

Social care research readiness project

MAPPING THE SOCIAL CARE LANDSCAPE ACROSS
BEDFORDSHIRE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE & HERTFORDSHIRE

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Contents

Introduction to the project	3
Approach.....	3
Findings: Social care researchers	4
Anglia Ruskin University.....	4
Research areas at Anglia Ruskin University	6
University of Bedfordshire	6
Research areas and key projects at the University of Bedfordshire	6
University of Cambridge	9
Research areas at the University of Cambridge.....	9
University of Hertfordshire	11
Research areas and key projects at the University of Hertfordshire.....	11
Engagement with social care providers	14
Engagement with the NIHR CRN Eastern.....	15
Summary of findings: Social care researchers and academics	16
Findings: Social care providers and practitioners	16
Hertfordshire.....	18
Regional networks	19
Next steps/recommendations	19
Appendices.....	21
Appendix A: Survey questions	21
Appendix B: Academics conducting social care research	23
Appendix C: Qualitative comments from academic/researchers survey respondents	29
Appendix D: Key contacts involved in the delivery of social care.....	31
Appendix E: Further social care research projects identified	33

Introduction to the project

The National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Clinical Research Network (CRN) Eastern commissioned this project to scope the social care landscape within the CRN Eastern geography. The overall aim of this exercise is to **develop capacity, partnerships and readiness** to undertake research relevant to adult and children's social care.

The overall aim of this project was fulfilled through the following objectives:

1. To map how social care is delivered across the NIHR CRN Eastern region.
2. To establish links with social care organisations and social care researchers within the NIHR CRN Eastern region.
3. To increase awareness of the support available from the NIHR for social care research.

The University of Hertfordshire was commissioned to scope the west of the NIHR CRN Eastern region. As such, this report details the social care landscape across Bedfordshire (which incorporates Central Bedfordshire and Bedford), Cambridgeshire (including Peterborough) and Hertfordshire.

Social care in England can be defined as the provision of social work, personal care, protection or social support services to children or adults in need or at risk, or adults with needs arising from illness, disability, old age or poverty.

Approach

Several methods were utilised to gather information and identify key contacts involved in the delivery of social care and/or research:

1. Scoping information online.
 - Relevant documents and websites were reviewed to foster understanding of the social care landscape in the west of the Eastern region.
 - Key individuals involved in the delivery of social care and/or social care research were identified.
2. Online surveys.
 - Two online surveys were developed– one for academics/researchers conducting social care research and one for those in practice /involved in the delivery of social care (see Appendix A for survey questions).
 - The surveys were cascaded via a number of routes, including: contacts identified through the online scoping exercise detailed above; personal/professional contacts; NIHR ARC East of England network; Herts and West Essex Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Research Strategy Group; the regional Principal Social Worker network; the regional Associate Directors of Adult Services network; and via social media.
3. Telephone meetings.
 - Telephone meetings were held with some of the key individuals identified, to elicit detailed information about the delivery of social care and the types of social care research currently being undertaken across the region.

4. Verification.

- Organograms and key contacts have, where possible, been verified with colleagues at the relevant institution/provider organisation in order to confirm current understanding and check for additional information.

The online survey tool and telephone meetings allowed for the identification of additional key individuals and social care service providers. These individuals and/or organisations were subsequently contacted, invited to complete the online survey and contributed to the mapping of social care in the CRN Eastern region. The snowballing of information proved to be a key feature of this project.

Findings: Social care researchers

Social care academics and researchers were identified from across the four universities in the west of the NIHR CRN Eastern region: Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), the University of Bedfordshire (UoB), the University of Cambridge (UoC) and the University of Hertfordshire (UH).

Through the scoping of university websites, delivering an online survey and snowballing information, 66 academics were identified with research interests relevant to social care. See Table 1 for a breakdown of the number of academics identified across the four institutions, including those who completed the online survey.

Table 1. *Number of social care researchers identified*

Institution	Academics identified	No. of survey responses
Anglia Ruskin University	22	5
University of Bedfordshire	15	4
University of Cambridge	7	4
University of Hertfordshire	22	7
Total:	66	20

Appendix B lists all the social care researchers identified in this project including, where possible, the research expertise of individual academics.

Anglia Ruskin University

Twenty-two individuals with social care interests were identified through the scoping of the Anglia Ruskin University website and ‘snowballing’ of contacts, with five academics/researchers responding to the survey. Social care researchers are broadly based in the Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine and Social Care, which incorporates the [School of Education and Social Care](#) and two research centres ([The Positive Ageing Research Institute](#) and [Veterans and Families Institute for Military Social Research](#)) with interests particularly relevant to social care and social work research (see Figure 1).

Anglia Ruskin University

Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine and Social Care*

School of Education and Social Care

Key contacts:

Dr Nicola Walshe

(nicola.walshe@anglia.ac.uk)

Vanessa Ferguson

(Vanessa.fergusson@anglia.ac.uk)

Positive Ageing Research Institute

Key contacts:

Rebecca Chandler

(Rebecca.Chandler@anglia.ac.uk)

Email:

postiveageingresearchinstitute@anglia.ac.uk

Areas of expertise:

- Supporting people with learning disabilities to develop happy and healthy social relationships
- Benefits of intergenerational interactions in care homes
- End of life care and learning disabilities
- Enabling technologies

Veterans and Families Institute for Military Social Research

Key contacts:

Matt Fossey (matt.fossey@anglia.ac.uk)

Areas of expertise:

- Veterans in the criminal justice system
- Impact of service and transition on families
- Living with limb loss

Figure 1. Organogram of key departments identified as being relevant to social care research at Anglia Ruskin University (*The Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine and Social Care also incorporates the School of Allied Health, School of Medicine and School of Nursing and Midwifery but these are not included in the organogram since social care research is less often undertaken here)

Research areas at Anglia Ruskin University

Through the survey responses from colleagues at Anglia Ruskin University and review of online material, social care research was noted in the following areas:

- Older people and ageing
- Practice learning in social work
- Marginalised groups and communities, including Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Migration and refugees
- Veterans and families social care and wellbeing
- Participatory research
- Youth transitions
- Mental health

University of Bedfordshire

Fifteen researchers/academics with social care expertise were identified at the University of Bedfordshire, located in the Institute of Applied Social Research. Four responded to our survey and provided further information. The [Institute of Applied Social Research](#) is home to three research centres which conduct research relevant to social care:

- [Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care](#)
- [The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation and trafficking](#)
- [Vauxhall Centre for the Study of Crime](#)

See Figure 4 for an organogram of the centres conducting research relevant to social care at the University of Bedfordshire.

