NIHR | School for Social Care Research

BUSINESS PLAN 2019–2024

NIHR SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL CARE RESEARCH
PHASE III: 2019–2024

www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk

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1. BACKGROUND

In November 2017, the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) announced its ongoing commitment to adult social care research and the NIHR School for Social Care Research (NIHR SSCR) by announcing funding for a further 5-year term from 1 May 2019. The continuation of the School acknowledges the important contribution that adult social care makes to the population's health and wellbeing.

The announcement followed the mid-term review of Phase II of the School. An open competition was announced to renew, refresh and secure the future of NIHR SSCR for a third phase. (Phase I of NIHR SSCR commenced in May 2009, and Phase II in May 2014.) The open competition was intended to establish NIHR SSCR (Phase III) as a virtual body under the NIHR. It would bring together the leading researchers and research groups in the adult social care field in England. It would combine a group of Core Members – teams or units in the member universities working in social care research - with a network of external fellows, who would be research collaborators, including specialists in wider areas of disciplinary or methodological expertise relevant to adult social care.

This Business Plan sets out the School's mission, activities, governance structure, research programmes, budget and timetable for its third phase, commencing 1 May 2019. The Business Plan will inform all activities of the School and will be reviewed regularly over the period to 30 April 2024. The Plan was developed in consultation with the School's Advisory Board and its User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group; earlier drafts were discussed with NIHR.

2. MISSION AND ACTIVITIES

2.1 Mission

The mission of the NIHR School for Social Care Research (hereafter 'NIHR SSCR' or 'the School') in Phase III continues to be to develop the evidence base to inform and improve adult social care practice in England by commissioning and conducting internationally leading research. In pursuit of this mission, the School will build on progress made in its first ten years.

2.2 Activities

The School will pursue this mission through a number of activities:

- conducting high-quality peer-reviewed research to produce new knowledge including, where appropriate, reviewing and synthesising existing knowledge, in order to inform the further development of social care practice

- commissioning high-quality peer-reviewed research through competitive tendering;

- adding value to research and associated activities funded by the School in Phases I and II

- providing a focus for adult social care research within NIHR, as well as strategic leadership for the development of adult social care research more generally

- further investing in ongoing efforts to build and strengthen adult social care research capacity and build research awareness and utilisation

- further developing methodological rigour and broadening the methodological repertoire, including bringing disciplinary perspectives currently not well represented in adult social care research

- consulting on research questions and distilling, with guidance from the Advisory Board and the User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group, into priorities

- supporting the generation of impact from the process of research and from findings, and supporting wider knowledge exchange and implementation activities

The approaches that NIHR SSCR will employ in respect of these activities are described in Sections 4–10 below.

2.3   Objectives

The School's objectives are set out in Section 2.2.

In the short term, the objectives are to:

- define an overarching framework for the research programme for NIHR SSCR that i) builds on the work of the first two phases of the School, ii) is relevant to the current context of adult social care practice in England, and iii) provides flexibility to respond to new priorities over the period 2019–24

- encourage and support collaborative research activities across the Core Member universities of NIHR SSCR

- encourage and support collaborative research and related activities with the other two NIHR Schools

- encourage and support the leveraging of additional research income from other sources within NIHR and from elsewhere

- review all of the School's published scoping and methods reviews to identify opportunities to refresh papers and/or commission new reviews, and to inform decisions regarding the research programme of the third phase of the School

- continue to engage sector stakeholders in the work of the School in contributing to pathways to impact from its research activities

- continue to experiment with, learn from and implement methods of achieving impact on improving adult social care practice;

- commission its first tranche of Core Member-led and externally-led research projects

- continue to support the Journal of Long-term Care, including through development of its outreach

- explore opportunities for, and support achievement of co-produced research and impact co-produced with users, carers and practitioners

- continue to invest in ways in which NIHR SSCR can best contribute to developing capacity in adult social care research, in particular through additional capacity-building funding for NIHR SSCR and through support of the NIHR Social Care Incubator in collaboration with the NIHR Academy

- evolve arrangements to continue to provide governance oversight of and value for money from the School's work and timely reporting of activities

- continue to support other parts of NIHR as they seek to support research on adult social care

In the medium term, the School's objectives are to:

- continue with its horizon-scanning and consultation work to inform the development of its research programme, in particular continuing to build links with policy communities (national and local) and with the new DHSC Policy Research Units, and also being aware of the research commissioning intentions and commitments of other funding bodies

- continue to manage a portfolio of high-quality commissioned work

- encourage and support collaborative research activities across the Core Member universities of NIHR SSCR

- encourage and support collaborative research and related activities with the other two NIHR Schools

- encourage and support the leveraging of additional research income from other sources within NIHR and from elsewhere

- ensure that all commissioned work is completed and reported in a timely fashion and in ways that will help achieve impact

- continue with ongoing reflection on published NIHR SSCR review papers to identify opportunities for updates and commissioning new reviews

- continue to ensure that all of the School's research maximises its impact in terms of improving adult social care practice

In the long term, the School's objectives are to:

- successfully complete its Phase III research programme within the funded period of the School to 30 April 2024

- significantly develop the evidence base for adult social care practice, including through encouragement to a range of research-funding bodies to invest in this area

- improve the quality of adult social care research

- show impact from its activities under Phases I, II and III, including through greater awareness and utilisation of research findings

