

# Centre for Health and Clinical Research (CHCR)

Newsletter, January 2025

## Introduction from the Director

Compiling this newsletter every 6 months allows me the opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the Centre and the amazing work being undertaken by our members. When I started producing the newsletter in July 2018, I could never have predicted the success that we would have achieved in the subsequent years. If I had also been aware of the challenges that we were going to face, my predictions would have been rather unambitious. It is therefore with great pride that I once again have the honour of sharing our accomplishments with a wider audience.

I would like to extend an invitation to join our Doctoral Showcase Lunchtime Seminar on Wednesday 19 March 2025 ([please register to attend](#)). This is a fantastic opportunity to hear about the range of research being undertaken in the Centre by our future research leaders. In addition, we will be holding our Annual Showcase conference on Thursday 3 July 2025 (please save the date). Registration and the call for abstracts for poster presentations at our annual conference will be announced shortly.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to all the theme leads who contribute to the smooth running of the Centre and have provided the reports for this newsletter. 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 via X [@CHCR\\_UWE](#).

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

Theme Lead: [Professor Jonathan Benger](#)

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

Highlights from research that is in progress include:

### **AIRWAYS-3: Randomised trial of a supraglottic airway device versus tracheal intubation during in-hospital cardiac arrest**

[AIRWAYS-3](#) continues to advance our understanding of optimal airway management during in-hospital cardiac arrest. The trial is now active in 57 sites across the UK, demonstrating excellent engagement and collaboration nationwide.

In 2024, we successfully recruited 719 participants, bringing the running total of participants to 995 at the end of December. Over 2,000 clinicians have completed AIRWAYS-3 training, and 53 clinicians have participated in the Associate Principal Investigator (PI) scheme. This is an incredible reflection of the trial's reach and the commitment of healthcare professionals.

This year promises exciting opportunities as we work to expand the trial internationally, with plans to open new sites in Finland and the Republic of Ireland. Recruitment is anticipated to continue until September 2026. We remain grateful for the dedication and enthusiasm of our participating teams, and we are excited to build on this momentum in the coming year.

### **National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)/Zinc innovation Fellowship**

**Dr Kim Kirby** has been working with [LightHeartedAI](#) whilst on a Zinc/NIHR Innovation Fellowship. LightHeartedAI have developed technology called the LightScope which uses laser light to measure tiny skin vibrations, capturing heart sounds, ECG, and blood pressure in one single scan. The technology can be used to detect heart valve disease quickly and without patient contact.

The team have been successful in securing a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Award to address the inequality in heart valve disease diagnosis in women. The SBRI Award will enable the team to further develop the technology to recognise differences in data between men and women concerning heart valve disease, conduct interviews to understand how the technology could be integrated within the NHS, investigate environmental sustainability and engage with patients and carers from diverse backgrounds.

Coming soon...



SURGE (Same day and urgent care workforce research partnership), co-led by **Professors Sarah Voss** and **Nicola Walsh** (KME theme lead) will deliver high quality research

and evaluation that will change policy and drive transformation across the same day and urgent care system to develop and support a thriving, diverse and sustainable workforce providing patient centred care. The aim of the SURGE partnership is to provide impactful, rapidly transferable evidence supporting employers to create a more effective and thriving SURGE workforce that can respond to current demands. More details on this exciting initiative will be presented in the next newsletter.

Researchers from the Emergency Care theme have been involved in a range of events and public engagement activities including:

### **REACH Annual Showcase 2024**

The 2024 REACH Annual Showcase was held on 14 November 2024 at The Watershed on the Bristol Docks. The focus of the event was engaging the community in emergency care research. The event brought together a diverse range of practitioners and stakeholders including researchers, clinicians, public contributors and representatives of the region's providers.

The morning began with a keynote address from Professor Palie Smart, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Global Civic Engagement at the University of Bristol. Professor Smart emphasised the vital importance of working with communities on a regional, national and global scale to ensure research is truly relevant and enables change.

The opening address was followed by a panel discussion, chaired by REACH co-director, **Professor Jonathan Benger**, focusing on the ways in which researchers can engage communities most impacted by health inequalities, particularly in Bristol and the Southwest.

