NIHR | National Institute for Health Research

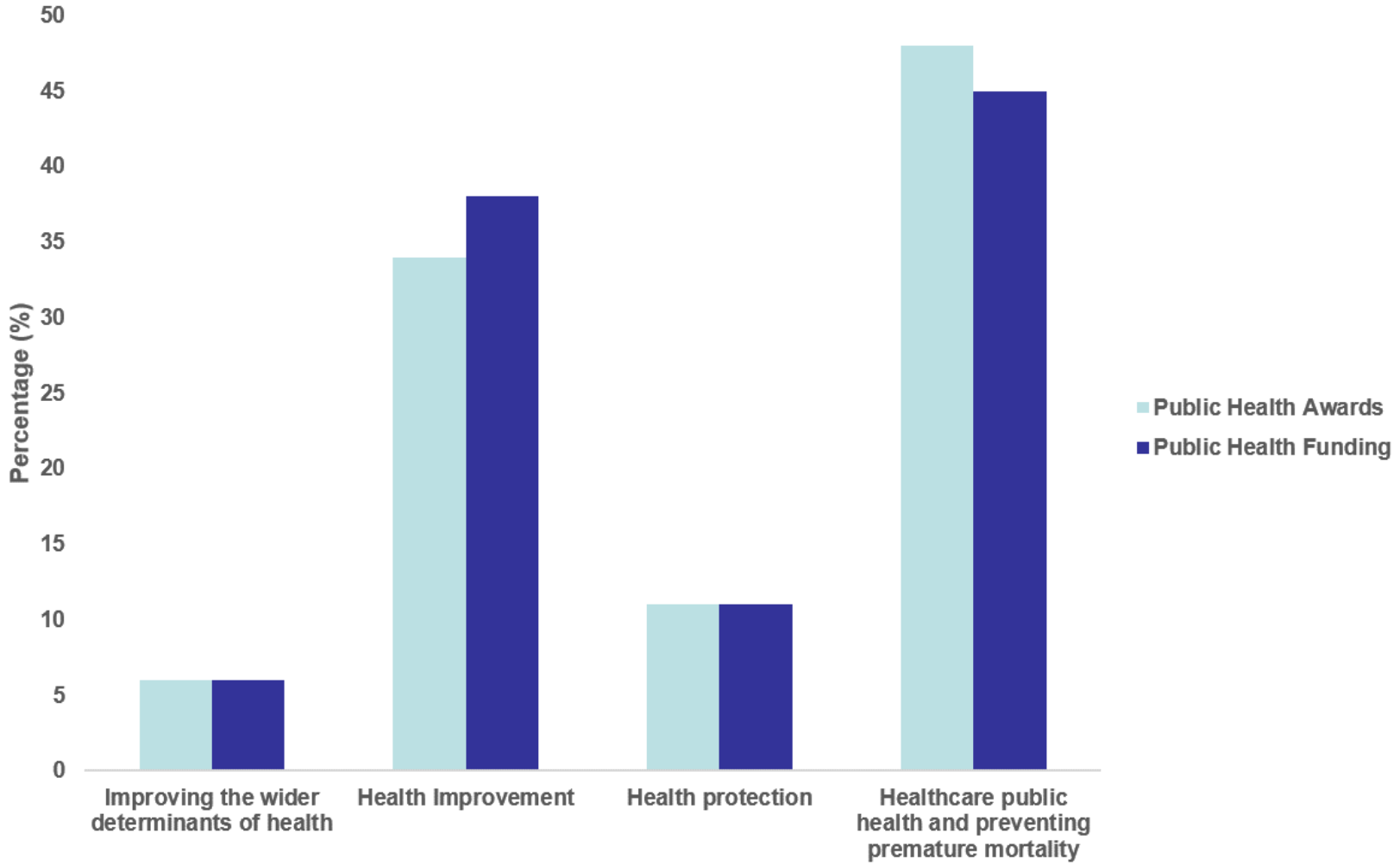
Health Determinant Research Collaborations (HDRC)