Research areas and key projects at the University of Bedfordshire

Researchers/academics at the University of Bedfordshire have expertise in the following social care topics:

- Child sexual exploitation and other forms of childhood sexual abuse
- Child and family social work
- Adult social work
- Safeguarding – adults and children
- Gang violence
- Youth justice
- Youth participation

The details of two specific research projects delivered by the University of Bedfordshire are noted as examples of relevant research, in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Scaling and Deepening the Reclaiming Social Work Model

Lead investigator:	Dr Lisa Bostock
Institution:	Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care Research, University of Bedfordshire
Funding body:	Department for Education
Project summary:	An evaluation of the Reclaiming Social Work (RCS) model embedded in five local authorities. The RCS model is a whole-system approach which aims to deliver systemic practice in children's services.
Project outputs:	Bostock, L., Forrester, D., Patrizo, L., Godfrey, T., Zonouzi, M., Bird, H., Antonopoulou, V. & Tinarwo, M. (2017). <i>Scaling and deepening Reclaiming Social Work model: evaluation report</i> . London: Department for Education

Figure 2. Example of a University of Bedfordshire research project.

Family Safeguarding Hertfordshire

Lead investigator:	Professor Donald Forrester (<i>no longer employed at the University of Bedfordshire; s co-author Dr Lisa Bostock can be contacted</i>)
Institution:	Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care Research, University of Bedfordshire
Funding body:	Department for Education
Project summary:	An evaluation of the Family Safeguarding Hertfordshire (FSH) – a whole-system reform of children's services. FSH includes the police, local authority, clinical commission groups (CCGs), probation and substance misuse services. The evaluation drew on mixed methods including interviews, observations and secondary analysis.
Project outputs:	Forrester, D., Lynch, A., Bostock, L., Newlands, F., Cary, A., Preston, B. (2017) <i>Familv Safeauardina Hertfordshire: evaluation report</i> . London:

Figure 3. Example of a University of Bedfordshire research project.

The University of Bedfordshire is also a member of '[Making Research Count](#)', a national research dissemination initiative with the aim of promoting knowledge-based practice in social work and social care. Making Research Count was founded by a consortium of universities (including the University of Bedfordshire) with expertise in social care and social work research. Each university in the consortium forms partnerships with local agencies to develop knowledge-based practice. The University of Bedfordshire has formed a partnership with 20 local agencies, including Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Hertfordshire County Council. The University of Bedfordshire provide a range of services to their partners including a programme of seminars and conferences on topical social care and social work issues, and specialist consultancy.

University of Bedfordshire

Institute of Applied Social Research

International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation & trafficking

Key contact:

Dr Helen Beckett (helen.beckett@beds.ac.uk)

Areas of expertise:

- Child sexual abuse and exploitation
- Meaningful and ethical participation of young people
- Contextual safeguarding

Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care

Key contact:

Prof Emily Munro (emily.munro@beds.ac.uk)

Areas of expertise:

- Children and families social care/social work
- Adult social care/social work
- Evaluation research of services and interventions

Vauxhall Centre for the Study of Crime

Key contacts:

Prof John Pitts
(john.pitts4@btopenworld.com)

Dr Tim Bateman (tim.bateman@beds.ac.uk)

Areas of expertise:

- Youth crime
- Youth justice
- Gang violence
- Resettlement of young people from care involved in the youth justice system.

Figure 4. Organogram of key centres identified as being involved in social care research at the University of Bedfordshire

University of Cambridge

Seven academics were identified from the University of Cambridge as undertaking research relevant to social care and four responded to our survey requesting further information. The conduct of social care research appears to be fragmented at the University of Cambridge, spanning several departments. The majority of social care research is co-ordinated from [Cambridge Institute of Public Health](#) and [Department of Public Health and Primary Care](#); however, the [Centre for Family Research](#) and [Department of Psychiatry](#) were also noted by colleagues working at the University of Cambridge as being relevant to social care research.

Figure 5 illustrates the departments conducting research relevant to social care at the University of Cambridge.

Research areas at the University of Cambridge

The survey responses from colleagues at the University of Cambridge and information collated from the project scoping exercises identified social care research in the following areas:

- Data linkage relating to ageing and dementia
- Interventions /service delivery to improve care for individuals with complex needs, specifically frail older people
- Children's mental health services and interventions
- Cohort studies of children moving through the care systems
- Children's social care and fostering
- Family health and interventions
- Integration of health and social care

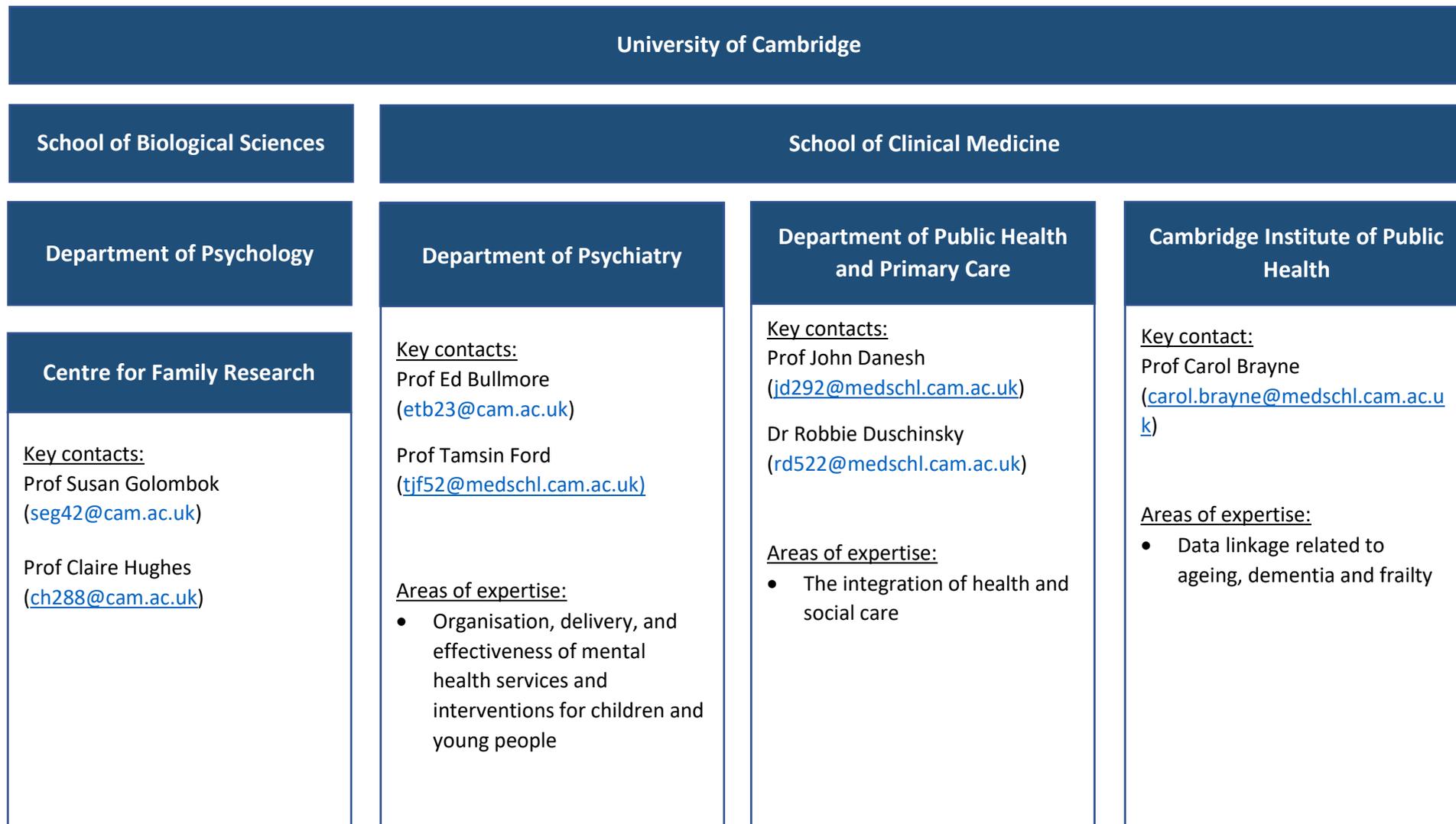


Figure 5. Organogram of key departments involved in social care research at the University of Cambridge