Attendees also heard a presentation from Empire Fighting Chance, an organisation using a unique model of boxing and psychological support to encourage young people to make positive changes. Empire Fighting Chance offers four programmes to support young people to improve not only their physical and mental health but also to engage with education and employment opportunities. The event also featured presentations from members of the REACH team about ongoing or recently completed work.



The showcase concluded with REACH Co-Directors, Professor Jonathan Benger and Dr Matthew Booker, announcing the [REACH Annual Report 2024](#).

### **3rd NIHR Emergency Care Incubator Symposium: Connecting Researchers, Advancing Practice**

The 3rd NIHR Emergency Care Incubator Symposium took place on 14 and 15 November 2024 at Watershed, Bristol. The event brought together 46 emerging and aspiring researchers from different professions in Emergency Care (doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, paramedics and other research staff) with a faculty of 16 academic leaders and experts in the field. The programme was delegate-led and faculty facilitated. It included six 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. The themes of the workshops were “Impact plan and dissemination”, “From research idea to research questions and protocol”, “Understanding academic careers paths”, “Grant writing”, “Working with industry”, and “Writing up your research”.

The programme also included two keynote talks – “From clinician to academia-challenges and opportunities”, delivered by Rebecca Kearney (Professor and Director of Bristol Trials Centre), and “Embracing Big Data”, delivered by Jon Massey (software developer and data scientist at the Bennett Institute for Applied Data Science). Rob Fenwick (Consultant Nurse/RCEM ACP) gave a talk on “Working with the media for dissemination”, and Alexander Mikulski (Business Manager for Bristol Trials Centre) talked about “Everything you need to know about Research Finance”.

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

Theme Lead: [Professor Richard Cheston](#)

### **Bidding success**

The ACTIoN theme received several research grants in the second half of 2024. **Professor Nikki Cotterill** was the lead applicant on an RCF (Research Capability Funding) grant from Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care Board (ICB). The project aims to investigate incontinence associated with female genital mutilation and is informed by work that was undertaken as part of a summer internship project, providing an example of how a pipeline of activity can build support for research proposals.

Nikki is also the lead applicant on an NIHR Pre-application support fund for an intended NIHR Professorship (Personal development award). Nikki would be happy to share her experiences of applying for this award and can be contacted via [email](#).

**Dr Sunny Chan** and **Professor Rik Cheston** also secured RCF funding from BNSSG ICB for a project that aims to investigate non-pharmacological coping strategies for addressing sleep issues in older adults with dementia. This study will be conducted within both the local white community and global majority communities, including individuals from Black, South Asian, and Chinese backgrounds.

**Dr Chloe Place** has received funding from North Somerset council and from BNSSG ICB to investigate the experiences of international care home workers employed in UK care homes within BNSSG. The intention is to raise understanding and awareness around the challenges international care home workers are facing and to seek out ways to support international care home workers and promote their engagement in meaningful and satisfying work. Ultimately, it is hoped that this research will enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of care home residents.

**Research in Bristol:** a launch event for an NIHR-funded community research study that is co-led by **Professor Rik Cheston** was held at City Hall. Attendees were members of local communities describing their experiences of living with dementia and caring for family members. During the study work will be undertaken with Bristol Dementia Wellbeing Service to develop augmented dementia pathways for people from Black, Chinese and South Asian communities.



ACTIoN theme members have a long history of collaboration with Bristol community organisations with a range of outcomes, including the production of a series of reports about dementia care in Bristol for global majority communities and several research papers.

A cornerstone of these collaborations has been Rosa Hui, who this year retired as the Chief Executive of the Chinese Community Wellbeing Society. In recognition of her contribution to the health and social care of people from the Chinese community, Rosa received an honorary doctorate from the University over the summer. Pictured below is Rosa at the award ceremony with **Professor Rik Cheston** (left) and **Professor Marc Griffiths** (right), Pro Vice-Chancellor for Health, UWE Bristol.





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

Theme Lead: Professor Emma Dures

**Dr Mwidimi Ndosi** (pictured far left), Associate Professor in Rheumatology Nursing, has been appointed Honorary Professor of Patient-Reported Outcome Measures and Health Education in Rheumatology at Aarhus University, Denmark. This appointment recognises his



contributions to the field and strengthens existing collaborations with Danish colleagues such as Professor Annette de Thurah, Professor Ellen-Margrethe Hauge, and Dr Line Knudsen. During this five-year professorship, Mwidimi will visit Denmark annually to collaborate on postgraduate programmes and research.