Helen Walters, NIHR Consultant Advisor

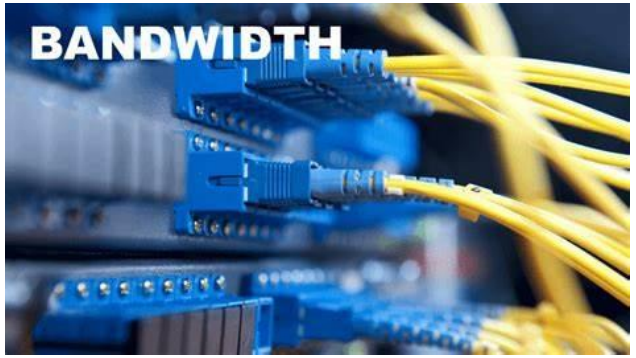
Public Health Research Programme

NETSCC

NIHR Public Health Studies by PHOF Domains (2006-2016)



What is an HDRC?



30 HDRCs….

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Tower Hamlets Health Determinants Research Collaboration

1 February 2023

London Metropolitan University

Queen Mary University of London

thcvs Council for Voluntary Service

University of East London

Introduction

- About Tower Hamlets
- Our HDRC vision and purpose, and our underlying values
- Our outcomes and plans to achieve them
- Progress so far
- Working in an HDRC

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Vision and purpose

Coproduction values & principles

1. **Equality:** communities and stakeholders as equal contributors

2. **Agency:** voice, choice and power

3. **Reciprocity:** communities, stakeholders and researchers all benefit

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Five key outcomes for our HDRC

Collaboration

We will work with partners and community groups to support research alongside strengthening research support, partnerships, and local people's involvement in the research. Together we will identify research funding opportunities. We will involve local people in deciding what we research.

Infrastructure

We will set up the support systems needed to make research happen. We will bring data on housing, schools, places and more together with health data. This makes data usable for research. We will support community researchers and help residents to participate in research. We will work with schools, housing associations and other places to do research.

Culture

Ensure council decisions are informed by research. We will make sure that the council thinks about how what it does impacts the health of people. We will develop a research plan to make sure we focus research on the most important things.

Capacity

We will develop training opportunities with our partners. Employees of the council, academics, and residents can access the training. Ensures our employees are ready to support and do research.

Influence

Share our learning and help to influence local, regional and UK policy. Also to support other areas in the country to set up their own HDRC. Work with our local community to make sure research findings are shared and have impact.

Themed research

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A thematic approach

Our work will focus on successively on 4-5 themes, co-produced with residents, elected members, researchers, the voluntary sector and council officers. Our coproduction method will be an important output of our HDRC. The first theme is **housing.**

Focusing on coproduced themes will help us to:

1. Identify **who** to involve
2. Make sure we support research that's **relevant** to local people
3. Decide on somewhere to start in our work to:
   - Find, catalogue and link data
   - Change culture and build capacity
   - Develop more collaborative research proposals
   - Commission small capacity-building projects
4. Engage people by giving us **specific examples** of what we can do
5. Evaluate our **impact**

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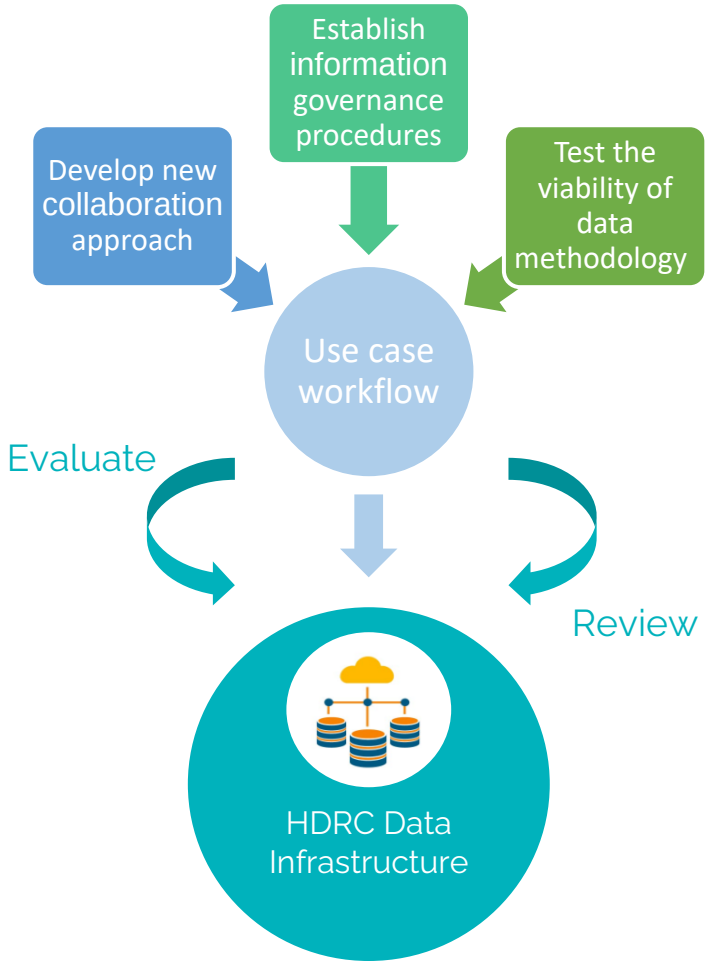
Data linkage use cases