University of Hertfordshire

Twenty-two social care researchers/academics were identified at the University of Hertfordshire and seven responded to the survey requesting additional information. Social care research at the University of Hertfordshire is primarily carried out in the [School of Health and Social Work](#), including the Department of Allied Health Professions, Midwifery and Social Work; Department of Nursing, Health and Wellbeing and the [Centre for Research in Public Health and Community Care](#). The [Centre for Health Services and Clinical Research](#) in the [School of Life and Medical Sciences](#) was also identified as conducting social care research. See Figure 6 for an organogram of departments conducting research relevant to social care¹.

Research areas and key projects at the University of Hertfordshire

Social care research at the University of Hertfordshire spans several topic areas, including:

- Supporting older people with complex needs (including dementia) living at home and in long term care settings (care homes)
- Integrated working across health and social care for older people and their families
- Community engagement activities that support people affected by dementia to live well
- Local authority use of technology to support older people living in their own home
- Service design and delivery for people with complex health and social care needs
- Food security and malnutrition for older people living in their own homes
- Sustaining community living for people with learning disabilities
- Supporting people living with mental health illnesses
- Children living in foster care
- Youth offending
- Child protection
- Domestic violence
- Recovery based approaches in mental health
- Co-production of research with service users and carers
- International social work
- Risk assessment in social care and health
- Violence against social care and health staff
- Social care staff well-being
- Social work with older people in BAME groups
- The role of practice educators in social work

See Figure 7 and Figure 8 for examples of two social care projects delivered by the University of Hertfordshire.

¹ As the report authors work at the University of Hertfordshire, it was less challenging to scope social care research at this institution

University of Hertfordshire

School of Life and Medical Sciences

School of Health and Social Work*

Centre for Health Services and Clinical Research

Key contacts:

Dr Silvana Mengoni
(s.mengoni@herts.ac.uk)

Prof Ken Farrington
(k.farrington@herts.ac.uk)

Areas of expertise:

- Looked after children
- Learning disabilities

Centre for Research in Public Health and Community Care

Key contacts:

Prof Wendy Wills (w.j.wills@herts.ac.uk)

Prof Frances Bunn (f.bunn@herts.ac.uk)

Prof Kathryn Almack (k.almack@herts.ac.uk)

Areas of expertise:

- Supporting older people with complex needs (incl. dementia) living at home and in long term care settings (care homes)
- Integrated working across health and social care
- Technology to support social care
- Food security, malnutrition and services for older people living in their own homes

Department of Allied Health Professions, Midwifery and Social Work

Key contacts:

Prof Karen Beeton (k.s.beeton@herts.ac.uk)

Prof Brian Littlechild (b.littlechild@herts.ac.uk)

Areas of expertise:

- Youth offending
- Child protection
- Recovery based approaches in mental health
- Co-production of research with service users and carers
- Risk assessment in social care and health
- Violence against social care and health staff
- Social care staff well-being
- Social work with older people in BAME groups
- Practice educators
- Children and Families across Borders

Figure 6. Organogram of key departments involved in social care research at the University of Hertfordshire (*The School of Health and Social Work also incorporates the Department of Nursing, Health and Wellbeing; this is not included in the organogram since social care research is less often undertaken here)

The Reflective Fostering Programme – improving the wellbeing of looked after children through psycho-education groups for foster carers: a randomised controlled trial.

Lead investigator: Professor Nick Midgley, University College London

UH lead: Dr Karen Irvine (k.irvine2@herts.ac.uk)

Institution: Centre for Health Services and Clinical Research, School of Life and Medical Sciences, University of Hertfordshire

Collaborators: University College London, Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, Kings College London, Kent County Council and University of East Anglia

Funding body: NIHR Public Health Research Programme ARC East of England Supported Study

Project dates: April 2020-July 2024

Summary: A mixed methods study with inbuilt Pilot to evaluate whether using the Reflective fostering Programme alongside usual support is more effective than usual support in: promoting the child’s emotional and behavioural well-being; reducing levels of foster carer stress and increasing their quality of life; improving the carer-child relationship; and in reducing placement instability and levels of foster carer burnout.

Figure 7. Example of a University of Hertfordshire research project

Dementia Friendly Communities: The DemCom Evaluation

Lead investigator: Professor Claire Goodman (c.goodman@herts.ac.uk)

Institution: Centre for Research in Public Health and Community Care, School of Health and Social Work, University of Hertfordshire

Collaborators: University of Cambridge and University of East Anglia. CLAHRC East of England Supported Study.

Funding body: NIHR Policy Research Programme (PR-R15-0116-21003)

Project dates: January 2017 - June 2019

Summary: A mixed methods study to evaluate Dementia Friendly Communities (DFCs), including understanding how different DFCs work, what is needed to sustain them and how they help people living with and affected by dementia.

Key outputs: Buckner et al. (2019). Dementia Friendly Communities in England: A scoping study. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 34(8), 1235-1243.

Woodward et al. (2018). The place for Dementia Friendly Communities in England and its relationship with epidemiological need. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 34(1), 67-71.

Figure 8. Example of a University of Hertfordshire research project

The University of Hertfordshire is also a key member of the [Joint University Council Social Work Education Research Committee](#), with membership across the universities in the UK which provide social work research. One of our researchers was, whilst its co-chair, lead author of its [Research Strategy 2018 – 2028](#) (full version available on request). This led to a meeting in February 2020 of key funders of social work/social care research, professional bodies, universities active in social work research, and other stakeholders from across the four UK nations. Examples of interests represented are the expert by experience led [Shaping Our Lives](#) organisation, NICE, and the [NIHR School for Social Care Research](#), which will form the basis of ongoing dialogue between funders, professional bodies, and other key stakeholders.

The University of Hertfordshire has also been part of the development of NICE social work engagement materials, in which brief documents highlighting how NICE findings can be used locally in social work practice have been produced (available on request).

Further, the University of Hertfordshire is represented on the Advisory Group of the NIHR School for Social Care Research by Professor Brian Littlechild.

In our teaching partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, funded by the Department of Health and Social Care, we have instigated a research committee comprising managers, social work academics, and social work practitioners, to take forward joint funding applications and joint research work. This has resulted in meetings between academics and social work managers and practitioners concerning social care for people with early onset dementia, and one project currently taking place in relation to domestic violence towards people with learning disabilities, jointly led by a social worker practitioner and a social work academic.

