



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Research Practice Partnership? There are many different forms of partnership between research and practice. Some approaches focus on work in single sites such as schools, hospitals or care homes, and others with service-delivery providers operating across local areas. How these partnerships are named and described also varies from place to place.

There have been fewer attempts to build long term partnerships in social work or social care in the UK than in other sectors and countries. One study of six knowledge exchange projects involving academics and social work practitioners in Scotland highlighted the importance of building relationships and the value of practitioner involvement in producing useful research. They also highlighted some of the barriers that university structures present to researchers engaging in collaborations (Wilkinson et al 2012). There is a useful microsite covering aspects of the work of Research Practice Partnerships in education in the US: [Research-Practice Partnerships microsite](#)

Previous experience with Research Practice Partnership (RPPs) highlights the following core features: (1) Commitment to the partnership is long-term; (2) Focus on problems emerging from practice; (3) Underpinned by a commitment to benefits for all partners; (4) Employ intentional strategies to support and develop partnerships; (5) Build capacity that supports professional involvement in research, and practitioners' ability to use findings to inform improvement.

RPPs typically include three types of activity:

- (1) Capacity-building (e.g., teaching of research skills, support to plan research ideas and projects, applying for research funding, and mentoring).
- (2) Development of novel research projects that are responsive to practice issues (analysis of existing practice-based data, pilot studies)
- (3) Supporting participation of practitioners, residents and their families in research groups and centres locally, nationally, and internationally (including larger funding proposals, and the development of interdisciplinary initiatives).

Can existing partnerships apply? The idea with this new funding from the National Institute for Health Research is to set up three brand new partnerships. If you have an existing partnership between practice and research and would like to be part of our learning network, please get in touch: Annette.Boaz@lshtm.ac.uk

How will the three partnerships be selected? The key criteria will be: 1) interest in participating in a research practice partnership, (2) clear goals for participation in the programme, (3) senior leadership support, and (4) commitment to participate in programme activities. However, we will also aim to identify three sites with a good spread in terms of geography and configuration of provision.

What sort of organizations are eligible to apply? There are a variety of different types of care home for older people, ranging from large businesses to small-medium size enterprises to single family-run homes. This work will focus on the small and medium-size providers which make up a significant proportion of the sector and are less likely to have access to their own research, training or capacity-building systems than the larger providers. Others offering different housing and care design models, such as Extra Care Housing providers are also welcome to apply. Research partners are likely to range in size and type and might be a single department, a centre or institute, a single institution or a group of institutions.

Who will make up the partnerships: Membership of the partnerships will vary, but they are likely to include care home staff, managers, team leaders and owners, academics, and people with lived experience. They may also include other local stakeholders such as local authority staff and knowledge mobilisers (people who help to support the use of research).

What sort of person should be identified as the 'lead person'? Someone who can demonstrate a commitment to building a fair and equitable partnership between practitioners, researchers, residents and their families to support improvements in processes of care and social care outcomes. Experience of leading and managing teams would be an advantage, as would some previous experience of engaging with research.

What do we mean by research? Research is typically new knowledge gathered through empirical studies. We include any systematic and transparent gathering and analysis of data to support care improvement. This would also include reviews of existing research and analysis of routine data collected by a provider organization.

Who should sign the application? The forms should be signed by someone in a leadership position in a care home organization and in an academic institution. For care homes, this is likely to be care home owner or a member of the senior management team of a care provider. For universities, it is likely to be a Dean, Head of Department or Associate Dean for Research.

What happens if my application is unsuccessful? Unsuccessful applicants and other sites interested in the study will be invited to join a learning network which will allow for shared learning from the programme and other relevant initiatives

If you have any questions that aren't covered here please don't hesitate to contact the Project Lead, Annette Boaz: Annette.boaz@lshtm.ac.uk

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[Wilkinson, H](#); [Gallagher, M](#); Smith, M (2012) A collaborative approach to defining the usefulness of impact: lessons from a knowledge exchange project involving academics and social work practitioners. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice*, 8 (3):311-327