

Centre for Health and Clinical Research (CHCR)

Newsletter, January 2026

Introduction from the Director

It has been a busy six months in the Centre for Health and Clinical Research (CHCR) since the previous newsletter was published.



Following on from our annual showcase conference, where we launched the award for CHCR Colleague of the Year, I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to our runners up, [Dr Ali Llewellyn](#) and [Dr Jen Orme](#) and our overall winner, [Dr Alison Diaper](#). These individuals exemplify what it means to be a role model, having made significant contributions to the Centre through their exceptional teamwork. The impressive number of colleagues nominated for this award serves as a testament to the dedication of Centre members in advancing health and care research while supporting one another.

Above: Dr Alison Diaper (left) receiving her award for CHCR Colleague of the Year 2024/25.

At the end of December, we were very sorry to have to say farewell to [Professor Candy McCabe](#), Professor of Clinical Research and Practice, as she retired from UWE Bristol. When I took over as Centre Director, Candy offered exceptional support in her role as a theme lead and has always been a staunch advocate for early and mid-career researchers pursuing clinical research careers. She also played a pivotal role in establishing significant collaborations with our clinical colleagues, alongside managing a substantial portfolio of funded research that has made a notable impact on healthcare both nationally and internationally. Candy continues to serve as the Head of Education and Research at [Dorothy House Hospice Care](#), where her research aims to enhance the quality of life for individuals with life limiting conditions, through to end of life. Candy also continues to co-Lead the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)-supported [Incubator for Palliative and End of Life Care](#).

Finally, we are delighted to announce that Candy has been appointed Emerita Professor at UWE Bristol, and we look forward to her continued presence and collaboration with CHCR.



Left: Celebrating the end of an era with Professor Candy McCabe (Seated, third from left).

Also in December, we were delighted to learn that [Jonathan Benger](#) CBE, Professor of Emergency Care and former Emergency Care theme lead for CHCR (*pictured below*), has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#). His appointment follows previous roles at NICE including chief medical officer, interim director of the Centre for Guidelines and deputy chief executive.



In his 20-year career at UWE Bristol, Jonathan's research interests have covered cardiac arrest, airway management, early diagnostic technologies, workforce, design research and pre-hospital care. Under Jonathan's exemplary leadership, the [Emergency Care theme](#) have contributed to securing more than £30 million in research funding and generated research evidence that has resulted in real world impact and improvements to patient care and

service delivery across the urgent and emergency care system. Jonathan has been instrumental in supporting capacity building and career development and leaves the theme in a strong position to continue on a successful trajectory.

We are extremely grateful for Jonathan's leadership, expertise and support and wish him all the very best in his new role. Whilst Jonathan will be stepping down from his role at UWE Bristol in April 2026, he will continue to practice as a Consultant in Emergency Medicine at the Bristol Royal Infirmary and works shifts with the Great Western Air Ambulance, a charity he helped to establish. We look forward to continuing to work with Jonathan in his new role at NICE and as Emeritus Professor at UWE Bristol.

Finally, the CHCR Doctoral Showcase will take place on Wednesday 4 March 2026 from 12:00 to 2:00 pm and the CHCR Annual Showcase Conference will take place on Wednesday 8 July 2026 with further details on registration for both events to follow shortly. In the meantime, save the dates and make sure that you sign up early to secure your place as we are expecting to reach capacity.

I do hope that you enjoy reading about our work and encourage you to share this newsletter with your colleagues.

To find out more about our research, please [visit our website](#) and [follow us on LinkedIn](#).

For additional queries, please [contact me by email](#) or telephone 0117 3288501.

Fiona Cramp

Professor of Long Term Conditions and Director of CHCR

News from the Emergency Care theme

Interim Theme Lead: [Professor Sarah Voss](#)

The Emergency Care Theme aims to enhance and improve the delivery of urgent and emergency care through innovative research and development in collaboration with the [Research in Emergency Care Avon Collaborative Hub \(REACH\)](#).