- support efforts to achieve the continuation of an NIHR-funded School for Social Care Research beyond the current period

- contribute to improvements of research capacity in the field of adult social care both within academia and more broadly

3.   MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

3.1   Structure of the School

NIHR SSCR is structured as follows:

- a Director of the School, supported by a part-time Research Programme Manager, a part-time Finance and Impact Manager and other administrative resources at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

- leads of Core Member universities appointed as Associate Directors of the School; one of whom will act as Deputy Director

- the NIHR SSCR Executive, comprising the Director, the Deputy Director, the five Associate Directors, the Research Programme Manager and the Finance and Impact Manager

- individuals appointed as NIHR SSCR Senior Fellows or NIHR SSCR Fellows;

- an independent Advisory Board

- a User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group (UCPRG)

- ad hoc working groups as needed

- formally established links with the DHSC/NIHR
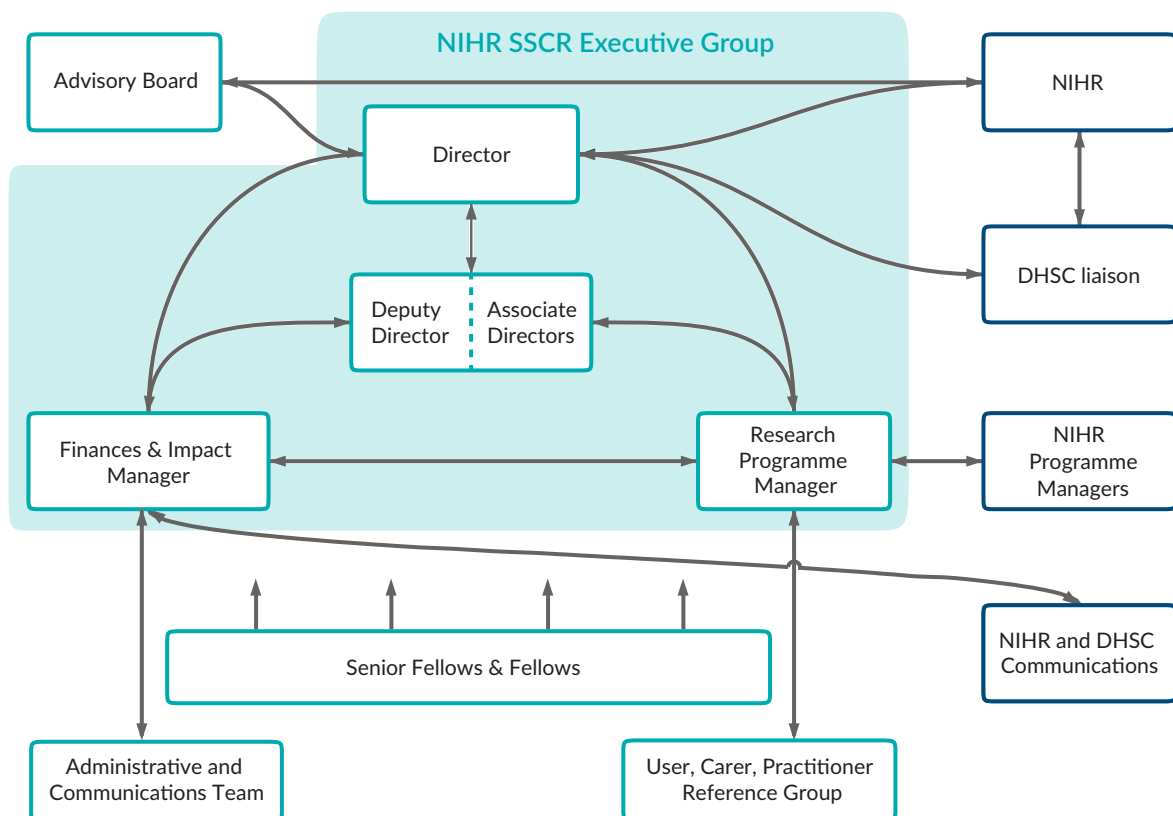
NIHR SSCR Director

The NIHR SSCR Director –– Professor Martin Knapp (LSE) – will have overall responsibility for leading, managing and directing the School, its affairs and activities. The Director will be accountable to NIHR for all aspects of the operation of NIHR SSCR. He will devote two days a week to the role. The period of office will be for the full 5 years of the third phase of the School.

Deputy Director

The Deputy Director – Professor Yvonne Birks (York) – was selected by the School's Executive Group. She will deputise for the Director as needed. She will also take responsibility to manage (on behalf of the School as a whole) researcher capacity-building, particularly but not solely through the additional funding provided to the School for capacity-building (see below). In addition to her Deputy Director position, she will carry out all responsibilities allocated to the Associate Directors (see below). The Deputy will serve for 5 years.

Associate Directors

The Associate Directors of NIHR SSCR are university-based individuals who have made a sustained high-quality contribution to research on adult social care practice in England selected by the NIHR. There is one Associate Director from each of the five Core Member universities (in addition to the School's Deputy Director), this being the lead applicant in that Core Member's application for membership of the third phase of NIHR SSCR. They will be fully committed to the mission of the School and all its activities.