Develop methodology, **evaluate** workflow and **review** procedure to enhance scalability and sustainability using **policy relevant research use cases** to demonstrate value of research and data linkage to councillors, council staff and residents.

Led by: Clinical Effectiveness Group (CEG), QMUL

We have been working on two use cases:

- Universal Free School Meals (UFSM)
- Overcrowding in Tower Hamlets



What did we do in 2022-23?

Collaboration

- Established our programme governance and ways of working
- Recruited (most of) the team
- Agreed our strategic scope and principles
- Agreed theme of housing for our first new research projects
- Hosted the first HDRC London Advisory Board

Infrastructure

- Agreed coproduction principles and a reward & recognition policy for residents
- Recruited >50 residents to get involved in research and began scoping a long-term involvement model
- Established two data linkage 'use cases':
  - Evaluation of free school means in primary schools
  - Setting up a dynamic measure of overcrowding linked to health data
- Supported a research project on local authority ethics
- Convened a network of organisations working with community researchers

Culture

- Embedded research in the Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan
- Member, officer, resident, researcher and VCS engagement events
- Established evaluation plans

Capacity

- Offered the first opportunities to host early career researchers in the council
- Mapped community research capacity and training across the borough and initiated a Citizen Science Academy with Act Early partners
- Supported successful research grant applications

Dissemination

- Supported organisation of the Local Authority Public Health Research Network Conference
- Advised 5 other councils applying for the second round of HDRC funding

Working in an HDRC

Creating something completely new

- Governance
- Groundwork
- High expectations

Like other local authority public health roles…

- Data and intelligence
- Appraising, synthesising and drawing on evidence
- Strategic coproduction with stakeholders
- Partnership building and system leadership
- Health improvement
- Identifying research needs

… but also unlike them

- Not a core public health function in every team
- Less focus on health protection or healthcare public health
- Different types of partner, with different organisational cultures to understand
- Chance to explore combination of research and practice

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For more information please contact hdrc@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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HDRC Doncaster Overview

Dr Susan Hampshaw, Director HDRC Doncaster

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Our vision for HDRC Doncaster is simple:
we will focus on growing capacity to **develop** and **use knowledge** within our decision-making processes leading to better outcomes for our citizens.

Underpinned by TIDES principles:

Work within each work stream will be **T**heory **I**nformed

We will learn by Doing and share our learning

We will ensure we do not privilege some voices/ideas above others (**E**quity)

We will ensure our collaboration is a pathway to **S**ustainable and applied research in Doncaster

WS1 Knowledge Mobilisation 'HDRC = a KM intervention'

- Developing skills in our people and our organisation to bring together research evidence combined with what we know locally
- Identify how best to deliver this information so that it can be part of a decision-making conversation

WS2 Capability, capacity & motivation building

- Develop skills in our people and the processes necessary to do research which will help us understand the factors that influence our health and well being

Enabling work packages:

Public Involvement and Community engagement

Data use /linkage for research purposes **BABI D flagship**

Collaboration building

City of Doncaster Council

Sheffield Hallam University

University of Sheffield

Our building blocks:

Working out how to get what we know from research into our decision making processes

Motivating people & organisations to get involved

Using and linking data

Involving staff, local people & partners

What should we research?