Highlights

The [main output](#) from the NIHR Health & Social Care Delivery Research (HSDR) funded study investigating the clinical and cost effectiveness of paramedics working in general practice (READY Paramedics) has been included in the 2025 Top 10 list of research outputs published in the British Journal of General Practice. The findings indicate that although paramedics working in general practice can reduce workload for GPs, there is no evidence of a reduction in NHS costs.



[Alyesha Proctor](#) has won a series of awards for presentations from her PhD, including: 'Best presentation' at the REACH annual showcase 2025 for 'Developing an Intervention to Support Paramedics in Safely Assessing and Managing Children with Minor Head Injury', and 'Research most likely to affect clinical practice' at the 999 EMS conference 2025 for her presentation titled 'Evaluating the acceptability and usability of a new Pre-hospital Assessment Tool for Children with Head injury (PATCH)'.

Left: Alyesha Proctor receiving a presentation award.

Research updates

[Professor Sarah Voss](#), [Dr Laura Goodwin](#), and [Neen Nedder](#) are embarking on a project in collaboration with Weston General Hospital and the For All Healthy Living Centre, funded by the Integrated Care Academy at UWE Bristol. This project will investigate experiences of individuals and teams participating in interagency collaboration and partnership working to evaluate and strengthen collaborative co-design of a High Intensity User (HIU) service at Weston General Hospital.



A [policy brief](#) from the recently completed Paramedic Delivery of End of Life Care (ParAid) research study was published in November 2025. This was the first England-wide mixed-methods evaluation of practice funded by Marie Curie and led by the University of Southampton. [Professor Sarah Voss](#), co-applicant, provided expertise on research in emergency care and worked closely with palliative care research experts to ensure the findings were translated into actionable recommendations with significant potential to change practice

and improve patient care. The study investigated how ambulance paramedics support people in the last year of life following a 999 call, what challenges they face, and how services can best enable effective, compassionate care.

The brief highlights key recommendations for policy and service improvement including palliative and end of life care education and training for all paramedics:

- 24/7 access to specialist palliative care advice lines for all paramedics
- Access to and ability to administer just-in-case medicines by all paramedics
- Improved interdisciplinary collaboration between paramedics and the wider healthcare team
- Better interoperability of patient records to ensure paramedics have the right information at the right time

This work provides a foundation for system-wide policy development aimed at strengthening the training, integration, and support of paramedics in delivering safe and effective end of life care.



[Dr Laura Goodwin](#) received funding from Health Innovation South West for a repeat evaluation of neonatal hypothermia data to explore the local impact of changes made in the NHS as a result of recent UWE Bristol-led research on prehospital birth.

Doctoral students

The EC theme are currently supporting five doctoral students: [Peter Danihel](#) is an Advanced Clinical Practitioner in Urgent and Emergency Care, investigating paramedic assessment and management for pain in people living with dementia; **Peter Owen** is a specialist paramedic in critical care, investigating how dispatch for prehospital critical care teams such as air ambulances can be improved; **Matt Dixon** is an advanced paramedic practitioner exploring the impact of portfolio working on paramedic wellbeing, job satisfaction and retention in the United Kingdom; [Alyesha Proctor](#) is an NIHR Doctoral Research Fellow and Advanced Paramedic Practitioner in General Practice aiming to develop an intervention to support Paramedics in safely assessing and managing children with minor head injury; and **Suzanne Ablard** is an NIHR Doctoral Research Fellow investigating the experiences of children and families when they receive care though hospital at home.

Philip Braude recently completed his DPhil (PhD by publication), looking at frailty and serious injuries. As part of his work, Philip examined frailty and outcomes in the national trauma database (TARN), studied how surgeons view frailty in acute admissions, and examined the phenomenon of frailty and discrimination in trauma care.

