up and made available to the interview panels where appropriate. Recommendations from the interviews are then approved by the full NIHR SPHR Executive Group and contracts are drawn up to distribute funding to the host institutions.

The SPHR Directorate will collect data annually that will be analysed and discussed with the training lead and Executive Group members. Data collected include equal opportunity metrics, details of publications and other dissemination activity, grants applied for, promotion and training opportunities. These data will be reported in the SPHR annual report to NIHR.

4. Building research capacity

Awards are distributed between SPHR Members in open competition. Where possible, we aim for an equitable distribution of awards across members but only where there are excellent candidates to fill posts. Supervision involves more than one SPHR member and, ideally, will include a practice-based advisor and a placement in practice, policy or other setting appropriate to the topic of study. The School awards aim to complement and not duplicate the opportunities offered by NIHR Academy.

SPHR summer studentships in public health research

The summer studentships are aimed at undergraduate students with an interest in a career in public health research. The studentships will offer support for 8-week projects supervised by SPHR Early Career Researcher (ECRs), Fellows and PhD students.

SPHR PhD studentships in public health research

Doctoral studentships are for those with a strong academic record who wish to develop a career in public health research. Applicants must have a first degree in a discipline relevant to public health research and will be expected to complete a PhD during the award period. Students receive fees and a tax-free stipend. The host member receives an allocation of funds to support the research.

¹ *The NIHR Academy is committed to eliminating unjustified discrimination and to promoting equality of opportunity for all applications to our Fellowships and other training schemes. NIHR Academy welcomes applications from all sections of the community and does not discriminate on the grounds of gender, disability, age, race/ethnicity, religion or philosophical belief or sexual orientation. In order to support this commitment the selection committee must ensure that the decisions and judgements about people are based on objective and justifiable criteria funding recommendations*

SPHR pre-doctoral fellowship awards in public health research

The **pre-doctoral fellowships** offer up to 24 months for individuals with a strong academic record who wish to gain experience of research in public health. Fellows can access skills training in topics such as epidemiology, statistics, health economics, qualitative methods, health services research and developing and evaluating complex public health interventions by attending courses and working on a variety of pre-existing research projects. These fellowships are similar to the Bristol Research Apprenticeships Scheme. This scheme, which has been running for six years, provides those with a relevant Master's degree and a strong interest in public health research the opportunity to undertake a two-year research apprenticeship. This includes working on a variety of research projects, learning new research methods both through attendance at short courses and by applying them in the projects on which they work, and the opportunity to shadow and work alongside those in public health practice. The goal of the fellowship is for the fellow to gain experience, knowledge and, skills and to prepare an application to undertake a PhD in public health research in a way that supports the capacity and training needs for the future public health research workforce. The fellowship covers the Fellow's salary with some research and training costs.

SPHR post-doctoral launching fellowships in public health research

The **post-doctoral fellowships** are 'NIHR SPHR Launching Fellowships in Public Health Research'. They offer up to 24 months for individuals with a strong academic record who wish to become an independent public health researcher but one that is closely connected to practice. The goal of these fellowships is for the Fellow to publish papers from their PhD and write fellowship or grant application(s) to secure further funding e.g. an NIHR Advanced Fellowship. The Launching Fellows will receive training and development opportunities provided by SPHR, the NIHR Academy and host organisation that equips them to undertake research that meets the substantial public health challenges we face in the UK in the 21st Century. This will include specific training around coproduction of research with practitioners and includes the opportunity to undertake a practice-based placement and acquire skills in new methodological approaches, for example. Applicants are expected to have experience of research in public health or a related area. The fellowships cover the Fellow's salary with some research and training costs.