Roles: Associate Directors of NIHR SSCR will provide intellectual leadership for the School, both through membership of the Executive Group (as set out below) and through shared leadership of the School's programme of research. They will act as ambassadors for adult social care research. They will take responsibility for guiding projects conducted or commissioned by the School, in particular by contributing to the scoping of research questions, preparation of requests for proposals, identification of potential reviewers, consideration of reviewers' comments, guidance and support for NIHR SSCR Fellows and others engaged in the School, assessment of completed reports, knowledge exchange and impact, and quality assurance of all research and research-related activities commissioned by the School. Associate Directors will coordinate NIHR SSCR activities within their institutions. Associate Directors may also take strategic responsibility for certain activities within the School; these areas will be identified in due course.

Specifically, Associate Directors may undertake some of the following activities:

- providing leadership for NIHR SSCR activities (research, mentoring, capacity-building etc.) within constituent Core Member universities, including taking a lead on developing research collaborations and leveraging external funding

- representing and promoting NIHR SSCR and NIHR in public forums, and representing and promoting NIHR SSCR within NIHR

- attending and actively participating in all Executive Group meetings and other relevant events

- developing NIHR SSCR's research agenda, priorities and programme, including involvement in commissioning of new external research and research-related activities such as reviews and workshops (e.g. identification of research questions, preparation of documentation for calls, preparation of research briefs, review of proposals received, and membership of commissioning panels)

- liaising on an ongoing basis with specified commissioned project teams, including (as needed) support for project Principal Investigators and reviewing NIHR SSCR outputs, and involvement in project-specific advisory groups

- supporting NIHR SSCR's programme of commissioned methods/scoping reviews

- supporting the UCPRG and Advisory Board (the latter through the NIHR SSCR Director as required), and membership of any specific working groups

- liaising with partner and other external organisations to develop strategic links or in other ways to promote NIHR SSCR

- contributing to NIHR SSCR knowledge exchange and impact activities, such as writing journal or other papers and communications, and contributing to drafts of annual reports and reporting to NIHR

- participating in, and publicising NIHR SSCR-organised events, including contributions to arrangements, attendance and (as required) presentation at the School's annual conferences

- ongoing promotion of NIHR SSCR through references to the School in general activities; inclusion of the School in events such as conferences and regional workshops organised by the Associate Director (where appropriate)

- other support for the NIHR SSCR Director, Research Programme Manager and Finance and Impact Manager as agreed

Selection of Core Members

Following an open competition to renew, refresh and secure the future of NIHR SSCR, an independent expert panel set up by NIHR selected seven universities to be designated and/or redesignated as School Members.

The universities were selected for the strength of their track record in research, the quality of research outputs relevant to adult social care practice, their critical mass of adult social care researchers, the relevance of their work and the strength of their submitted strategic plans.

Core Members of NIHR SSCR are the London School of Economics and Political Science (lead applicant: Professor Martin Knapp), King's College London (Professor Jill Manthorpe), University of Birmingham (Professor Catherine Needham), University of Bristol (Professor David Abbott), University of Kent (Dr Karen Jones), University of Manchester (Professor Catherine Robinson) and University of York (Professor Yvonne Birks).

Executive Group

The Executive Group (EG) will support the Director. The Executive will provide academic leadership for NIHR SSCR, and will be responsible for supporting the Director in the running of the School and reporting on its activities. Advised by the Advisory Board and by the User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group (UCPRG) (see below), and operating within established NIHR procedures, the Executive Group will make decisions on what research questions are to be examined, commissioning processes, appointment of reviewers for proposals, commissioning decisions, monitoring of ongoing studies, assessment of final reports, and decisions regarding knowledge exchange and impact.

The EG will comprise the Director, the Deputy Director and five Associate Directors for the full 5-year funded period. The Research Programme Manager and the Finance and Impact Manager will be ex officio (non-voting) members. (See below for descriptions of these posts.) The School's NIHR CCF liaison contacts will attend Executive Group meetings. The School's DHSC liaison may attend meetings.

The EG may seek expert advice from relevant individuals and invite such individuals to EG meetings where this will be helpful.

The EG will meet every two months or more frequently if required. The Director will chair meetings of the EG. Quorum will be 5 out of 7 of current membership. (In the event of a meeting not being quorate, decisions will be taken by either teleconference or email discussion.) Invited individuals may attend Executive meetings under special circumstances, as agreed in advance by the Group. (The EG might also invite others, including from other parts of NIHR, to join their meetings for particular items.) Decisions will be made by simple majority voting. In the event that a member cannot attend an EG meeting, no substitutions will be made unless under exceptional circumstances (such as long-term sickness absence).

A joint meeting between the Executive Group and the UCPRG will take place annually. Executive Group members will regularly attend UCPRG meetings.

NIHR SSCR Senior Fellows

Key researchers within each of the seven Core Member universities will be NIHR SSCR Senior Fellows. These are the four individuals other than the Core Member lead named in the Core Member's application for the School. The list of key researchers is given in Annex F. However, other key researchers from those Core Member universities could alternatively or additionally be designated NIHR SSCR Senior Fellows. There is no maximum number. Decisions on who will be designated a Senior Fellow will be taken by the School's Executive Group. All Senior Fellows will be listed on the NIHR SSCR website.