Events and management

The REACH Annual Showcase was held on Monday 10 November 2025 at the Watershed, Bristol. The 2025 event centred on 'capacity building in emergency care research'. The event

included presentations from a range of speakers and provided insights into emergency care career pathways and development opportunities, alongside current emergency care research in the region. There were 54 people in attendance, and feedback on the day was extremely positive. The [REACH annual report \(PDF\)](#) has also been published.



Above: REACH Annual Showcase.

The NIHR Emergency Care Incubator Symposium was held on the 10 and 11 November 2025 at The Watershed in Bristol. The programme was delegate led and faculty facilitated. It included seven interactive workshops aimed at stimulating and refining research ideas, developing a range of research skills (some seldom taught), and fostering emergency care research in a supportive and non-intimidating environment. There were 68 people in attendance.



Above: NIHR Emergency Care Incubator Symposium.

As part of the PARADE project (**PAR**amedic **Active** lives promotion for **olDEr** people), three highly successful workshops were held during October to shape the next phase of research on falls prevention and healthy ageing. Across the sessions, 40 participants took part, including 10 patient and public representatives, care home managers and staff, paramedics, and representatives from Age UK and Sirona. The workshops shaped priorities for intervention design, ensured the research reflects lived experience and workforce realities and are already influencing the development of falls prevention practice and patient-facing resources.

News from the ACTIoN (Assessment, Care, Treatment In Neurology) theme

Theme Lead: [Professor Richard Cheston](#)

ACTIoN theme members come from many different research and clinical professions and work across many different areas of neurological research, bringing their research experience to bear on a range of issues related to assessment, care and treatment.

Research updates

Enhancing Hip Surveillance Pathways for children and young people with Cerebral Palsy (DECIDE-CP). Senior Physiotherapy Lecturer and PhD student, [Tanya McGrath](#) (right), has been awarded a Pre-Doctoral Award by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Charitable Trust (CSPCT) to support her doctoral study, DECIDE-CP. Tanya is a specialist paediatric physiotherapist working with children and families in the UWE Bristol Human Analysis Laboratory, and her PhD focuses on improving hip surveillance for children and young people with Cerebral Palsy. The



DECIDE-CP study aims to enhance the UK hip surveillance pathway by embedding the perspectives of children, families, and clinicians into clinical decision-making for hip displacement and dislocations. In its review, the CSPCT panel commended the project's strong rationale, high-quality patient and care involvement and its potential to deliver meaningful improvements to the lives of children and their families. This work aligns with and supports national developments led by the Cerebral Palsy Integrated Pathway, the UK's coordinated programme for hip surveillance. See [further information about the national approach](#).

Continence research: [Professor Nikki Cotterill](#) was the senior co-lead on an application to the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) workstream for funding to establish the EVOLVE project (Evaluating natiOnAL use of the perinatal pelVic hEalth self-assessment questionnaire).

Neuropsychology research: [Dr Anna Piasecki](#) received funding from North Bristol NHS Trust to start the development of CO-LAB – a COgnitive and LAnguage-Based intervention toolkit to support the rehabilitation of people with brain cancer. Her team (the Brain, Language and Behaviour Lab) won the 'Outstanding Collaboration' category in the North Bristol NHS Staff Awards. Additionally, PhD student **Hajira Mumtaz** won the Best Oral Presentation in the Oncology session at the *Society of the British Neurological Surgeons* conference.

Dementia Research: [Dr Nancy Zook](#) and [Professor Rik Cheston](#) were co-applicants on a submission to the UKRI (UK Research & Innovation) for funding to develop an AI-enabled decision support system for dementia care. Nancy also presented on her work developing a [gamified test using eye tracking and deep learning towards the early diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease](#) at the Alzheimer's Research UK South West Network Conference.



[Dr Natasha Woodstoke](#), Karin Burschenfeld, [Dr Emily Dodd](#) and [Professor Rik Cheston](#) collaborated with the Gloucestershire charity Mindsong, to produce a [short film](#) aimed at introducing the LivDem model, whilst Rik's research was recognised as he won the UWE Bristol Community Impact Award. The LivDem team continued to expand with Jude McClellan starting her PhD to adapt the model for people with Young Onset dementia.