Engagement with social care providers

In the survey, we asked academics/researchers whether they had engaged with “social care practitioners and providers within the East of England” over the past year. Most academic respondents (13/20) indicated that they had engaged with providers. The level of engagement reported on was varied, including disseminating research evidence to providers (for example, presenting at Hertfordshire County Council Research Coffee meetings); participating in local authority steering groups and meetings; delivering training and professional doctorates; and collaborating with social care providers as co-applicants on research grant applications.

Barriers to collaborating with social care practitioners and providers include:

- Time and workload pressures of social care staff
- Difficulty identifying key individuals
- Lack of funding
- Research not aligning with social care provider priorities

See Figure 9 for indicative quotes from the academic/research survey respondents. Appendix C details all survey comments in relation to engagement with social care providers.

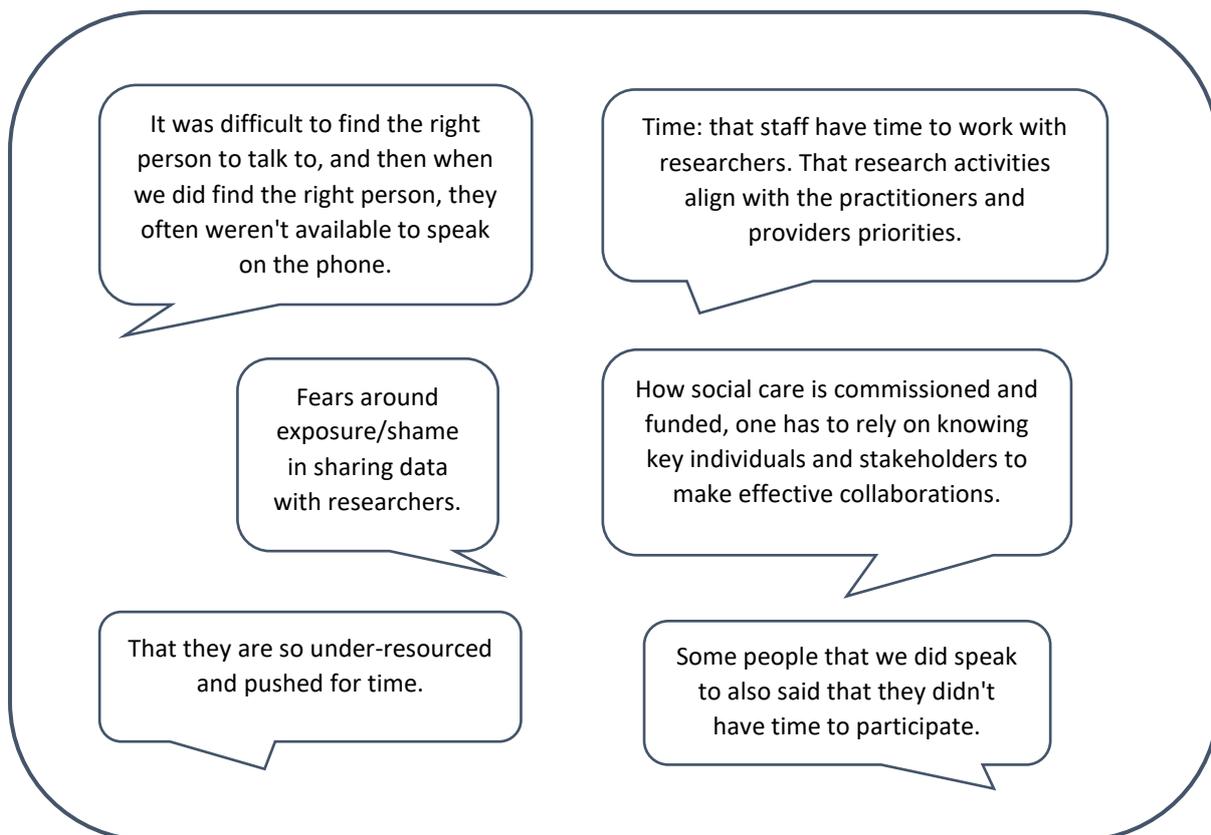


Figure 9. Challenges researchers/academics perceive when engaging with social care practitioners and providers.

Engagement with the NIHR CRN Eastern

We asked academics/researchers whether they had engaged with the CRN Eastern in the past year, and around half of survey respondents (11/20) indicated that they had. CRN Eastern were described as having facilitated the recruitment of participants and research sites, supported grant applications and advised on research funding streams (including delivering funding presentations to researchers in the Institute of Applied Social Research, University of Bedfordshire). It is not clear whether responses related specifically to support for social care or health research.

Reported barriers for academics/researchers regarding collaborating with the NIHR CRN for the Eastern region include:

- Lack of awareness of the support on offer
- Time
- Perceived lack of relevance

See Figure 10 for indicative comments from the survey respondents. Appendix C details all survey comments in relation to academic engagement with the CRN Eastern.

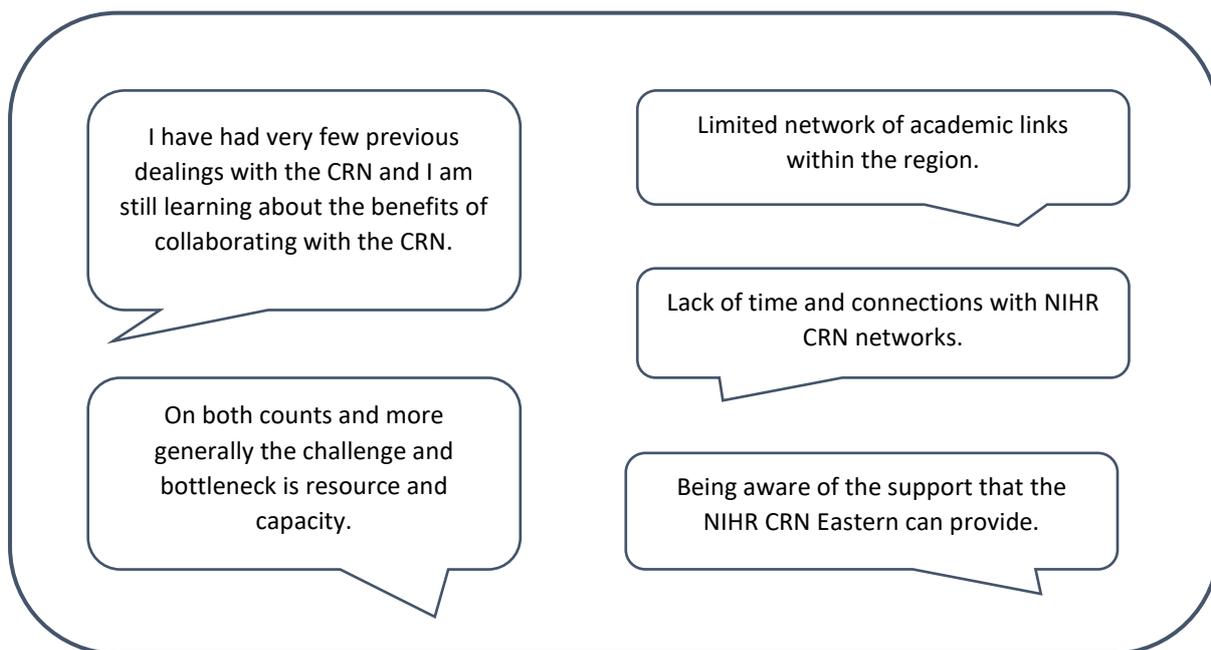


Figure 10. Challenges researchers/academics perceive when engaging with the CRN Eastern.