NIHR SSCR Senior Fellows will be current or anticipated future leaders of adult social care research groups, with strong track records of work in the adult social care field that will enhance the work of the School. They will work closely with the NIHR SSCR Core Member leads in furtherance of all of NIHR SSCR's activities, and will particularly support the School in reviewing proposals and reports. The School will support NIHR Senior Fellows to develop their own research careers. They will be expected to be actively involved in the School's capacity-building activities. The responsibilities of Senior Fellows within Core Member universities will be established through the relevant Core Member lead.

NIHR SSCR Fellows

All individuals funded from projects commissioned by NIHR SSCR will be designated NIHR SSCR Fellows during and up to a year after the end of their NIHR SSCR-funded projects.

Advisory Board

The role of the independent Advisory Board is to advise and support the NIHR SSCR Director on:

- the programmes of research undertaken by core or external research teams
- the development of research capacity and research literacy across adult social care
- opportunities for maximising impact from NIHR SSCR research

- the strategic development of NIHR SSCR in the context of national and international opportunities

- other matters concerning the development of adult social care research capacity and capability

Board members will play an ambassadorial role for NIHR SSCR. They will work to ensure optimal partnerships with key stakeholders, including people who use services, carers, the broader research community, independent and third sector providers of social care, local government and the NHS, among others. Membership of the Board will be for three years in the first instance.

Two representatives from the School's UCPRG will be invited to participate in Advisory Board meetings.

The terms of reference as agreed with the Advisory Board available on the School's website*.

User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group
A key aim within NIHR SSCR is to involve people who use services, carers, practitioners, policy makers and relevant others in all the stages of research. NIHR SSCR therefore aims to ensure the active, informed engagement of people from each of these groups in all of its activities. For example, all research projects (and hence all research proposals) must demonstrate evidence of meaningful user, carer and practitioner involvement.

As well as there being representation on the Advisory Board, the School's established User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group (UCPRG) will continue into Phase III. As formalised in 2009, the role of the UCPRG is to advise the School's Executive Group on all NIHR SSCR research and related activities, including identification of research questions, reviewing proposals, participating in other ways in the commissioning of research, reviewing reports and other outputs, and communicating findings so as to have an impact. (User and carer reviewers will be paid for each proposal and report reviewed.) One of the key roles of the UCPRG will be to advise the Executive Group on innovative ways to continue to develop its engagement with people who use services, carers and practitioners. Meetings and activities of the UCPRG will be coordinated by the Research Programme Manager and chaired by a member of the Group (currently Margaret Dangoor).

The UCPRG will be invited to submit a written or verbal report to the School's Advisory Board for consideration at the Advisory Board's six-monthly meetings.

The terms of reference as agreed with the UCPRG are available on the School's website*.

Ad hoc working groups
Time-limited ad hoc working groups may be convened to support or deliver the NIHR SSCR's strategic objectives. They will be appointed by the NIHR SSCR Executive Group as needed.

Links with the DHSC/NIHR
Links between the School and NIHR will be maintained between the Director and Executive Group of the School and identified representatives of NIHR and Department of Health and Social Care. The School's NIHR CCF liaison contacts will attend Executive Group meetings.

3.2   Administration

The Director will be supported by a 0.90 FTE Research Programme Manager (RPM). The RPM will ensure that adequate structures and processes are in place for the NIHR SSCR to pursue its agreed activities and to achieve its objectives. The RPM will serve as the main point of contact for the NIHR SSCR. Specific responsibilities will include:

- operational planning and organisation, including monitoring research and related activities funded by the School

- managing the commissioning of research;

- reporting on NIHR SSCR activities

- facilitating representation from people who use services, carers and practitioners in the work of the School

- identifying further funding opportunities and, in collaboration with the Executive Group, exploring potential joint funding opportunities with external funding bodies

- working to develop links across NIHR and support it and other organisations as they develop support for adult social care research

- supporting the Deputy Director on activities related to capacity-building, including those activities funded through additional resources provided by NIHR to the NIHR SSCR, and supporting the NIHR Social Care Incubator

- supporting the Director on research activities and research programme leadership

- working closely with the Finance and Impact Manager to achieve the objectives of the School

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* www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk/Terms-of-reference_Advisory-Board.pdf

** www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk/Terms-of-reference_UCPRG.pdf

The Director will be further supported by a part-time Finance and Impact Manager, whose primary responsibilities will include:

- financial administration of all aspects of the School's operations

- liaison with the member universities and externally commissioned research teams to monitor expenditure, including ensuring compliance with NIHR and other regulations and requirement

- monitoring of expenditure by NIHR SSCR as a whole against agreed schedules, and liaison with NIHR to report expenditure patterns

- monitoring of commissioned research, including delivery of written outputs as contractually required, and to ensure that all project outputs intended for the public domain are submitted to NIHR 30 days before publication

- management of the School's knowledge exchange and impact programme, including organisation of seminars, the annual conference and other events

Full-time administrative and part-time communications support will be appointed.

3.3   Monitoring and reporting

NIHR SSCR's performance will be reviewed by the School's Executive Group biannually. A report will be submitted at the end of each financial year to NIHR, following consultation with the Advisory Board. In preparing its annual report, or for other monitoring or reporting purposes, the Executive Group has the right to call upon individuals or project teams funded by NIHR SSCR for reports or information at any reasonable time, and will ensure that relevant information on activity and projects is maintained. The Executive Group will also ensure that the

Director, Deputy Director, Associate Directors, Senior Fellows, Fellows and staff of NIHR SSCR adhere to all appropriate monitoring and reporting requirements, including those of organisations hosting the research.