Finally, congratulations to [Professor Rik Cheston](#) (right) who won the UWE Bristol Community Impact Award. Rik has dedicated his career as a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Professor of Dementia Research to improving the emotional and psychological wellbeing of people living with dementia, including those from diverse communities. His work on wide-ranging projects highlights Rik's ongoing commitment to equitable dementia services for all communities and the positive impact his work has had both locally and across the UK.



News from the MAMBO (Musculoskeletal Management, Measurement, Behaviour change and Outcomes) theme

Theme Lead: [Professor Emma Dures](#)



In September, MAMBO hosted an away day for members at the Arnolfini. Twenty-two people, including patient partners who support our research, joined us. We talked about creative ways to communicate with our stakeholders facilitated by [Professor Clare Wilkinson](#) from UWE Bristol's [Science Communication Unit](#) – thank you Clare! We also shared ideas for ways that MAMBO can support members and their research. In December, Steve Creffield from

Evolve Integral gave a follow-up session on solution-focused coaching techniques to build on strengths, open new perspectives, and keep momentum in your conversations and collaborations.

Above: Creative Lego - different solutions to the same problem.



MAMBO are delighted to have a number of new projects starting up, looking at quality of care and support provision for adults with learning disabilities. The projects are being led by [Katie Fishpool](#). [Katie Fishpool](#), [Professor Emma Dures](#), [Jen Orme](#) and [Dr Emma Douglass](#) are being funded by Bristol Health Partners, through the Bristol Bones and Joint Health Integration Team, to explore the experiences of people with learning

disabilities who access rheumatology care. They have created accessible resources including a video, poster and information leaflet to invite people to attend PPI events.

Above: Katie Fishpool in a still from the introduction video for research participants with learning disabilities.

Kim Oakes has recently joined the team as a Research Associate, working on a project led by Katie Fishpool and funded by Bristol and Weston Hospital Charities. Kim will be conducting a scoping review of the use of reasonable adjustments to support people with learning disabilities accessing outpatient services.

[Katie Fishpool](#) has also been awarded NIHR Pre Application Support funding for training, working with communities and network development to inform a doctoral application on "Addressing the needs of people with learning disabilities and arthritis".



As a member of the Men's Health Academic Network, [Dr Caroline Flurey](#) (left) contributed to England's first men's health strategy which was published in November 2025. The network is a national body that will advise the Government on the implementation of the strategy and the evidence needed to improve men's health outcomes across the country. Caroline took part in radio interviews with Heart FM LBC and the BBC to discuss the men's health strategy following its launch.

Left: Caroline Flurey at the BBC.

[Dr Caroline Flurey](#) has also been awarded £6k funding from Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care Board research capacity funding for working with people and communities and stakeholder engagement towards a future NIHR application: "Building men's mental fitness behind bars: Evaluating Talk Club in UK prisons"

[Professor Emma Dures](#) was invited to visit the clinical team at Geneva University Hospitals, Switzerland in October. She gave a talk on 'Fatigue in inflammatory rheumatic conditions' to around 50 people from the region, with a mix of clinical backgrounds including physicians, nurses, and psychologists.



Our congratulations to **Ruben McNeil-Walsh** who successfully defended his PhD at viva in August. Ruben's research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council South West Doctoral Training Partnership and his thesis was titled "The experiences of young men living with and managing inflammatory arthritis, and the healthcare professionals who care for them."

Above: Ruben with his supervisors Dr Caroline Flurey (Director of Studies) (right) and Professor Fiona Cramp (left).