With selected campaigners, charities and organisations, **Dr Caroline Flurey** attended the Men's Health summit at the Emirates Stadium, London, on 28 November 2024. Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting, announced the government's commitment to the UK's first ever Men's Health Strategy. The strategy will consider how to prevent and tackle the biggest health problems affecting men of all ages, which could include cardiovascular disease, prostate cancer and testicular cancer, as well as mental health and suicide prevention. It will form a key part of the government's 10 Year Health Plan for the NHS.



Caroline's book, *'Talking Men's Health: Understanding and Supporting Men with Long-Term Conditions'* was published in July 2024.



Colleagues from MAMBO work with the Bristol Bones and Joints Health Integration Team (BBJ HIT) and with funding from Bristol Health Partners, **Dr Jen Pearson**, **Jen Orme** and **Professor Emma Dures** have supported the co-development of a community-based music and movement programme for people with musculoskeletal (MSK) pain.

The study team were invited to present the project at the inaugural Creative Health in Action event at the Bristol Beacon in October. Over thirty local organisations and hundreds of community performers from Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire came together to showcase and discuss their work within the arts and health sector. Panel discussions and a round table conversation explored the role that creativity has on health and included moving testimonies from people with lived experiences. Read more about [the music and movement project](#).



### New projects underway

**T**otal **b**urden of **L**ong-Term **P**soriasis (TULiPS) is an NIHR-funded study jointly led by **Professor Emma Dures** and Professor Neil McHugh (University of Bath). TULiPS comprises work to follow an existing cohort of people with psoriasis to see who subsequently develops psoriatic arthritis (PsA) and how this affects their health and physical function. In addition, the team will examine whether it is possible to determine risk factors to inform targeted screening. For those people who do develop PsA, the diagnosis can be challenging, and treatments can be complex. **Katie Fishpool** and **Christine Silverthorne** are undertaking a realist review (also called a realist synthesis) of clinical consultations and support for self-management for people newly diagnosed with PsA. They are being supported by UWE Bristol Fellow in Realist Methods, Dr **Leah Morris**, librarian Jason Ovens from the Royal United Hospitals in Bath and patient partner Mel Brooke from [PsA HQ](#).

Alongside the literature reviews and initial theory development, a survey for health professionals has been designed to understand existing provision and perceptions of barriers and enablers to self-management.

Two patient and public involvement discussion groups and three one-to-one interviews have also been held to explore the challenges faced by people newly diagnosed with PsA. Patients talked about their disabling pain and fatigue, living with an invisible and unpredictable illness and the relief of a diagnosis. They talked about having to give up activities they enjoyed, and which were tied up with their identity, their social life, and their fitness levels. They also discussed medication, financial and work issues and having to wade through information to find what they needed.

A particular concern was the lack of psychological support and support for their partners and families. Patients also expressed a need for help with acceptance and expectations for the future as well as the need for targeted help, such as young people wanting to start a family or older people with multiple health conditions.



**Rare AutoImmune SElf-management programme development (RAISE)** is an NIHR-funded study, led by **Dr Jo Robson**, Associate Professor in Rheumatology and Consultant Rheumatologist. Other UWE Bristol staff supporting the project are **Dr Sadia Janjua, Dr Alice Berry, Dr Ilhem Berrou, Dr Mwidimi Ndosi** and **Professor Emma Dures**. The aim of the project is to provide accessible self-management support for people with rare autoimmune rheumatic disease (RAIRDs). RAIRDs include systemic lupus erythematosus, vasculitis, scleroderma, myositis, and Sjogren's syndrome. They can affect people of any age, can be chronic lifelong diseases and have a significant impact on health-related quality of life.

Information from online meetings with groups of people who have these conditions highlighted that they wanted to know about their disease, treatment, and access help in adapting to living with a rare and serious disease. However, our survey of NHS rheumatology departments shows that the majority (80%) do not provide support to help patients to deal with the impact of living with one of these diseases.

There are three work packages in the RAISE project. The first will use focus groups to gather a range of views regarding support needs. The second will perform a UK-wide patient survey of support needs, translated into the ten most spoken languages in the UK. Finally, the third work package will use focus group findings and survey results to build a picture of the type of support needed and how to achieve this in practice. The research team will present the results to stakeholders including patient partners, charities, NHS management and healthcare professionals. The feedback received from stakeholders, will inform the design of a support programme.