Summary of findings: Social care researchers and academics

The findings suggest that there is a range of social care and social work research, spanning various topic areas across adult and children’s services, being undertaken in the four universities across the west of the CRN Eastern region. There is considerable expertise in and capacity for research relevant to social care, as identified through this project.

Most academics/researchers who responded to the survey reported engaging with social care providers and practitioners. The perceived barriers to engaging with social care providers centred around the time constraints of social care practitioners and the ability to identify a key individual to act as a successful conduit to facilitate research in social care settings.

Over half of survey respondents had engaged with the CRN Eastern on some level. Barriers to engaging were time constraints and a lack of awareness about the support offered by the CRN Eastern.

Findings: Social care providers and practitioners

Limited survey responses were obtained from across the three counties the project covered (see Table 2). Fifteen survey responses were collected from a range of social care providers, including those employed by local authorities (for example, principal social workers and directors of adult services) as well as care providers from the independent sector (for example, employees in the charity organisation [POhWER](#)).

Table 2. Regional social care networks

County	No. of survey responses
Bedfordshire	7
Cambridgeshire	1
Hertfordshire	7
Total:	15

Of those who responded to the survey, the majority (13/15) reported using research evidence in their work at least ‘sometimes’. The types of research evidence which social care providers and practitioners reported drawing on varied (see Figure 11).

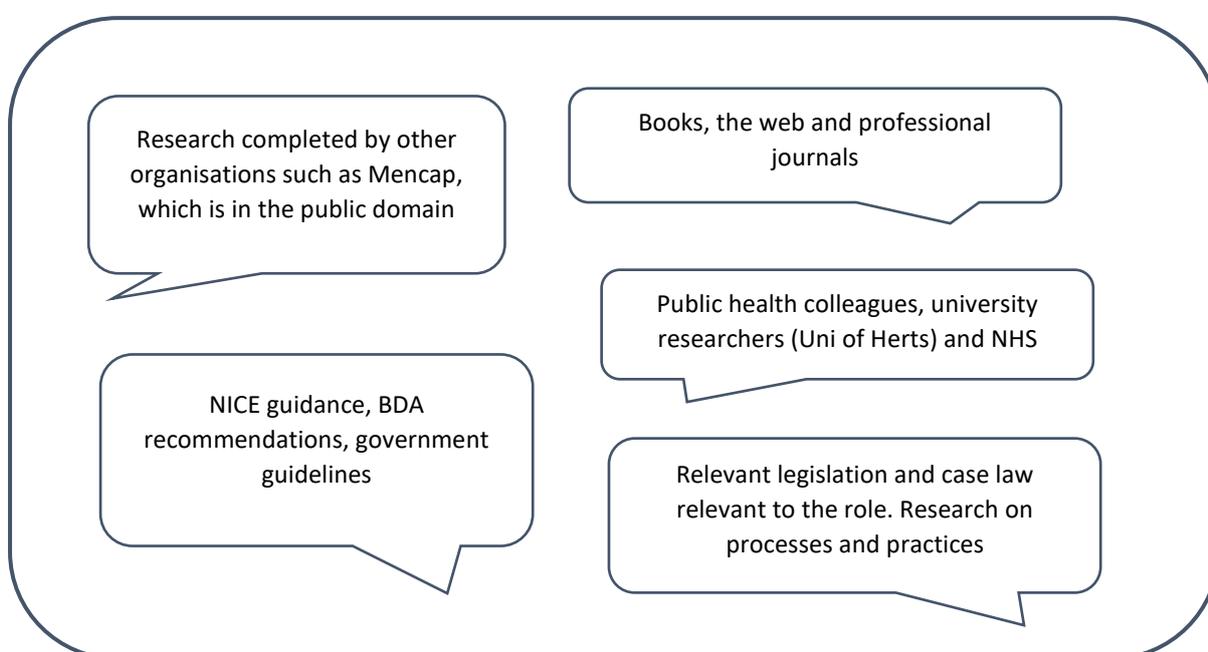


Figure 11. Sources of evidence social care providers said they utilised in their work

It is known that social care is delivered by a wide range of organisations and individuals. For example, in 2018, the adult social care sector in the Eastern region incorporated approximately 1,900 organisations, with an estimated 163,000 employees². As such, the survey responses we obtained do not provide a full reflection of the delivery of social care in the Eastern region. We asked survey respondents for contact details of other individuals or organisations that they felt would be useful for us to contact. Through using this method of ‘snowball sampling’ we were able to identify further contacts to follow up, but the findings only provide a slim snapshot of the local landscape. Appendix D lists the names and organisations of social care providers who were identified.

² <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/Regional-reports/Eastern-regional-report-2019.pdf>

Identifying individuals involved in the delivery of social care proved more challenging than scoping researchers/academics conducting social care research, primarily because individual contact details (phone numbers or email addresses) for those involved in the delivery of social care are not readily available in the public domain. Furthermore, the high turnover of staff in social care settings was noted by some individuals we spoke to as a limitation, as historic knowledge concerning collaborations and links is often lost when staff leave.

Drawing on personal and professional contacts proved to be the most effective route to identifying key organisations and individuals. As the authors of this report work at the University of Hertfordshire most of their links were with local, Hertfordshire-based organisations, and as such the findings below focus on key providers of social care in Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire

Below we provide details of several individuals, organisations and groups within Hertfordshire which have been identified as playing a role in the delivery of social care in Hertfordshire and/or have proved helpful in scoping the social care landscape:

- [Hertfordshire Care Provider's Association \(HCPA\)](#)
HCPA play a key role in social care in Hertfordshire; most adult care providers in Hertfordshire are HCPA members. A representative from HCPA responded to the online survey and commented that "HCPA would love to support research on care practice in Hertfordshire". HCPA have previously acted as a conduit for a researcher at the University of Hertfordshire, allowing the researcher the opportunity to talk about their research and identify sites which would like to participate in the study. They played a key role in the 'snowballing' of contacts for this project.
- [Age UK Hertfordshire](#)
HCPA flagged Age UK as a key organisation in the social care landscape. Age UK provide several services aimed at older people, primarily with a focus on prevention. During a telephone meeting with a representative from Age UK Herts, it was noted that they support approximately 12,000 people a year. Furthermore, the representative said they had personally tried to map the social care landscape in Hertfordshire and had been unable to do so due to the complex and fragmented nature of social care.
- [Hertfordshire Independent Living Service \(HILS\)](#)
HILS was highlighted as a key contributor to social care by both HCPA and Age UK Hertfordshire. HILS are involved in social care research with the University of Hertfordshire, including via a HILS dietitian being the recipient of an NIHR CLAHRC fellowship, which has led to ongoing research with HILS and a peer reviewed publication.
- [Hertfordshire and West Essex Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Research Strategy Group](#)
This group is co-chaired by the University of Hertfordshire (Prof Frances Bunn f.bunn@herts.ac.uk) and a colleague from a Hertfordshire NHS Trust. The membership (60+ individuals) is half academic and half from other stakeholder organisations across the STP patch, including from social care organisations and providers.