News from the Supportive, Palliative Care and End of Life theme (SPACE)

Theme Lead: [Dr Alison Llewellyn](#)

It is delightful that the new year for the SPACE theme has commenced with us being able to report a significant amount of activity. Recent meetings have showcased a comprehensive program of presentations from our members, emphasizing the extensive range and depth of expertise within the theme. We have thoroughly appreciated the presentations from:

- [Dr Annie Bellamy](#), who discussed the palliative care concept of 'dying-in-place' and its application to architectural practice,
- **Dr Pauline Humphrey**, who presented her research on brachytherapy (for cervical cancer), and
- **Rachel Simms-Moore**, who shared her work on intervention development for fatigue management in primary brain tumour.

Achievements and awards



We were thrilled that [Dr Ilhem Berrou](#) (left) was recently recognised in the UWE Bristol Staff Awards for her outstanding work to develop and launch a community based digital startup for provision of free healthcare and wellbeing services across the UK. Awarded highly commended in the Community Impact category, her success was announced with this lovely testimonial: *"Their dedication and vision aim to ease the burden on current health infrastructure and provide these community services to people of all abilities. With a focus of making healthcare accessible and inclusive, Dr Ilhem is leading a handful of teams to achieve significant milestones in sustainability and inclusivity."*

Warm congratulations also go to [Dr Annie Bellamy](#), who was nominated for this highly competitive award.

Adding a creative (and culinary!) flourish, **Rachel Simms-Moore** was deservedly recognised in the UWE Bristol Bake Your PhD competition. This imaginative entry was not only a delight to the taste buds but also an innovative and engaging way to communicate research. Rachel described her cake as: *“based on my PhD on fatigue in people with primary brain tumours, with a patient quote, “I’m tired of being tired” written in icing around the base. It was a floating illusion cake, created using a slate cake stand and stainless steel dowel. The top was a vanilla sponge with strawberry jam and buttercream filling, and the bottom half was moulded from rice krispies and marshmallow. I used edible food colouring to dye the fondant in different colours and shaped it into swirls to mimic the brain’s surface, with small dots representing tumours. The greyscale half of the brain symbolises how fatigue drains energy, leaching the colour from the other side.”*



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Finally, congratulations to **Claire Prendergast** from Dorothy House Hospice, who recently passed her UWE Bristol MSc Dissertation module. Well done Claire!

New appointments

[Dr Michelle Griffiths](#) has been appointed as a steering group member for the James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership for thyroid diseases. This is an important opportunity to contribute to shaping the future research agenda for this significant and burdensome group of conditions.

[Dr Ali Llewellyn](#) was delighted to have contributed to establishment of the new [Bristol Health Partners End of Life Matters \(ELM\) Health Integration Team](#). Led by Dr Sophy Gretton, Palliative Care Consultant at University Hospitals Bristol and Weston, Ali is one of a team of co-directors for this excellent new initiative in the Southwest region.

[Dr Sunny Chan](#) published a book chapter entitled “Effectiveness and future direction of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy: A synthesis of systematic reviews/meta-analyses”. This is included in [The Palgrave Handbook of Third-Wave Psychotherapies](#).

Working with colleagues from Addenbrooke’s Hospital in Cambridge and the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore, [Dr Ali Llewellyn](#) has developed two educational videos arising from her NIHR-funded study on therapy-led management of complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS). Hosted on the CRPS Network website, [these videos are for healthcare professionals and one for people living with CRPS](#).

Grants and upcoming projects

[Dr Michelle Griffiths](#) has been awarded a UWE Bristol Integrated Care Academy grant for her project “Perceptions and use of AI chatbots: A survey of long-term condition patient charities to co-develop digital services”. Reviewers commended the application for its innovative approach to exploring trust and trustworthiness in AI.

[Dr Sadia Janjua](#) has received Research Capability Funding from University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust to extend her work on psychological interventions for emotional wellbeing in people with advanced progressive life limiting illness and support a bid for further funding. Patient and public involvement activities are underway to inform the design of the future project.

The ENRICH study, led by Dorothy House Hospice, has now commenced. This Arthritis UK funded project seeks to inform recommendations to help people live well with inflammatory arthritis throughout the disease course. **Dr Sharon Grieve**, is managing the study alongside [Professor Candy McCabe](#), with [Dr Ali Llewellyn](#) leading one of the work packages.

