

A strategy for policy & practice engagement and collaboration

2018 – 2022

Building the evidence base to
support public health practice



A strategy for policy & practice engagement and collaboration

Background

This document should be read with the following linked Strategy documents:

NIHR SPHR Knowledge Exchange Strategy
NIHR SPHR Public Involvement and Engagement Strategy
NIHR SPHR Communications Strategy

Vision for collaboration and engagement

The SPHR aims to increase the volume of evidence for effective public health practice in England by creating a collaborative environment, in which excellence in research and knowledge exchange can thrive. Central to this aim is the need to build and maintain close relationships with policy and practice partners, at all levels and in all aspects of our work. The relationships between SPHR and its partners will be two-way, necessitating a strategy for inward and outward facing dialogue and communication. Key partners for SPHR include national agencies and organisations, local policy and practice stakeholders, voluntary and community sector, local authorities and other agencies in areas such as housing, education and environment.

Principles for engagement and collaboration

We will ensure that:

- Our engagement processes are transparent and inclusive.
- We develop and maintain reciprocal relationships with partners to work together from the beginning to the end of the research process, to facilitate co-production and knowledge exchange.
- We value different forms of knowledge and expertise.
- Our research, resources and networks are aligned with our partners to increase complementarity and synergy.
- The impacts and experiences of collaboration and engagement are evaluated and lessons are learned and improvements are made.

Objectives

Building on the collaboration and engagement work that has been undertaken to date the objectives for the next three years are:

- To effectively engage partners in the exchange of knowledge emerging from our phase one and two projects that are approaching completion.
- To engage partners from the beginning of the research process (and throughout) within each of our research programmes and cross cutting themes.
- To develop further opportunities to engage and collaborate with partners across the public health community.
- To establish a wider programme of engagement activities and processes that seek to bring partners and researchers together.
- To extend existing networks and contacts.
- To maintain partnership and engagement with our established Advisory Board, exploring new ways of engaging outside of the annual meeting.

- To develop sustainable approaches to engagement and collaboration.
- To ensure effective reporting of research collaboration and engagement by SPHR members through the School research planning and reporting processes to enable review, evaluation and contribution to a narrative of successes and lessons learned (see NIHR SPHR Knowledge Exchange Strategy).

Key partners

We have a diverse range of partners and value the different types of knowledge and expertise that they bring. We acknowledge that different approaches will be required to engage and collaborate with our different partners across different contexts. Several of the SPHR academics maintain part practice roles and many hold honorary contracts with PHE. We aim to effectively use these embedded links to sustain relationships and develop new connections. Below are some examples of our partners: this is not an exhaustive list but acknowledges the diverse range of individuals and organisations with which we will engage:

- **Partner organisations:** PHE, DHSC, LGA, ADPH.
- **Collaborative partnerships and networks:** SPCR, SSCR, CLAHRCs (to become ARCS), AHSN.
- **Practitioners:** frontline staff providing public health services, third sector providers.
- **Policy makers:** local, regional, national.
- **Decision makers:** commissioners, managers, service improvement specialist.

How we will engage

Research Programmes and Themes

Engagement and collaboration plans are built into our programmes and themes. Each of the SPHR programmes and cross cutting themes have been co-produced with named practitioners and policy makers.

Mechanisms for engagement and collaboration will include:

- Programme and theme specific practice and policy engagement plans.
- Stakeholder Advisory Group.
- Stakeholder engagement workshops.
- Work packages focused on knowledge exchange such as the co-produced Equal England network, an integral part of the Health Inequalities cross cutting theme.
- Building a database of key contacts.
- Database of engagement activities.
- Impact group of policy and practice representatives aiming to ensure the needs of knowledge users remain embedded within the programme.
- A virtual network of potential knowledge users.
- Programme specific e-newsletter aimed at stakeholders.
- Programme specific Impact Strategy.

Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme (PHPES)

Our Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme is a key route to collaboration and engagement with practice and policy partners. Applications for the scheme are practice or policy-led and an effective way for practitioners to obtain funding and academic support to evaluate public health interventions. A new call for applications will be launched in spring 2019 supported by a launch campaign to raise awareness and provide guidance.

NIHR SPHR Knowledge Exchange Broker

A Knowledge Exchange Broker (1.0fte) was appointed in June 2018. This is a new role within the School and aims to support the engagement and collaboration activity within the research programmes and themes, Public Health Evaluation Scheme and SPHR directorate. See the NIHR SPHR Knowledge Exchange Strategy for further detail.

Communications and engagement

We have an established SPHR newsletter, website, twitter account and YouTube channel that can be accessed by our key partners. These communication channels support our collaboration and engagement work, see the NIHR SPHR Communications Strategy.

Review and evaluation

We will evaluate the objectives described in this strategy via the monitoring and review processes described in the NIHR SPHR Knowledge Exchange Strategy. This Strategy relates to overlapping knowledge exchange objectives of 'Collaboration with key partners' and 'Knowledge to action'. The mechanisms for engagement and collaboration within each research programme and theme will be reviewed via the SPHR research reporting processes. A key part of this review and evaluation process will be to engage key partners in this process to ensure we are engaging and collaborating in a reciprocal manner.

For more information, please contact sphr@ncl.ac.uk

Produced by NIHR SPHR, October 2018

The information in this report/brochure is correct at the time of printing.