Reporting requirements for individual projects are described in Section 5. These include an annual impact assessment, and support for individual research projects by a nominated academic liaison member of the Executive Group.

3.4   Regulation and transparency

NIHR SSCR will comply with guidance issued from the DHSC and other statutory bodies such as EU regulations on clinical trials, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Mental Health Act 2007 with regard to the conduct and administration of research. All research will need to comply with the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research (2017) and with the requirements of equality and human rights legislation. All research will need to follow requirements set out in the Data Protection Act 2018.

Intellectual Property agreements will be drawn up in accordance with standard NIHR procedures, and detailed in individual project contracts. Requirements around access to data and data archiving will also be set out.

The School will continue to implement NIHR's Open Access policy to support transparency of research findings. Every journal article and every other form of dissemination based on work commissioned by NIHR SSCR will be required to acknowledge funding from the School and NIHR.

Everyone involved in NIHR SSCR is expected to comply with guidance with regard to the conduct and administration of research set out by the institutions hosting the research. Where guidance from an individual institution differs from that of the lead partner, the lead partner's internal guidance will be deemed applicable.

NIHR SSCR will adhere to the Freedom of Information Act as applicable. Requests for information will be dealt with in line with LSE's Freedom of Information principles.

3.5   Contractual arrangements

The main contract with NIHR will be held with the London School of Economics and Political Science, with a collaborative agreement from the LSE to Core Member universities. For research projects commissioned from Core Members an agreement will be issued covering the requirements of the individual funded project. For Core Member projects, the project lead will be designated the Principal Investigator with the Core Member lead designated the Contractual Lead.

Agreements for externally commissioned individual projects will be established as part of external commissioning processes, and individual research agreements will be issued at the conclusion of the competitive tendering process following approval of funding to the applicants.

Terms and conditions governing research projects will be the same for both Core and externally-funded research.

Funding for Phase III of the School will start on 1 May 2019, and will run for 5 years.

3.6   Financial arrangements

Allocation between Core and externally-funded research

After accounting for LSE and other running costs for the NIHR SSCR, it is intended that, over the 5-year contracted period, approximately 80% of the budget will be allocated to research carried out by Core Members and 20% to research carried out by external research teams. The 80:20 allocation between Core Member and external research may be amended on agreement with NIHR. Core Members will explore collaborative projects with each other within their research budget allocations, and these will be discussed regularly as part of Executive Group discussions on the School's research programme. Non-programme work by external NIHR SSCR Fellows could include methodological reviews and consultation exercises.

Decisions on funding will be taken by the Executive Group in relation to individual projects after full consideration of the current state of evidence in that field, the type of research to be undertaken, the best design for that type of research, the expected value for money of that work and its relevance to the improvement of adult social care practice in England and independent peer-review. The Executive Group will closely monitor expenditure patterns and the consequences for research quality and the distribution of resources, and make recommendations for change if necessary.

Deputy Director budget
A budget of £25,000 per annum (inclusive of travel, subsistence and other costs) will be available for the Deputy Director in support of her management and related responsibilities within the School, as detailed in Section 3.1.

Associate Director budget
A budget of £20,000 per annum (inclusive of travel, subsistence and other costs) will be available for allocation to each Associate Director in support of their management and related responsibilities within the School, as detailed in Section 3.1.

FEC/overheads
Funding for all projects, reviews and other research-related activities will be on the basis of value for money. The School will fund legitimate and reasonable indirect costs for the research proposed. Arrangements for overheads will be stipulated in the School's research commissioning guidelines.

In issuing calls for proposals, the School (through the Executive Group) may identify target costs for projects of different sizes and types. Proposals will need to include full details of planned expenditure, and a detailed statement of expenditure will be required at each reporting stage. It will be made clear to individuals and organisations tendering for NIHR SSCR funding that value for money will be one of the criteria used to assess proposals.

Financial management and regulations
The financial arrangements for the School, including the allocation of funding to projects, will be overseen by the NIHR SSCR Executive Group. The Finance and Impact Manager will submit an account of all income and expenditure to meetings of the Executive on a quarterly basis, to feed into quarterly monitoring of School finances by NIHR.

Any Executive Group member, Senior Fellow or Fellow engaged on NIHR SSCR-commissioned work who additionally receives funds from elsewhere which contributes to that work, and/or receives additional funding leveraged through their School role, will be asked to notify the Finance and Impact Manager who will keep appropriate records.

Funding regulations for Executive Group members, NIHR SSCR Core Members and Fellows will be set out in the tender documentation and in the contracts.

Invoicing

Payment for commissioned research will be made quarterly from the LSE upon receipt of invoices detailing actual expenditure. Payment schedules will be set out in individual subcontracts.

Project contracts will stipulate requirements to submit timely invoices to support the School's financial management processes.

Each Executive Group member, Senior Fellow and Fellow receiving funding from NIHR SSCR will be required to nominate a finance manager or appropriately qualified individual from their organisation to liaise with the NIHR SSCR Finance and Impact Manager to provide quarterly updates on expenditure, project and activity finances. Each must keep records which are transparent, auditable and compatible with good financial practice.