Learning by Doing

Motivating people & organisations to get involved

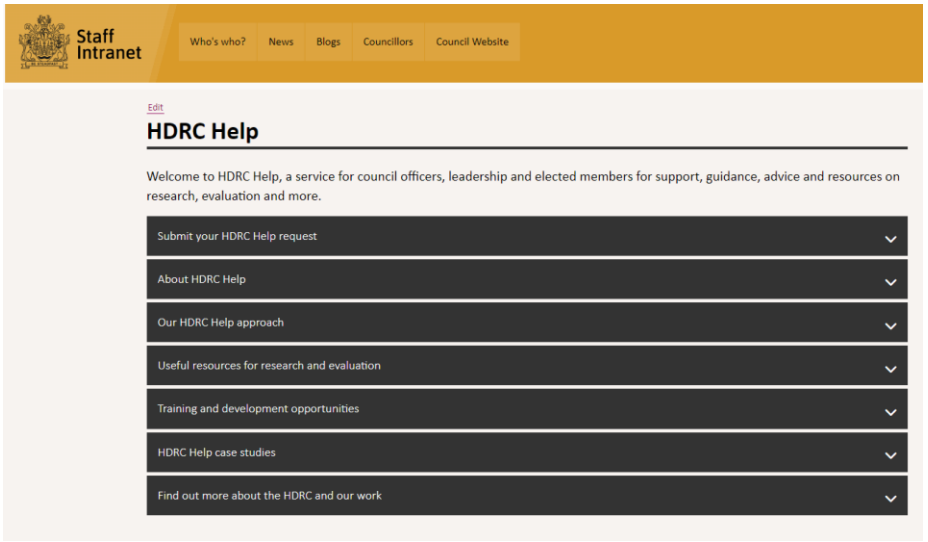
Training & Development

- Research training & development needs assessment & skills mapping survey
- Signposting & application support for individual awards
- Skill sessions at the Inaugural HDRC conference
- Placements and attachments

Presence of the embedded researchers (x8)

- Key investment - capacity
- Enthusiasm
- Critical mass
- Spotting research opportunities

- **HDRC Help**
- 28 live projects
- Capacity building (in team & in organisation)
- PH registrar involvement