Regional networks

Throughout this project a number of regional networks (spanning the entire CRN Eastern geography) have been identified, which could act as pathways to providers of social care (see Table 3).

Table 3. Regional social care networks

Group	Details
Association of directors of adult services (ADAS)	A regional network of the directors of adult services; meets quarterly.
Associations of directors of children's services (ADCS)	A regional network of the directors of children's services.
Age UK	Age UK Hertfordshire proved a useful resource and a key organisation in the delivery of social care across Hertfordshire. Age UK Bedfordshire and Age UK Cambridgeshire & Peterborough play a similar central role in social care in their respective areas.
Health Watch	Each county has a Health Watch, whose remit includes holding social care providers to account and being aware of ongoing research and opportunities to engage.
Regional network of Principal Social Workers (adults)	The authors of this report consulted the regional Principal Social Worker (PSW) network at the network's 2020 away day. Opportunities to engage in research were viewed favourably. Following the authors consultation with the regional PSW network, 'research' will be a standing item on future PSW network meeting agendas. Chairs of the network are Sarah Range and Ioana Roberts
Sustainability and transformation partnerships (STP)	There are three STPs across the west of the Eastern region; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes• Cambridgeshire and Peterborough• Hertfordshire and West Essex

Next steps/recommendations

This project was undertaken during a short timescale (3-4 months) but has provided the CRN Eastern with the basis for further work in equipping the Eastern region to undertake a greater volume of high-quality social care research. Mapping the social care provider landscape proved especially challenging though key organisations have been identified, at least within Hertfordshire, to provide the CRN Eastern with a starting point for further mapping/investigation. In terms of mapping the academic research landscape, this was less challenging than mapping the provider landscape and the organograms provided in this report should prove useful for the CRN Eastern in terms of taking

forward conversations about raising awareness of the support the CRN Eastern can offer. The following recommendations are also suggested:

1. A key link person (with research responsibility) at each university may help the CRN Eastern to raise awareness of support for social care research, for example, the Pro Vice-Chancellor/ Associate Deans of Research. However, terminology for the appropriate contact is likely to differ across universities. For example, the research initiative at the University of Bedfordshire is driven by the Directors of each research institute whereas at the University of Hertfordshire the Associate Deans (Research) would be an effective route to contacting researchers.
2. Different individuals, research groups, provider organisations and practitioners differ in their perception of 'social care' and 'social care research'. It is therefore important that the CRN Eastern are clear in the materials they use and the conversations they have about what is meant by 'social care' research.

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey questions

Survey for academics conducting social care research:

1. Which university do you work for?
 - a. Anglia Ruskin University
 - b. University of Bedfordshire
 - c. University of Cambridge
 - d. University of Hertfordshire
 - e. Other (please specify)
2. Which schools/departments/units/centres etc. are the key contributors to social care or social work research in your university?
3. What are the key social care and social work themes or areas of expertise within your university?
4. Please provide details of key academics in the above themes or areas of expertise.
5. Please provide one or two exemplar research projects.
6. In the past year have you engaged with social care practitioners and providers within the East of England?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. If yes, could you provide examples of this engagement and what has helped facilitate this collaboration?
8. What would you say are the biggest challenges or bottlenecks you currently face in collaborating with social care practitioners and providers?
9. In the past year have you engaged with the NIHR CRN Eastern?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
10. If yes, could you provide example of this engagement and what has helped facilitate this collaboration?
11. What would you say are the biggest challenges or bottlenecks you currently face in collaborating with the NIHR CRN Eastern?

Survey for those involved in the delivery of social care:

1. Who is your employer?
2. Which local authority area do you work in?
 - a. Bedford
 - b. Central Bedfordshire
 - c. Luton
 - d. Cambridgeshire
 - e. Hertfordshire
 - f. Peterborough

- g. Other (please specify)
- 3. What services do you provide?
- 4. Who is your target population for your service?
- 5. Do you use research evidence in your work?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
- 6. If you answered 'yes' or 'sometimes', what sources of evidence do you access?

Appendix B: Academics conducting social care research

Name	HEI	Faculty/department	Area of expertise	Email address
Anglia Ruskin University				
Dr Roxana Anghel	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Transitions to adulthood from care	roxana.anghel@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Dave Beckworth	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Social work, poverty and social exclusion	dave.backwith@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Melanie Boyce	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Mental health, social inclusion, domestic abuse, marginalised groups	Melanie.Boyce@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Hilary Bungay	ARU	Allied Health	Delivery and organisation of health care services; impact of the arts on health (incl. in care home settings)	hilary.bungay@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Sarah Burch	ARU	Faculty of Health, Education, Medicine and Social Care	Older people and ageing; social policy.	sarah.burch@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Nick Caddick	ARU	Veterans and Families Institute	Veterans and families; gender, men's health and masculinities	nick.caddick@anglia.ac.uk
Vanessa Ferguson	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Deputy Head of School for Education and Social Care	Vanessa.fergusson@anglia.ac.uk
Matt Fossey	ARU	Veterans and Families Institute	Veterans and families health, social care and wellbeing	matt.fossey@anglia.ac.uk
Professor Jeffrey Grierson	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Social work and social policy	jeffrey.grierson@anglia.ac.uk
Dr David Lane	ARU		Practice learning in social work	david.lane@aru.ac.uk
Dr Pauline Lane	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Social exclusion and minority communities; refugees; Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities	pauline.lane@anglia.ac.uk
Prof Marie-Pierre Moreau	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Carers in academia	
Irina Morosanu	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Ethics and values in social work; family law; social work practice learning	irina.morosanu@anglia.ac.uk

Professor Carol Munn-Giddings	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Social work and social policy	carol.munn-giddings@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Niamh O'Brien	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Participatory approaches to research with young people	niamh.obrien@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Jenny Rose	ARU	School of Nursing and Midwifery	Wellbeing across the lifespan through behavioural interventions in childhood	jennie.rose@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Adriana Sandu	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Migration and refugees; public policy	as81@anglia.ac.uk
Jas Sangha	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Social work and social policy	jas.sangha@anglia.ac.uk
Dr David Smith	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Social and health inequalities; Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities	david.smith1@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Grace Spencer	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	Young people's health; youth transitions, migration and social change	grace.spencer@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Nicola Walshe	ARU	School of Education and Social Care	The intersection of the arts, nature and wellbeing, particularly with children	nicola.walshe@anglia.ac.uk
Dr Ceri Wilson	ARU	School of Nursing and Midwifery	Promoting mental well-being and social inclusion of mental health service users	ceri.wilson@anglia.ac.uk
University of Bedfordshire				
Dr Tim Bateman	UoB	Vauxhall Centre for the Study of Crime	Youth justice; youth custody and resettlement	tim.bateman@beds.ac.uk
Dr Helen Beckett	UoB	The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking	Child sexual exploitation and other forms of child sexual abuse	helen.beckett@beds.ac.uk
Dr Lisa Bostock	UoB	Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care Research	Child and family social work	lisa.bostock@beds.ac.uk
Dr Carlene Firmin	UoB	The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking	Contextual safeguarding and peer-on-peer abuse	carlene.firmin@beds.ac.uk
Professor Mike Fisher	UoB	Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care Research	Dementia services	mike.fisher@beds.ac.uk