A schedule for recruitment of PhD students and Fellows is in table 1 (providing that the applicants meet a high-quality threshold):

Category	Number of awards	Recruitment date	Duration	Part time option?	Latest start date
PhD studentships	31	April-May 2018	3 years	No	1 st April 2019
Pre-doctoral fellowships	8	Summer 2019	2 years	Yes	1 st April 2020
Post-doctoral launching fellowships	8	Summer 2019	2 years	Yes	1 st April 2020
Summer studentships (round 1)	16	Jan-March 2020	8 weeks	n/a	Summer 2020
<i>Summer studentships (round 2)*</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>Jan-March 2021</i>	<i>8 weeks</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Summer 2021</i>

*Funding for a second round of summer studentships is not confirmed yet. We will review the success of round 1 before making a case for a second round from the SPHR core budget.

5. Public Involvement and Engagement (PI&E)

Meaningful involvement and engagement of the public is central to the ethos of the School, ensuring our work draws on their lived expertise, incorporates their perspectives and responds to their challenge. PhD students and Fellows will contribute to and build on the existing body of involvement and engagement activities within our research projects and beyond. All PhD students and Fellows will be required to draft a public involvement and engagement plan 3 months after the commencement of their award (as objective 4 above).

The public will be involved and able to participate in all stages of research and governance. Existing expertise and structures will be used wherever possible. Work will be coordinated with other key organisations.

Professor Jennie Popay is the SPHR Strategic Lead for PI&E and with representatives from across the School and leads the SPHR PI&E group tasked with implementing the [SPHR PI&E Strategy](#). SPHR PhD students and Fellows will have access to the strategy and be expected to implement the plan in their research and will be asked to consult the INVOLVE definitions of involvement, engagement and participation. All PhD students and Fellows are expected to produce plain English summaries of their research and outputs. The School will provide training sessions for its PhD students and Fellows on all aspects of PI&E.

6. Dissemination and communication

Communications about the SPHR research capacity development programme and impact will be managed centrally by the SPHR Directorate and locally by SPHR members. All research progress reports will include a description of dissemination activity and impact.

Funding will be made available to PhD students and Fellows to enable their research to be disseminated appropriately, in line with the NIHR Open Access policy.

PhD students and Fellows will be encouraged to produce at least one peer reviewed publication in a high-ranking journal, and these will be captured in annual reports and made available on the SPHR website. PhD students and Fellows will be asked to provide structured feedback, contribute ideas for training events, act as peer mentors, write blogs, tweet and provide articles about particular aspects of their training so that good practice and experiences are shared.

All PhD students and Fellows are expected to attend the SPHR Annual Scientific Meeting where they are required to produce a poster of their work that is entered into a competition, presented to their peers, external stakeholders and to senior academic staff in the School.

7. Feedback and review

The SPHR Directorate will collect regular feedback from our PhD students and pre- and post-doctoral fellows to monitor the quality of their experience as members of the SPHR and enable us to constantly improve what we are doing with regards to research capacity development. We will share findings and discuss suggested actions based on the findings with the SPHR Executive. We will also review the training plan annually to ensure that it remains up-to-date and fit for purpose.

8. Performance Indicators

The School will collate data on the number of applications received and success rates for all awards. These will be compared to other funding schemes in NIHR. Equal opportunity data are collected from all applicants for SPHR schemes by the NIHR Academy.

All School PhD students and Fellows will complete an annual progress report based on those used by the NIHR Academy to collect data on a range of performance indicators that are indicative of success, including, publications, grant income, training and career progression. High-level data will be presented and discussed by the SPHR Executive Group and be available for annual reporting to NIHR. The Directorate will also monitor career progression and research related impact, publicising this through our website, newsletter and wider dissemination activities.

Key performance indicators include:

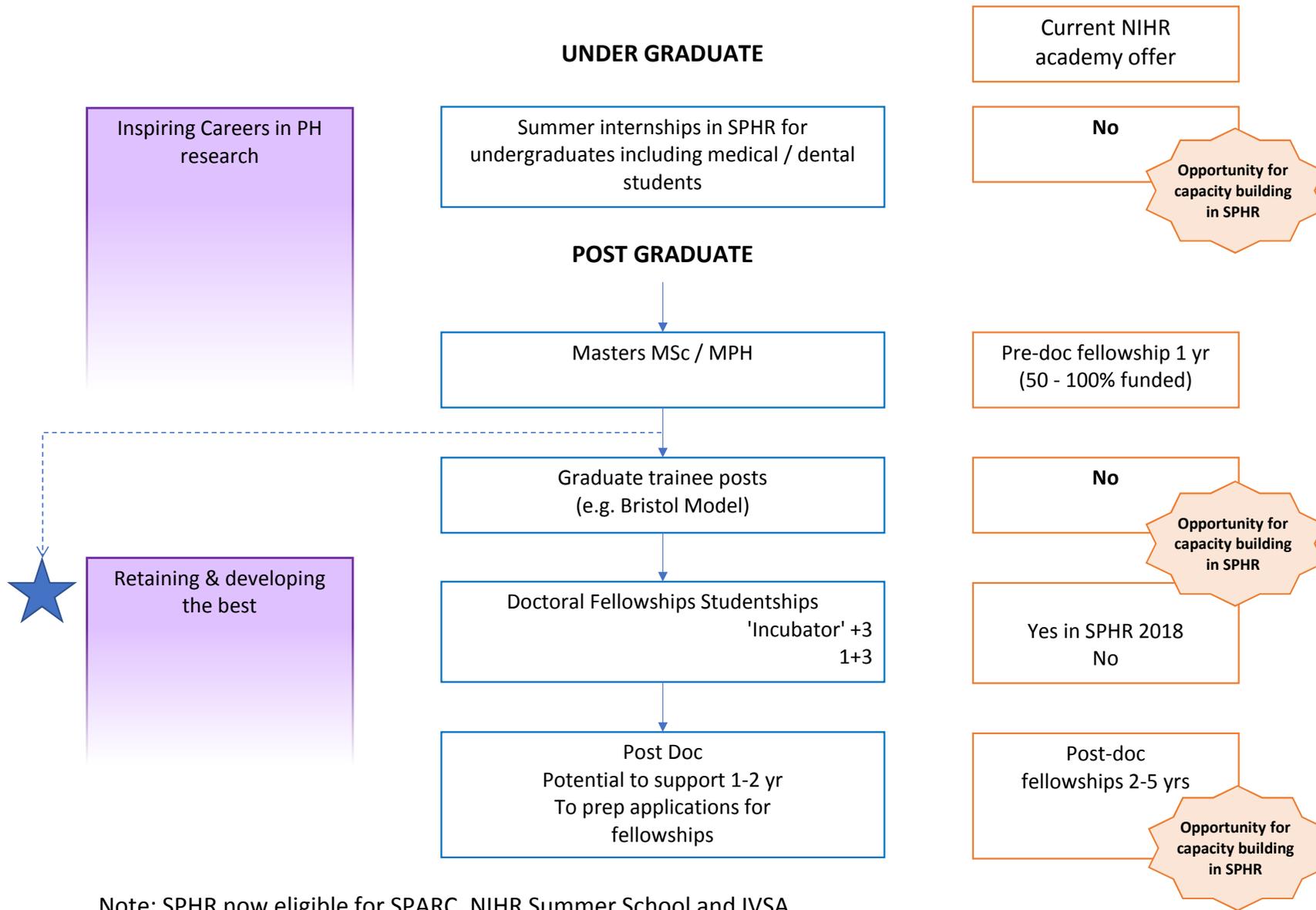
1. Contribution to developing research capacity in public health research from pre-doctoral to post-doctoral levels including number and % of PhD completions; number of Pre- Doctoral and Launching Fellows appointed to SPHR; and training opportunities offered to PhD students, Fellows and ECRs
2. Number of high-quality publications by SPHR PhD students and fellows
3. Number of further research awards gained by SPHR PhD students and Fellows
4. Number and % of PhD students and Fellows continuing careers in public health research and/or practice
5. Public involvement and engagement activity by Summer students, PhD students and Fellows
6. Innovative approaches to communication used by Summer students, PhD students and Fellows
7. Impact of research of PhD students and Fellows on public health practice and policy
8. Promotions obtained by early and mid-career research staff
9. Impact of Summer studentship on awardee's future plans

The National Institute for Health Research School for Public Health Research, is a partnership between:
the Universities of Sheffield, Bristol, Cambridge, UCL; Imperial College London; The London School for Hygiene
and Tropical Medicine; the LiLaC collaboration between the Universities of Liverpool and Lancaster and Fuse;
The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health, a collaboration between Newcastle, Durham,
Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside Universities.