### **New PhD underway – welcome Emily**



**Emily Barnes** started her PhD in October. The key aim of her study is to capture the impact of glucocorticoids (steroids) on children and young people with rheumatic conditions, including the impact of this treatment on their health-related quality of life.

The study will explore the acceptability and relevance of the adult Steroid Patient Reported Outcome (PRO) questionnaire in different age groups with a view to developing a paediatric version of the Steroid PRO.

Emily is based with the rheumatology research team at the Bristol Royal Infirmary, working closely with the paediatric rheumatology team and her director of studies, **Dr Jo Robson**.



**Charlie Gerlis** reached the finals of the Vitae national three-minute thesis competition with her presentation "*Digital support to promote physical activity for people with rheumatoid arthritis*". She gave [a fantastic presentation](#) (which remains accessible to watch) and has since given presentations about her experience to a range of students at UWE Bristol. Charlie has also secured a fourth year of funding from Versus Arthritis to enable her to further develop her doctoral research.

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

Theme Lead: Dr Alison Llewellyn

The second half of 2024 saw the continued expansion of the SPACE theme with new colleagues from the hospice sector and across UWE Bristol, with the focus of activity remaining on supportive, as well as palliative and end of life care.

### Achievements and awards

We have been delighted to celebrate a range of significant achievements from colleagues within the theme.

A particular highlight of the Autumn was the national recognition of the Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development (ACCEND) Programme. **Dr Julie Armoogum** (pictured right) has been significantly involved in this initiative, establishing UWE Bristol as a founding member whilst also leading the development of an e-learning package for the cancer support workforce. We were thrilled that the programme won the Workforce Initiative of the Year at the recent 2024 HSJ (Health Service Journal) Awards.



Julie was also awarded a National Teaching Fellowship at the Advance HE National Teaching Excellence Awards for her innovative work in cancer education, and the cancer care team recently won the Changemaker Award at the UWE Bristol Staff Awards 2024.

We are also delighted to report the success of colleagues in securing funding for a new NIHR Incubator for Palliative and End of Life Care which will be launched on 1 July 2025. This was a team application, from across the UK Palliative and End of Life care community, led by Professor Christina Faull from LOROS hospice and **Professor Candy McCabe** from UWE Bristol and Dorothy House Hospice, Winsley. The team will be shortly advertising for a part time project manager to be employed by Dorothy House Hospice.

In a significant contribution to knowledge exchange, **Hazel Cottle** (UWE Bristol Lecturer in Occupational Therapy Lecturer, pictured right) recently gave a TED talk in Brighton. Whilst the focus of her talk was not about end of life per se, Hazel included reflections about the positive effects she had observed from the provision of 'green spaces' in a hospice setting and the benefits for end-of-life patients in hospitals of getting outside and into fresh air. Well done Hazel for your great work in 'normalising' death and dying in a non-Palliative and End of Life Care context!



We were also delighted that the work of **Dr Jac Fennell** (Senior Lecturer in Product Design, UWE Bristol) has been showcased in the recently published Life Science Hub Wales Annual Report 2023/24 in an article focusing on the HUG project (a therapeutic comforter to improve wellbeing). Jac's work exemplifies the wide ranging and inclusive nature of the SPACE theme in crossing disciplinary boundaries.

### **New appointments**

Suriya Kirkpatrick (North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT)), an external collaborator with SPACE theme members, has recently taken up a new role as Assistant Chief Nursing Officer – Research Development and Genomics at NBT whilst continuing her positions as Chair of the Lung Cancer Nursing UK (LCNUK) Research Interest Group and as a member of the Global Power of Oncology Nursing Advisory Council. Many congratulations on your latest appointment Suriya.

**Dr Luigi Moretti** (UWE Bristol PhD Researcher) has recently become an Innovate Healthier Together (IHT) Fellow. This is an NHS community, focused on reimagining health and care across Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire, and whose membership includes a broad network of researchers and healthcare professionals across this geography. Well done Luigi, we are looking forward to making the use of this network in the expansion of SPACE research collaboration.