Auditing

The Director of the School reserves the right to appoint an independent chartered or certified public accountant through the LSE at the NIHR SSCR's expense to examine all relevant books and records of Core Members and Fellows, provided:

- reasonable prior written notice is given by the Finance and Impact Manager

- access is only required during normal working hours

- the Director and the auditor will make all reasonable endeavours to keep confidential any information that they may require in the exercise of their rights under this Clause

For all Members and Fellows, audit principles as set out by their host institution will be applicable. Where an institution's policies may differ from the lead institution's policies, the LSE's principles will apply.

Indemnity and insurance

Issues of indemnity and insurance will be set out in the individual contracts with host universities. It is the responsibility of the individual host institution to ensure that all staff engaged in programmes have the appropriate indemnity for the conduct of research. Proof of indemnity will be requested upon signature of agreements with the LSE for NIHR SSCR records.

Arrangements for withdrawal

Arrangements for withdrawal will be set out in individual collaboration agreements for Core Members, and individual project agreements.

In the event of withdrawal of an NIHR SSCR Core Member, the School will discuss with the NIHR what actions should be taken.

In the event of withdrawal of a Principal Investigator on a funded research study, the School will discuss with the host university for that project an acceptable replacement to ensure that the project can continue. Where this is not possible, the Executive Group will make all reasonable attempts to reallocate the committed funding to another university or organisation that can complete the required project. Any reallocation will be agreed with the NIHR. A withdrawing Associate Director, Senior Fellow or Fellow will not be entitled to receive any additional payment for costs incurred from NIHR SSCR activities that were carried out before the withdrawal unless otherwise agreed.

The process for terminations relating to breaches with commissioned research will be stipulated in the relevant agreements and dealt with accordingly.

4.   CONDUCTING HIGH-QUALITY RESEARCH

4.1   Aims

The core aim of NIHR SSCR is to carry out high-quality internationally leading research to produce new knowledge (including, where appropriate, reviews and syntheses of existing evidence), in order to inform the development of adult social care practice.

The other activities described in Sections 5 to 10 will contribute to this main activity. Each of them – consultation on priorities, methodological investment, developing research capacity, knowledge exchange and impact, and providing research focus and leadership – is essential to the success of the School.

NIHR SSCR will undertake and commission primary and secondary research on adult social care practice in England, covering the delivery of adult social care by professional and non-professional staff working in the statutory, private and third sectors.

The term 'adult social care' refers to provision of personal and practical care and support that people may need because of their age, illness, cognition, disability or other circumstances. It also includes support for family members or other unpaid carers. Important aims are to help people remain independent, retain their dignity and achieve a better

quality of life. Another important aim is to safeguard vulnerable individuals from abuse and neglect. Care and support are provided in a number of settings: in residential and nursing homes, in people's own homes (domiciliary or 'home' care) and in other community settings such as day centres. There are also various accommodation settings, such as sheltered housing, extra-care housing, supported living and Shared Lives schemes. Social workers and other staff carry out assessments, provide information and coordinate activities to back up this service provision. The School's work is intended to help to improve the quality of care and support services for all those people who use them. The overall programme will strike an appropriate balance, as informed by its UCPRG, Advisory Board and others, between being as inclusive as possible and being focused on priorities and areas where impact can be achieved.

NIHR SSCR will draw on a wide range of academic disciplines and research methods. The School will

encourage multi-disciplinary complex research questions relevant to real world practice. NIHR SSCR will ensure that its research response to any particular adult social care practice question is proportionate: the resources and effort devoted to addressing a research question should be in proportion to the likely implications of the findings for adult social care practice.

NIHR SSCR will ensure that the findings from well-conducted research are translated into outputs that are accessible and usable by all relevant stakeholders within adult social care and related systems (see Section 9). Lessons from Phase I and II activities on impact and knowledge exchange will be built into the School's activities as far as possible.

The quality of the research commissioned by NIHR SSCR will be monitored by the Executive Group and through independent reviewing of research proposals and assessment of final reports.

4.2   Research themes and projects

The School's research programme should endeavour to span the most important themes currently emphasised in adult social care policy with other sectors, and practice in England. Section 12.1 sets out further information on the School's research themes.

As required for specific purposes, other cross-cutting themes will be used as means of grouping research projects and findings in ways relevant to adult social care practice, such as service user groups (e.g. people with mental health needs, learning disabilities or sensory needs), care settings (e.g. home care, care homes, and community), and specific practice and policy-into-practice issues (e.g. safeguarding,

commissioning, and housing support). NIHR SSCR will continue to be guided by its UCPRG and Advisory Board to ensure the continuing relevance of these themes. The School will also continue to take note of developments beyond the School that relate to what ought to be the most helpful content of the research programme, e.g. James Lind Alliance and other research prioritisation exercises, research commissioned by the rest of NIHR and other funders, and significant policy and practice developments.

The type of research to be undertaken – a review, an initial 'scoping' of the issues, an exploratory study or a full evaluation – will be considered by the Executive Group before work is commissioned.