Other activity

[Dr Michelle Griffiths](#) was delighted to present at the United Kingdom and Ireland Vasculitis Society educational course in November 2025. Her well-received talk focused on the psychological aspects of vasculitis care.

Also in November 2025, [Dr Ali Llewellyn](#) was invited to present to the British Association of Hand Therapy and the British Society for the Surgery of the Hand in Birmingham. She shared findings from her ENACT-CRPS study on therapy-led management of complex regional pain syndrome in England.

News from the Workforce Research theme

Interim Theme lead: [Professor Nicola Walsh](#)

Following the official launch of the Workforce theme (WReT) at the CHCR conference back in the Summer, we are delighted that our monthly meetings are well attended with representation from UWE Bristol and other external organisations locally. We would of course be delighted to welcome new members from within UWE Bristol and across the region. If you would like more details about the theme and our meeting schedule, please contact Neen Nedder (neen.nedder@uwe.ac.uk). You can also [follow our work on LinkedIn](#).

Within the theme, we have two special interest groups (SIGs) (1) Research Informed Education and (2) Inclusion. We are currently looking for more people who share an interest in either of these topics and would like to shape healthcare workforce research to join our SIGs. If you would like more information or be a part of this work, please contact our SIG leads:

- Inclusion: Neen Nedder (neen.nedder@uwe.ac.uk)
- Research-informed Education: Dr Behnaz Schofield (behnaz.schofield@uwe.ac.uk)

Social care research



[Dr Chloe Place](#) (left), a researcher within Occupational Therapy is leading a study investigating International Care Workers (ICW) who play a vital role in supporting the wellbeing, dignity, and day-to-day lives of people living in care homes, yet their own experiences and wellbeing are often under-represented in research. This study, funded by the BNSSG Integrated Care Board and North Somerset Council, aims to better understand what it is

like to work as an ICW in UK care homes. Through interviews, the research explores people's experiences of coming to the UK, working in care homes, and managing daily life, as well as what helps or hinders wellbeing and job satisfaction.

By listening directly to ICWs stories, the study is identifying ways that care homes, commissioners, and policymakers can better support this vital workforce to improve retention and ultimately enhance care for residents. [Get in touch with Chloe](#) if you would like to hear more about her work.

Primary Care skill mix

Staff from UWE Bristol are working with the University of Surrey (lead institution) on an [NIHR funded study investigating how Primary Care Networks make decisions on which staff roles to recruit](#) (e.g. GPs, First Contact Physiotherapists, Community Pharmacists) and how this impacts patient outcomes. This two-and-a-half-year study which commenced in October 2025 includes case study evaluation and extensive PPIE work, both of which are being led by UWE Bristol staff. Working on this study will also be newly appointed Research Fellow, [Dr Josie Morley](#), who will commence her role in February 2026. Josie is a nurse by profession and brings expertise in NHS workforce and patient experience research.

WReT welcomes new staff

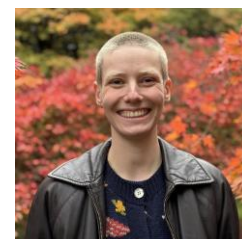
As the workforce portfolio continues to grow, we're delighted to welcome new staff to UWE Bristol.

Dr Antonia Dingle (right) joined UWE Bristol in September 2025 as a Senior Research Fellow and the Project Manager of the [INSERT Study](#) investigating implementation of the Nursing Associate role in the NHS acute care setting, a study led by [Dr Zoe Anchors](#) and [Dr Laura Goodwin](#). Antonia has a background in public health research; her PhD research was conducted in Cambodia, on equity of access to health services.



[Dr Cindy Corliss](#) (left) also joined UWE Bristol in September, as a Research Associate on the INSERT study. She is working across a variety of work-packages within the study to ensure successful delivery of the research.