Dr Julie Harris	UoB	The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking	Safeguarding of vulnerable and marginalised children	julie.harris@beds.ac.uk
Professor Ravi Kohli	UoB	Institute of Applied Social Research	Social work with asylum seeking and refugee children and their families	ravi.kohli@beds.ac.uk
Professor Emily Munro	UoB	Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care Research	Child and family social work; transitions from care to adulthood	emily.munro@beds.ac.uk
Dr Jo Neale	UoB	Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care Research	Domestic violence and abuse	jo.neale@beds.ac.uk
Professor Jenny Pearce	UoB	The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking	Child sexual exploitation and safeguarding	jenny.pearce@beds.ac.uk
Professor John Pitts	UoB	Vauxhall Centre for the Study of Crime	Gang violence; youth justice	john.pitts4@btopenworld.com
Professor Michael Preston-Shoot	UoB	Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care Research	Adult safeguarding	michael.preston-shoot@beds.ac.uk
Dr Sarah Wadd	UoB	Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care Research	Substance misuse, with a focus on alcohol use among older people	
Dr Camille Warrington	UoB	The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking	Children and young people's participation	camille.warrington@beds.ac.uk
Dr Lauren Wroe	UoB	The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking	Child criminal exploitation	lauren.wroe@beds.ac.uk
University of Cambridge				
Professor Carol Brayne	UoC	Cambridge Institute of Public Health, School of Clinical Medicine	Longitudinal population based studies; ageing	carol.brayne@medschl.cam.ac.uk

Dr Robbie Dusckinsky	UoC	Department of Public Health and Primary Care, School of Clinical Medicine	Child and family mental health; the integration of health and social care	rd522@medschl.cam.ac.uk
Professor Tamsin Ford	UoC	Department of Psychiatry, School of Clinical Medicine	Young people's mental health; mental health services and interventions	tjf52@medschl.cam.ac.uk
Professor Claire Hughes	UoC	Centre for Family Research, Department of Psychology		ch288@cam.ac.uk
Dr Louise LaFortune	UoC	Cambridge Institute of Public Health, School of Clinical Medicine	Interventions /service delivery to improve care for individuals with complex needs, specifically frail older people	l1394@medschl.cam.ac.uk
Dr Anna Moore	UoC	Department of Psychiatry, School of Clinical Medicine		l1394@medschl.cam.ac.uk
Professor Paul Ramchandani	UoC	Faculty of Education	Parents and children's mental health	pr441@cam.ac.uk
University of Hertfordshire				
Professor Kathryn Almack	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	End of life care, including specific needs of LGBT people; care environments for ageing populations; same-sex parenting; young people's involvement in research	k.almack@herts.ac.uk
Professor Frances Bunn	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Older people with complex needs including those with dementia and comorbid conditions including delivery of care and shared decision making	f.bunn@herts.ac.uk
Nicole Darlington	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Dementia friendly communities	n.darlington@herts.ac.uk
Dr Angela Dickinson	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Vulnerability and malnutrition prevention among older people; care/service delivery for older people	a.m.dickinson@herts.ac.uk
Dr Vida Douglas	UH	Department of Allied Health Professions, Midwifery and Social		v.douglas@herts.ac.uk

		Work, School of Health and Social Work		
Professor Claire Goodman	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Health and social care needs of the oldest old, including those affected by dementia and living in long term care	c.goodman@herts.ac.uk
Laura Hamilton	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Food and eating practices; poverty and inequality; free school meals	l.hamilton7@herts.ac.uk
Dr Melanie Handley	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Service design and delivery for people with complex health and social care needs.	m.j.handley@herts.ac.uk
Dr Karen Irvine	UH	Centre for Health Services and Clinical Research, School of Life and Medical Sciences	Care of children with autism; care of children/young people with depression	k.irvine2@herts.ac.uk
Dr Julia Jones	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Service user and carer involvement in research	j.jones26@herts.ac.uk
Professor Brian Littlechild	UH	Department of Allied Health Professions, Midwifery and Social Work, School of Health and Social Work	Research and services in health and social work/social care settings, professional social work, violence and aggression in health and social work/social care settings, and co-production and risk assessment in mental health and children's work.	b.littlechild@herts.ac.uk
Dr Jenni Lynch	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Use of technology to support social care	j.lynch5@herts.ac.uk
Dr Elspeth Mathie	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Service user and carer involvement in research	e.j.mathie@herts.ac.uk
Dr Andrea Mayrhofer	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Mental health, recovery, service design/delivery and social care, with a particular focus on Dementia and Young Onset Dementia	a.mayrhofer@herts.ac.uk
Dr Silvana Mengoni	UH	Centre for Health Services and Clinical Research; School of Life and Medical Sciences	Applied research with children and adults with learning disabilities/ long-term health conditions	s.mengoni@herts.ac.uk

Professor Shula Ramon	UH	Department of Allied Health Professionals, Midwifery and Social Work	Mental health and social work	s.ramon@herts.ac.uk
Dr Claire Thompson	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Applied health and social care research with local partners; community responses to health inequalities	c.thompson25@herts.ac.uk
Dr Julia Warrener	UH	Department of Allied Health Professions, Midwifery and Social Work, School of Health and Social Work	Practice education in social work	j.warrener@herts.ac.uk
Dr David Wellsted	UH	Centre for Health Services and Clinical Research, School of Life and Medical Sciences	Concordance, adherence, and behaviour change in people living with long term conditions	d.m.wellsted@herts.ac.uk
Professor Wendy Wills	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Vulnerability and malnutrition prevention among older people	w.j.wills@herts.ac.uk
Professor Mark Whiting	UH	Centre for Research in Public Health & Community Care	Caring for children with complex needs and disabilities	m.1.whiting@herts.ac.uk
Dr Yuet Way Yeung	UH	Department of Allied Health Professions, Midwifery and Social Work, School of Health and Social Work	Practice education in social work	y.yeung2@herts.ac.uk

Note. ARU = Anglia Ruskin University; UoB = University of Bedfordshire; UoC = University of Cambridge; UH = University of Hertfordshire