4.3   Over-arching principles and cross-cutting considerations

A number of principles will be adhered to throughout the School's research activities, namely:

- user, carer and practitioner engagement will be expected throughout the School's activities. Procedures will be needed, for example, to allow the participation of people for whom standard methods of communication are not possible. Appropriate involvement in all projects will also be required and supported by the School

- all projects will be required to be as inclusive as possible of individuals and groups; for example, we will promote and support good use of the Mental Capacity Act provisions for including the experiences of people lacking capacity

- the highest ethical and research governance standards must be achieved

- the pursuit of scientific excellence is imperative, but must be proportionate to the real-world relevance of the question

- research commissioned and conducted by the School should have real-world relevance

- peer-review processes will be employed to ensure that funded proposals are of a high standard and are relevant

- completed reports will be similarly assessed

- the details of commissioned projects and the findings of completed studies should be highly visible within the public domain, and accessible to all relevant stakeholders

- all projects will be required to consider their pathways to impact from the beginning of their project, and to implement these as far as possible

- all projects will be required to aspire to a minimum of one 'gold' open-access publication in a peer-

reviewed journal, and the School will strongly encourage more publications where possible and appropriate. It is also a requirement that all published outputs from NIHR SSCR research projects should be (at least 'green') open-access

Additional cross-cutting principles underpinning the research and related work of the School will be:

- development and utilisation of robust outcome measures, which will address as applicable outcomes of interest to commissioners, managers, staff, people who use services and their carers

- exploration of 'process outcomes', reflecting how individuals access and experience care and support

- analysis of cost-effectiveness, ensuring that resource impacts are addressed alongside outcome impacts, and that any trade-offs are transparent

- recognition of cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic and other dimensions of diversity

- commitment to highlighting inequalities in need, access to support, outcomes, funding and other relevant dimensions, and – where appropriate – making research-based recommendations for ways to address them

- awareness of interfaces between adult social care, health care and relevant other systems (such as housing, pensions and benefits)

- efforts to inform social work and social care practice, including through practice-facing outputs from NIHR SSCR research

- exploration of consequences of practice changes for the paid workforce in the statutory, third and private sectors, and for unpaid carers

4.4 Collaborative working

NIHR places considerable emphasis on collaborative working across its Schools. Although in some respects more complicated to set up and manage, collaborative studies offer a number of potential advantages. They allow Core Members to utilise and share their more specialised methodological skills or topic expertise to the mutual advantage of others. This could also contribute to the capacity-building objectives of the School. Collaborative research can make it easier to enrol a range of services or sites into a study, and to ensure recruitment from a range of potentially diverse localities, particularly given the wide geographical spread of Core Member universities across England. There could also be economies of scale arguments. Another advantage could be to help to build a platform for leveraging additional funding from outside the School budget, particularly for large, ambitious studies.

In Phase II of the School there were a number of jointly conducted studies, as well as a range of other collaborative activities, such as joining (or in at least one case, chairing) advisory groups for each other's projects, offering methodological advice (including on-site training), and jointly delivered impact events.

The School is committed to conducting collaborative research projects and other collaborative activities within its budget. The aim is for each Core Member to undertake at least two projects or activities over the course of Phase III of the School that are carried out collaboratively with at least one other Core Member.

Collectively, the School's Executive Group will discuss as soon as possible the feasibility of developing and conducting a large multi-university project. We will also add 'Collaborative working' as a standing agenda item for Executive Group meetings. Through other activities, such as workshops and capacity development events across Core Member localities, we will further encourage and facilitate collaborative working and impact across the NIHR SSCR.

In addition, NIHR SSCR is committed to exploring and building on existing collaborative research opportunities with the other two NIHR Schools, notwithstanding the slight complication that the other Schools are at different points in their 5-year funding cycles.

4.5   Leveraged funding

As noted in Section 2.3, one of the School's objectives is to leverage additional research funding from external sources, including (but not only) from other parts of NIHR. This will build on the School's commitment to future collaborative working (see Section 4.4), and also on previous successes (as individual university groups and collaboratively) in securing such additional funding, linked to previous or ongoing NIHR SSCR activities.

The School collates information on research funded from sources other than NIHR SSCR that has built on previous or current SSCR activities. This is research funding awarded not only to Core Member universities but also to others supported by the School in Phases I or II. The School will continue to record information on leveraged funding.

The short-term priorities of the School (for the first 9-12 months) are to 'bed down' new relationships and processes, commission and commence the first Phase III Core Member projects (of which there could be as many as 15 starting in May 2019) and to issue an external research call, followed by the commissioning of external projects. In this latter respect, NIHR SSCR is different from the other two NIHR Schools. Towards the end of the School's first year, the Executive Group will devote time to the further development of a clear plan for leveraging additional funding. As with other major activities within the School, this will involve consultation with key stakeholders, including the UCPRG and the Advisory Board. It will also involve review of external funding opportunities (within broader NIHR and beyond), and will link to the School's discussions with funders on expanding funding opportunities for adult social care research in England. We will prepare a plan for leveraging funding for discussion with NIHR reflecting on these discussions before the end of the School's first year. (Through the additional capacity-building funding from NIHR, we plan to host – during the first year of the new phase of the School – a meeting of other funders of research in and near to adult social care to examine possibilities for collaboration and leveraging funding on capacity development.)

5.   COMMISSIONING RESEARCH

5.1   Commissioning principles

The School aims to commission research that is of the highest quality, relevant, ethical, independently peer-reviewed, widely disseminated, and fully engages with people who use services, the practice communities and other stakeholders.