### **Grants, publications and dissemination activity**

SPACE theme researchers, **Dr Ali Llewellyn**, **Dr Julie Armoogum** and **Dr Chloe Place**, were all recipients of BNSSG ICB RCF. These awards are supporting a range of ongoing Patient and Public Involvement and grant application activities that we hope will bring further funding success in the coming months.

**Dr Jac Fennell** and colleagues have been awarded Innovate UK funding for their SmartSocks® wearable technology project. This work, which involves a collaboration between UWE Bristol and the digital healthcare company, Milbotix, will evaluate the use of socks which contain sensors to aid in monitoring aspects of the patient's health and inform carers of key events. Developed for patients with dementia, this device offers a non-invasive solution for physiological monitoring in supportive care delivery.

### **Other activity**

**Dr Ali Llewellyn** gave a presentation on the work of the SPACE theme to a broad audience at a very well-attended engagement workshop in October 2024. Led by Dr Sophy Gretton, Palliative Care Consultant at University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust, the aim of the event was to seek input to inform a proposal to Bristol Health Partners to establish a new South West "End of Life Matters" Health Integration Team (ELM HIT). The development team is currently engaged in work to co-produce the priorities and workstreams for the ELM HIT, and intend to submit an application for its establishment imminently. Ali has been a member of the ELM HIT development team since its inception and we are very excited about opportunities for the SPACE theme to contribute to its future research activities.

With support from **Boud Dominicus** (UWE Bristol Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Manager), we are continuing to develop as the newest CHCR research theme, and keen to extend and support collaborations in any aspect of Supportive, Palliative and End of Life Care research. We aim to provide a welcoming, informative and encouraging forum for researchers at any stage of their career. If you are interested in joining us or being added to our email mailing list, please contact our administrator, [Charlotte Spence](#) or theme lead, [Ali Llewellyn](#).

## News from the Knowledge Mobilisation and Evaluation Theme

Theme Lead: [Professor Nicola Walsh](#)

### Cervical screening for transgender people



Welcome to **Ela Ury** (pictured left), who commenced her PhD in October. Ela will explore staff perspectives, policies and practices of cervical screening for Transgender people. Cervical cancer is one of the most prevalent of all the cancers worldwide, but regular cervical screening is estimated to prevent up to 75% of all cases, yet only 70% of those eligible in the UK attend regularly. Some reasons for non-attendance may be fear and potential discomfort or embarrassment associated with the procedure.

One group that faces unique challenges in engaging in cervical screening is transgender people. Most transgender people who are assigned female at birth do not undergo gender-reaffirming surgery, thus retain their cervix, and require regular screening. Research exploring the views of these individuals towards screening has identified numerous barriers. For example, when a person legally changes their gender from female to male, they may not be invited to regular appointments. Others may avoid screening due to the distress associated with medical examination of the genital area.

International research with healthcare professionals has shown mixed views regarding knowledge of undertaking this procedure and also the willingness of healthcare professionals to screen transgender patients. Ela's research will be the first to investigate UK practice. [Contact Ela](#) if you would like to know more about this work.

### NIHR i4i recent success



Congratulations to **Dr Alice Berry** (pictured left) who has recently received funding to evaluate the impact of the getUBetter digital technology to support people with musculoskeletal pain. Read the [spotlight on this work](#) can be found at the end of the newsletter.

**Coming soon...**



MintRoot, a UWE Bristol spin out organisation led by **Dr Ilhem Berrou**, aims to develop an online platform that provides a health and care safety net for people at risk of ill health. This safety net consists of community-based health and social care programmes on offer within each locality. People can type in their postcode to reveal the health and care support initiatives around them. There is much on offer at the doorstep of people and communities, yet information on availability and level of support is hard to come by.

In addition, there is no space for community providers to collaborate with each other, creating inefficiencies and many missed opportunities to work together to optimise resource use and support people and communities. Mint Root aims to connect people with the health and care programmes that serve them locally and beyond, with ease, understanding and compassion. More details on this exciting venture will also be presented in the next newsletter.

## **News from the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) theme**

Theme lead: [Dr Toity Deave](#)

The theme held a showcase event in December with a range of UWE Bristol staff and external collaborators delivering presentations of their research. There was good attendance with several new connections established and potential projects identified for future collaboration.