Appendix C: Qualitative comments from academic/researchers survey respondents

Challenges or bottlenecks in collaborating with social care practitioners/providers:	Challenges or bottlenecks in collaborating with the NIHR CRN Eastern:
N/A	Limited network of academic links within the region. Time.
That they are so under-resourced and pushed for time.	The process for engaging in social care research are new and untested, so unable to get definitive answers to questions about things such as RTCs etc.
I have previously invited people providing social care to people with learning disabilities to take part in research. It was difficult to find the right person to talk to, and then when we did find the right person, they often weren't available to speak on the phone. Some people that we did speak to also said that they didn't have time to participate.	None
Churn of staff within LA. Fears around exposure/shame in sharing data with researchers.	
How social care is commissioned and funded, one has to rely on knowing key individuals and stakeholders to make effective collaborations.	Always have to justify the study as relevant to the portfolio but once that is established then very helpful indeed.
Ability of social care providers to invest in research-based practice.	
Their busy workloads reducing capacity to support research & lack of clarity around local area ethical and governance requirements.	Limited funding opportunities relevant to our work with children and young people.
Time: that staff have time to work with researchers. That research activities align with the practitioners and providers priorities.	Being aware of the support that the NIHR CRN Eastern can provide.
The lack of research capacity and awareness. There is no embedded process for engaging directly with researchers and social care practitioners/providers often don't know how these relationships should work. This can make it very difficult for researchers to find the right people to work with i.e. those with authority to collaborate and make decisions; and can cause lots of practical delays, e.g. agreeing honorary contracts.	As I largely do social care research I have had very few previous dealings with the CRN and I am still learning about the benefits of collaborating with the CRN.
	On both counts and more generally the challenge and bottleneck is resource and capacity I think. The team are great.
Lack of time, their workload, different priorities, fragmented nature of social care provision.	
Lack of capacity on their part.	
Heavy teaching workload.	Lack of time and connections with NIHR CRN networks.

Fast changing landscape, organisations in a state of flux and people changing roles or leaving. Also, unless there is clear opportunities for income generation collaboration is getting harder.	I do not see it as relevant to my research interests - although I appreciate this could be a misinterpretation.
Not sure	Time
Practitioners with limited research skills or know how masquerading (or being forced to) as academics/researchers. Ideologically driven research whereby only certain topics, explanations or conclusions are valid. In my view this is related to the previous point.	None they are very helpful.
funding available to researchers	application process
For social care providers: I think they are very stretch and unless the research directly helps them improve the care they offer it will be hard to engage them - mainly due to time constraints, not lack of interest. For providers: I think it will be easier if the research provides evidence directly relevant to their decision making (obvious answer, I know, but only in principle - in practice it might be more difficult to prioritise and demonstrate direct/short term value).	

Appendix D: Key contacts involved in the delivery of social care

Name	Role	Employer
Leire Agirre	Principal Social Worker (adult)	Central Bedfordshire Council
Michelle Airey	Integration Manager	Hertfordshire Care Provider's Association
Charlotte Black	Service Director: Adults and safeguarding	Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council
Geoff Brown	Chief Executive	Healthwatch Hertfordshire
Ruth Coals	Head of Professional Standards; Principal Social Worker	Central Bedfordshire Council Children's Services
Helen Duncan	Principal Social Worker (adult)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Hannah Gardner	Admiral Nurse	East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust
Mark Hanna	Director of Operations	Age UK Hertfordshire
Martha Haruna	Community manager	POhWER
Fizz Heseltine	Director	Living It Up Events CIC
Kelly Holland	Specialist Support Services Manager	
David Jones	Interim Chief Officer & Principal Social Worker	Bedford Borough Council
Kulbir Lalli	Head of Integrated Accommodation Commissioning & Workforce Development Integrated Accommodation Commissioning Adult Care Services	Hertfordshire County Council
Iain MacBeath	Director of Adult Care Services	Hertfordshire County Council
Claudia Megele	Children's Principal Social Worker & Chair of the National Children's Principal Social Worker network	Hertfordshire County Council
Tanya Moore	Principal Social Worker (adult)	Hertfordshire County Council
Asimah Naseem	Community manager	POhWER
Tim Parlow	Head of Integrated Community Support Commissioning (Older People) Adult Care Services	Hertfordshire County Council

Sarah Range	Principal Social Worker (adult) & Chair of Principal Social Worker network for the Eastern region	Southend
Ioana Roberts	Principal Social Worker (adult) & Chair of Principal Social Worker network for the Eastern region	Suffolk
Maria Surgenor	Head of Skills	The Aurora Group
Priva Vaithilingam	Head of Research & Engagement	Healthwatch Hertfordshire
Rosalind Wyllie	Head of Engagement	Age UK Hertfordshire

Appendix E: Further social care research projects identified

Lead investigator/ Contact person	HEI	Title/Focus of research project	Further details
Anglia Ruskin University			
Dr Hilary Engward	ARU	Blesma Families Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The family perspective on living with limb loss – Funded by the Forces in Mind Trust
Rebecca Chandler	ARU	The UP! Intergenerational Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Exploring the benefits of intergenerational interactions in care home settings – Part funded by Essex County Council and the Essex Community Foundation
Professor Carol Munn-Giddings	ARU	Arts in the care settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The role of the arts in building creativity and community in older people in care settings. – Funded by the Arts Council – 2016-2018
Professor Carol Munn-Giddings	ARU	ESTEEM: Effective support for self-help/mutual aid groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Funded by the Big Lottery Fund – 2010-2013
University of Bedfordshire			
Professor Emily Munroe	UoB	Evaluation of the National Female Genital Mutilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – DfE Children’s Innovation Fund – Ongoing
Dr Sarah Wadd	UoB	Drink Wise, Age Well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Informing policy and practice to prevent alcohol misuse among older people – Funded by the Big Lottery Fund
Dr Camille Warrington	UoB	The Making Noise Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Children’s experiences of help-seeking and support after sexual abuse in the family environment – Funded by the Children’s Commissioner for England – March 2015- October 2016

University of Cambridge			
Dr Robbie Duschinsky	UoC	Living Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Investigate the problems facing children’s services and how health and social care might work together effectively to support children and families. – Collaboration between University of Cambridge, University of Kent and the National Children’s Bureau – Funded by Wellcome – Ongoing – 5 year project
University of Hertfordshire			
Dr Angela Dickinson	UH	Meals on wheels feasibility study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Westminster Council
Professor Claire Goodman	UH	OPTIMAL: Better health for care homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A realist evaluation of the features and mechanisms that support effective working for the continuing care of older people in residential settings. – Funded by NIHR Health Services and Delivery Research programme – January 2013 – December 2016
Professor Claire Goodman Professor Frances Bunn	UH	Namaste Care Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Namaste Care intervention to improve the quality of dying for people with advanced dementia living in care homes: A realist review and feasibility study for a cluster randomised controlled trial – November 2016 – October 2018
Professor Brian Littlechild Vida Douglas	UH	Domestic violence and learning disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Examining domestic violence towards people with learning disabilities, jointly led by a social worker practitioner and a social work academic. – Hertfordshire County Council and UH Teaching Partnership project – Ongoing
Dr Jennifer Lynch	UH	Assistive technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NIHR funded Knowledge Mobilisation Research Fellowship – May 2018 – May 2021
Dr Julia Warrener	UH	BUIBRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Building bridges between Europe and China to strengthen the social work profession

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- A collaboration between three European Universities (including UH) and three Chinese universities.
 - Funded by Erasmus+

Professor Wendy Wills UH [Food provision in later life](#)

- A study about older people's experience of accessing food in the UK
- Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council
- September 2014 - August 2016

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