Appendix 1

Member	Name	Supervisor(s)	Award reference	ORCID ID	Start date	End date	Title or SPHR research area
Bristol	Vicky Carlisle	Olivia Maynard, Matthew Hickman, Kyla Thomas & Jo	SPHR-PHD-BRI-004	0000-0003-0452-8729	01/10/2017	30/09/2020	Facilitators and barriers to completing opioid substitution treatment
Bristol	Alice Porter	Ruth Kipping & Laura Johnson	SPHR-PHD-BRI-001	0000-0001-5281-7694	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	What exactly are 'me' sized meals for one to five year olds? Developing age-and-sex specific meal size guidance for pre-schoolers.
Bristol	Lizzy Winstone	Judi Kidger	SPHR-PHD-BRI-002	0000-0002-5547-6087	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	Exploring the effect of social media use on teenage mental health and well-being
Bristol	Yanaina Chavez-Ugalde	Frank de Vocht	SPHR-PHD-BRI-003	0000-0001-6191-2722	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	Approaching evaluations of public health interventions to tackle obesity from a complex systems perspective
Cambridge	Dolly Theis	Martin White	SPHR-PHD-CAM-001	0000-0001-8309-8565	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	Political engagement with public health issues and public health research – consideration of case studies in diet, physical activity and obesity
Cambridge	Matt Keeble	Jean Adams	SPHR-PHD-CAM-002	0000-0002-1512-7421	01/04/2019	30/03/2022	Exploring new ways of purchasing food.
Cambridge	Campbell Foubister	Kirsten Corder	SPHR-PHD-CAM-003	0000-0002-2625-8478	01/04/2019	31/03/2022	School physical, social and policy environment and physical activity during adolescence
Cambridge	Olivia Alliot	Esther van Sluijs	SPHR-PHD-CAM-004	0000-0002-1835-6852	01/04/2019	31/03/2022	Physical activity in socioeconomically disadvantaged adolescents
Fuse	Cassey Muir	Ruth McGovern	SPHR-PHD-FUS-002	0000-0003-4137-1345	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	Co-producing an intervention to promote social and emotional resilience in children and young people affected by parental substance misuse.
Fuse	Sophie Phillips	Frances Hillier-Brown	SPHR-PHD-FUS-003	0000-0003-4140-8013	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	Assessing options for the measurement of movement-related behaviours in pre-school children from socio-economically deprived communities at a population level
Fuse	Alison Jane	Suzanne Moffatt	SPHR-PHD-FUS-001	0000-0003-2646-6135	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	Exploring the impact of Universal Credit on health and social outcomes
Imperial	Jennie Parnham	Chris Millett	SPHR-PHD-IMP-001	0000-0002-4385-2153	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	Evaluating the impact of the Healthy Start programme on cardio-metabolic outcomes
Imperial	Rosie Jenkins	Anthony Laverty & Eszter Vamos	SPHR-PHD-IMP-002	0000-0003-4600-2258	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	The impact of economic recession and austerity measures on nutritional intake and associated health outcomes in the UK
Imperial	Tishya Venkatraman	Sonia Saxena	SPHR-PHD-IMP-003	0000-0001-6171-2384	22/10/2018	21/10/2021	Scoping the impact of The Daily Mile on wellbeing, academic attainment and physical health of primary school children in England
Imperial	Rhiannon Thompson	Prof Mireille Toledano and Dr Martina Di Simplicio	SPHR-PHD-IMP-004	0000-0002-8188-3460	01/04/2019	31/03/2022	Effects of traffic-related air and noise pollution on adolescent cognitive and mental health