[Neen Nedder](#) (right) joined UWE Bristol in November 2025 as Research Associate supporting the Workforce Theme. As part of this role, Neen is supporting theme development, managing social media and assisting on various research projects within the portfolio. Neen has a background in LGBTQIA+ inclusion work within the healthcare sector and is leading the Special Interest Group for Inclusion for WReT.



Special features

The Same Day and Urgent Care (SURGE) Workforce Research Partnership



SURGE The Same Day and Urgent Care (SURGE) Workforce Research Partnership is funded by the NIHR HSDR programme. The SURGE partnership consists of a highly experienced team of academics, clinicians and researchers across the UK and is led by [Professor Sarah Voss](#) (Emergency Care Theme) and [Professor Nicola Walsh](#) (Workforce Research Theme). SURGE launched in March 2025 and over a 5-year duration, it will provide impactful, rapidly transferable evidence that will support employers to create a more robust and thriving workforce that can respond to current demands in the urgent and emergency care (UEC) system. The SURGE partnership is focussed on the UEC workforce delivering care in: Primary Care; Ambulance Services; Emergency Departments and Urgent Treatment Centres and Urgent Community Response Services.

During the first 18 months of the partnership, the team have been engaged in preparatory work to inform the development of an onward research portfolio.

Research priorities:

We are conducting a priority setting exercise in association with the James Lind Alliance (JLA) and in collaboration with an inclusive and diverse UK-wide steering group consisting of staff, patients, and carers. We have collected 923 responses from 285 participants to identify potential research questions related to workforce issues. These data have been synthesised into a long list of indicative questions which will now be taken through a prioritisation exercise with the UEC workforce and public contributors. The top 25 and top 10 research questions will be published early in 2026 and will inform the partnership research plan.

Mapping UEC services in the UK:

The partnership is working with UEC providers in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to produce a comprehensive picture of the availability of different services across the UK. These data will also be used to create an interrogable database that can be used to identify geographical variation in service availability. The SURGE partnership will draw on this data to determine which areas of the UEC system should be prioritised for investigation of issues that affect workforce sustainability.

Case studies of UEC service initiatives:

The SURGE team are in the process of conducting small scale case studies with UEC services that have been established to manage demand and patient flow. The aim of these case studies is to generate initial theories on the key factors that affect staff experience, workforce stability and service organisation. We will consider which emerging theories relate to the research priorities that have been identified and could be investigated in follow on work to lead to actionable recommendations for improving workforce sustainability.

Evidence synthesis:

The partnership team are currently engaged in several reviews to inform the ongoing partnership research plan. The focus of these reviews is:

- existing theoretical frameworks that are relevant to understanding and addressing workforce issues in the UEC system.
- available evidence on UEC staff experience in relation to making decisions on the transfer of patients from the community to hospital-based care.
- benefits and challenges relating to the use of Artificial Intelligence tools in UEC for the clinical and non-clinical workforces.

Project work:

Work on the first of seven partnership research projects will begin in Spring 2026. In response to earlier consultation work, this project will focus on when, how and why support for decisions on whether to refer a patient to hospital or to manage them in the community affects staff experience and workforce stability. We look forward to providing updates on this work in the summer newsletter!

Inclusive research cultures: Addressing ethnic inequality through collaboration

[Dr Praveen Kumar](#) launched the first UWE Bristol Ethnic Inequality Conference on 4 November 2025, an inclusive platform with varied speakers, personal stories, and interactive sessions, enabling knowledge exchange, networking, and new ideas to advance equity in research and community partnerships. This milestone event marks a significant step toward inclusive research cultures and strengthening community collaboration.

The event was funded by the School of Health and Social Wellbeing and the Centre for Health and Clinical Research, UWE Bristol. Almost 80 delegates attended with keynote speakers including experts from ethnic research fields and community partners, including Dhek Bhal, Accure Health, and BNSSG Diverse Research Engagement Network. Twenty-five research posters were presented with opportunities for informal and structured networking.