**Dr Onyeko Amiebenomo**, Senior Lecturer in Optometry, is part of a 12-member survey working group with the International Society for Clinical Eye Tracking. The aim of the work is to characterize clinical eye tracking use worldwide and develop standards for clinicians. More generally Onyeka's research has involved the use of a high-speed eye tracker, with psychophysical visual acuity testing, to evaluate fixational eye movements in people with Infantile nystagmus. She is also interested in the eye care needs of children and young people with learning disability, some of whom have nystagmus.

**Dr Leah Morris** was awarded a Vice-Chancellor's Early Career Researcher Award which she started in August 2024. Her project is titled: Physiotherapy interventions for Functional Motor Disorder (FMD) in a paediatric population: A scoping review and qualitative study exploring physiotherapists' experiences of management of paediatric patients with FMD, and FMD outcome measures. Leah is also supporting realist evaluation skills development at UWE Bristol with funding support from BNSSG ICB.





Congratulations to **Dr Laura Goodwin** who has won a prestigious Academic Career Award from BNSSG ICB. The funding will support her full-time for 18 months to further develop her research in emergency care for maternity incidents.

**Dr Julie Menzies**, Clinical Academic /Nurse Researcher Paediatric Critical Care at Bristol Children's Hospital, started her NIHR Senior Clinical and Practitioner Research Award (SCPRA) in October 2024. She is funded for two days/week for three years to develop a competitive NIHR ACAF application.



**Dr Ann Smith** has been funded on a Research Capability project (BNSSG ICB) to coordinate information from relevant health partners in the system and to assist in strategy discussion meetings and decision making, as part of a statutory child protection arrangement under the Children Act. There is a need for 'health' practitioners to provide and coordinate specific information from relevant practitioners that deal with family, maternity and school mental health, domestic abuse and violence, and

substance misuse. This will assist in the strategy discussion and decision-making as part of the statutory child protection arrangement. The volume of strategy discussion meetings is unknown, and attendees are known to be unable to attend a significant proportion of them. This has resulted in local authority colleagues making multi-agency decisions without the relevant health information of the child in question, which has created tension in relationships between statutory safeguarding partners. Staff sicknesses, reduced capacity and a lack of consistency in approaching health contributions to strategy discussion has contributed to the problem.

The health partners are Sirona Care and Health, ICB, Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council and North Somerset Council; all of which are collaborators on this project.

## Special feature on – The INSIGHT Study

### UWE Bristol win funding to evaluate digital self-management app

**Dr Alice Berry**, Associate Professor in Rehabilitation, has been awarded £1.4 million from the NIHR to evaluate the implementation of the musculoskeletal self-management app, [getUBetter](#). The UWE Bristol team includes **Professor Nicola Walsh**, **Dr Alison Diaper** (also representing BNSSG), **Dr Ilhem Berrou** and **Rachel Thomas**, alongside Dr Carey McClellan (getUBetter) and a range of other external co-applicants. The evaluation will be undertaken with BNSSG ICB and getUBetter, and partners from the University of Bristol and St George's University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

Low back pain affects many people in the UK, restricting their daily activities and accounting for 5% of GP appointments. Many digital tools exist to support people with low back pain to self-manage their symptoms. However, we don't know how they work for patients and healthcare professionals, and whether they provide good care.

The getUBetter app is already used by the NHS to support people with low back pain to self-manage their symptoms. Typically, patients are directed to the app by their doctor, GP practice staff, or physiotherapist.

The funding comes from the NIHR [Invention for Innovation \(i4i\) Programme](#), in collaboration with the Office for Life Sciences and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. NIHR have funded seven new projects aimed at bringing new technologies into the NHS to benefit patients. The funded teams will be gathering real-world evidence for their products. This will help to accelerate adoption of these technologies, which have been recommended for early use in the NHS through NICE Early Value Assessment.



The funding aims to help make the UK a leading testbed for late-stage health innovations. It will allow researchers and companies to generate the evidence needed to achieve full NICE guidance, and to accelerate uptake in the NHS so that patients can benefit sooner.

This project aims to assess if using getUBetter improves pain, and the ability to engage with daily activities, reduces the need for further care, and whether it offers the NHS good value for money. This research will help to understand how the app is being used by patients and GP practices and develop guidance on how getUBetter and other digital self-management tools can be used to support patients with low back pain.