LiLaC	Adam Mars	Paula Holland and Siobhan Reilly	SPHR-PHD-LIL-002	0000-0003-3060-8538	01/04/2019	31/03/2022	Understanding how GPs regard their role and capacity to use social prescribing to improve work outcomes for patients with long-term health conditions
LiLaC	Mario Jiménez	Bruce Hollingsworth and Eugenio Zucchelli	SPHR-PHD-LIL-003	0000-0001-6189-6494	01/04/2019	31/03/2022	The impact of economic shocks on health and health inequalities
LiLaC	Katie Fahy	Ben Barr and David Taylor-Robinson	SPHR-PHD-LIL-004	0000-0003-2566-237X	01/06/2019	31/05/2022	The equity impact of changing spatial distribution of resources for population health and inequalities
LiLaC	Anna Head	Martin O'Flaherty, Chris Kyriodemos, Kate Fleming	SPHR-PHD-LIL-005	0000-0002-4577-9869	01/05/2019	30/04/2022	Reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases: which interventions are more effective and equitable?
LiLaC	Davara Bennett	David Taylor-Robinson	SPHR-PHD-LIL-001	0000-0003-3480-6566	01/11/2018	31/10/2021	Inequalities in children taken into care in England: local area studies to inform policy
LSHTM	Amanda Karapici	Steve Cummins	SPHR-PHD-LSH-002	0000-0001-9447-9814	01/01/2019	31/12/2021	Simulating the impacts of complex local food system interventions on diet-related health using spatial agent-based models
LSHTM	Omotomilola ('Tomi) Ajetunmobi	Matt Egan, Karen Lock & Dalya Marks	SPHR-PHD-LSH-001	0000-0002-6172-5975	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	How migration affects local food and alcohol 'systems': challenges and opportunities for public health.
LSHTM	Denise Ndlovu	Claire Thompson & Steve Cummins	SPHR-PHD-LSH-003	0000-0001-5517-8728	01/04/2019	31/03/2022	An ethnography of food bank nutrition policies and their intersection with low-income household food practices
Sheffield	Clare Timblin	Liddy Goyder	SPHR-PHD-SHF-004	0000-0001-9121-1484	01/04/2019	31/03/2022	Physical Activity in Children
Sheffield	Abigail Stevely	Petra Meier and John Holmes	SPHR-PHD-SHF-001	0000-0002-5637-5245	01/11/2017	31/10/2020	How the characteristics of drinking occasions affect alcohol consumption and related harms
Sheffield	Natalie Bennett	Sarah Salway	SPHR-PHD-SHF-002	0000-0002-4742-7656	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	Social connectedness and mental well-being in communities experiencing ethnic change
Sheffield	Olivia Sexton	John Holmes & Petra Meier	SPHR-PHD-SHF-003	0000-0003-0504-8313	01/01/2019	31/12/2021	Drinking events – what are the best ways to collect data on how people drink?
UCL	Elizabeth Ingram	Jessica Sheringham	SPHR-PHD-UCL-001	0000-0002-0354-4551	24/09/2018	23/09/2021	Exploring the value of linked health and council data to examine the clustering of multimorbidity and associated unplanned service use
UCL	Sarah Beardon	Rosalind Raine	SPHR-PHD-UCL-002	0000-0001-8716-6211	24/09/2018	23/09/2021	Integrated legal advice and health services
UCL	Ke Zhou	Nicci Zimmermann	SPHR-PHD-UCL-003	0000-0002-8270-3417	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	Applications of whole-systems approaches to place-based decision making: leveraging urban housing for population health and sustainable development
UCL	Sarah Ledden	David Osborn	SPHR-PHD-UCL-004	0000-0002-5121-7934	01/10/2018	30/09/2021	Preventing self-harm and suicide: identifying at risk populations for preventative strategies and early intervention across the life course

SPHR NIHR Incubator Capacity Building in Public Health Research



Retaining & developing the best

Next Challenge