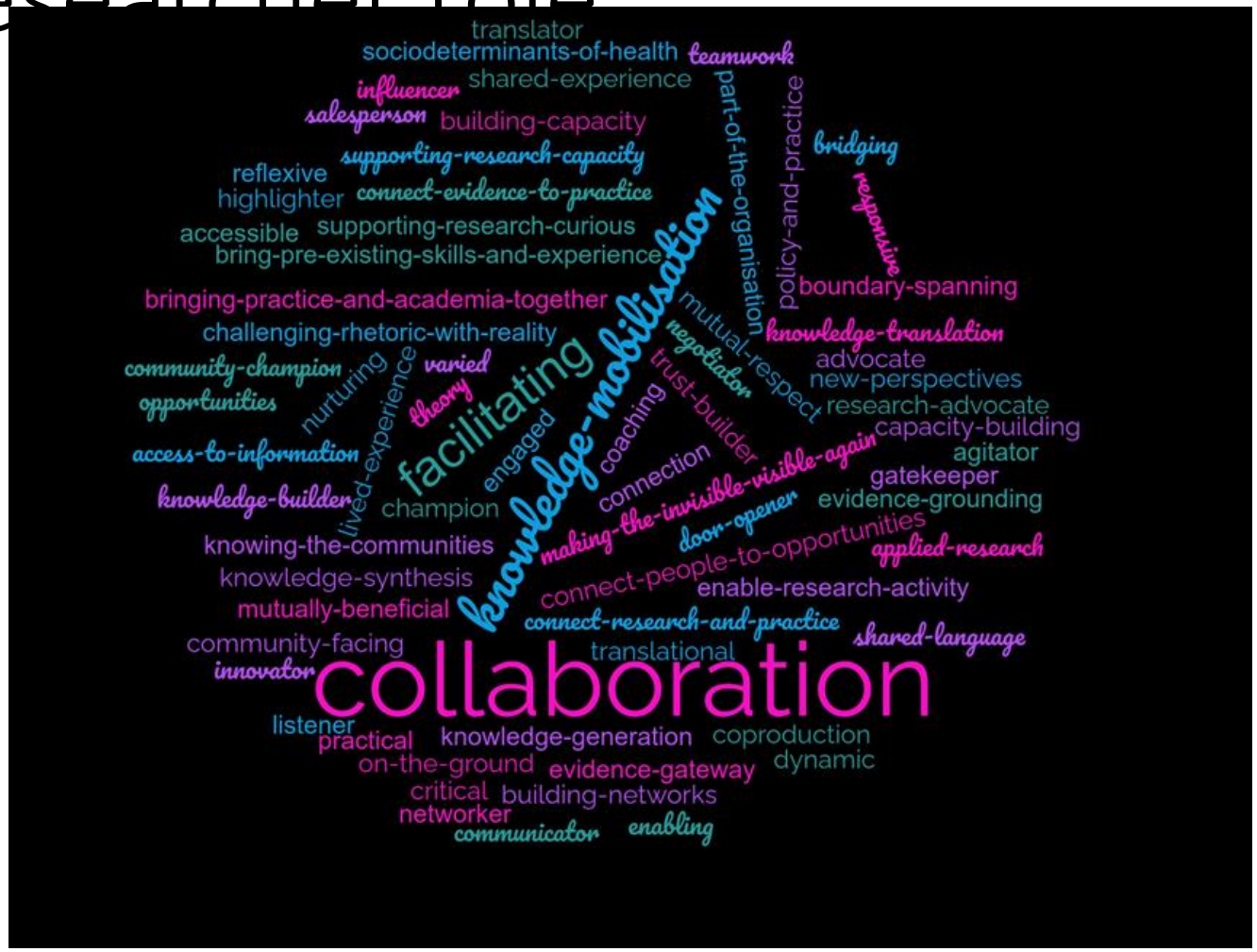


Why invest in the embedded researcher role

- Cheetham (2019) found that embedded researcher roles 'offer opportunities to generate and sustain links between policy, practice and academia'
- We had utilised embedded researchers during our NIHR Local Authority Research Systems study
- Our investment:
  - 4 co-investigators: Profs Andrew Booth and Liddy Goyder; Drs Annette Haywood and Cath Homer
  - 4 University employed embedded researchers: Drs Lorna Dowrick and Alexis Foster; Richard Gettings and Ellie Holding
  - *4 City of Doncaster HDRC employees operating as embedded researchers: Alex Delahunty and Drs Faye Esat, Susan Hampshaw, Katie Marvin-Dowle*

The embedded researcher role

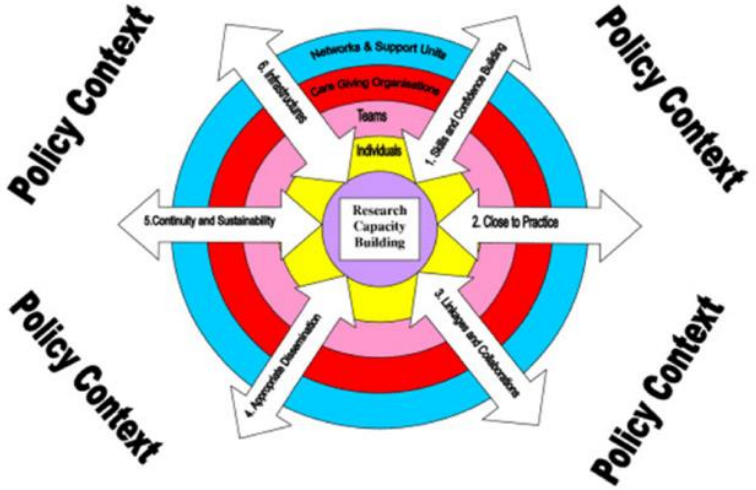
- UCL embedded researcher project uses a set of principles to define embedded researcher activity:
  - **enable research activity**
  - have **dual affiliation** across policy/practice and research organisations
  - develop a **two-way**, mutually beneficial **relationship**



Learning by Doing

Placements and attachments examples

- 2 MPH students undertaking dissertation projects (embedded research lit review, evaluation of a compassionate approach to weight training programme)
- Developing a placement with Citizens Advice Bureau and UoS Business School to work on fuel poverty within our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities
- PhD student funded via SHU looking at creative art and health inequalities
- Data analyst rom St Leger Homes to develop data linkage skills
- National Graduate Development Programme – placement starting in April
- Pre-doctoral Research Fellow
- Public Health Registrar - working on a Vaping and Young People and our Born and Bred in Doncaster Birth cohort study (opportunities: data linkage and public involvement and engagement)



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