5.2   Commissioning of research by Core Members

Core Member leads are required to propose to the Executive Group initial outlines of research projects they are considering for internal NIHR SSCR funding. These need to be relevant to the School's mission. If agreed at this outline stage, the project Principal Investigator (PI) then completes a full application, which will be independently peer-reviewed. The RPM will oversee the review process unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case one of the Core Member leads will be asked to oversee the review through their own university base. An EG academic liaison will be appointed to lead on commissioning the project and liaising with the PI if the project is commissioned, including attending project-specific advisory group meetings.

Three rounds of commissioning per year will take place with deadlines for receipt of full proposals: 30 April; 31 August; 30 November (or next working day). Outlines proposals can be submitted for any EG meeting.

Subject to satisfactory peer-review and revision of the proposal, projects are then commissioned and contracted through NIHR SSCR's arrangements with the LSE. Projects will be required to start on the date agreed during the commissioning process.

Encouragement will be given to research conducted across two or more university members of the School, as well as to proposals that lay foundations for leveraging funding. However, it is not necessary for all projects to be tied to these two objectives.

5.3   Commissioning of research from external research teams

The Executive Group will consult with the Advisory Board, UCPRG, and external stakeholders to identify the key questions for external calls for research applications, and the Executive will then prioritise these questions. Opportunities to apply for research identified through this process will be advertised widely.

Two-stage calls for proposals will detail the research questions, the expected duration of the study, financial rules and regulations, and an indicative cost. The School will produce guidance for applicants and endeavour to undertake other activities to help applicants produce good proposals. In particular, the School will facilitate opportunities for service users, carers and adult social care practitioners to participate in defining and, where possible, to lead or collaborate in research projects. This will include encouraging links between local authorities, provider organisations, individuals, NIHR Research Design Services and the NIHR Clinical Research Network (as appropriate) to encourage and support development of proposals.

Specifications for calls and commissioning processes will be in line with all relevant EU regulations, and any additional LSE and NIHR regulations. The Executive Group will carry out screening review of Stage 1 proposals focusing on eligibility and scope. Proposals that do meet Stage 1 requirements will be invited to submit full proposals at Stage 2. Full proposals will be peer-reviewed (see Section 5.4) before being considered further.

All commissioning decisions will be made by a panel comprising the School's Executive Group, and at least one service user/carer/practitioner (appropriately supported and remunerated) and at least one researcher independent of NIHR SSCR.

Call for proposals will stipulate a specific start date for successful proposals; unless there are exceptional circumstances, the start date for a project will be non-negotiable.

5.4   Peer review

Prior to commissioning, each NIHR SSCR study will be peer-reviewed. The School will aim to ensure that each piece of work is externally peer-reviewed by a user or carer, one or two researchers with particular expertise in the area and possibly also an adult social care practitioner. Wherever possible, reviewers will be chosen so as to bring relevant contextual experience or expertise to the task. User and carer reviewers will be paid for carrying out reviews; standard NIHR operating procedures concerning the payment of other reviewers will be followed. Ensuring that there are no conflicts of interest, two previously identified Executive Group members will play a key role in the interpretation of reviewers' comments and recommendations. Decisions on which proposals will be funded, and any conditions attached to that funding, will be the responsibility of the Executive Group based on discussion at the Commissioning panel. These decisions will be informed by the following criteria:

- feasibility
- methodological excellence
- originality
- relevance to adult social care practice
- potential to have an impact on practice and on the lives of people using services and their carers;
- value for money
- strength of the research team
- contribution to the coherence of the programme and to the work of NIHR SSCR more broadly
- clearly defined and costed plans for user, carer, practitioner involvement, well-defined pathways to impact (through engagement and dissemination, for example) and being as inclusive as possible of research participants
- clearly defined and costed plans for meeting research ethics and governance requirements

5.5   Research ethics and governance

All projects must have successfully undergone a form of ethics review. Where required, projects must apply for a favourable opinion from an appropriate research ethics as specified under Health Research Authority (HRA) guidance. Where HRA approval is not required,

review by a university ethics committee will be required. (For non-university organisations conducting NIHR SSCR-commissioned research, equivalent arrangements will need to be made.) All work supported by the School will be carried out in

accordance with the UK policy framework for health and social care research (2017), the Implementation Plan for Social Care (2004), the Mental Capacity Act (2005), the Mental Health Act (2007), the Data Protection Act (2018) and all other legislation and good practice (e.g. trial registration) for research ethics and governance.

The School acknowledges that time spent on ethics applications is not funded by universities for career-track research staff. However, time spent on ethics preparation itself will not be eligible for funding from NIHR SSCR. Funding can be released for activities that do not require ethics approval while ethical processes for other study elements are completed. Where ethical approval is not received, funding for those activities requiring approval will not be released and (if appropriate) the project contract will be terminated.

5.6   Monitoring of research projects

Stringent targets will be set and indicators used to monitor progress of funded projects. A key contractual requirement will be the biannual production of brief reports by all funded research teams, and an annual impact assessment. Progress meetings are expected to take place twice a year. Failure to achieve targets agreed in project agreements may require remedial action by the School, firstly to identify any problems, time pressures and other issues that NIHR SSCR may be able to resolve; and secondly (if appropriate) to involve other researchers, subject to contract regulations, in the completion of the project and/or in the production of some of these outputs.

For ongoing commissioned research, any substantive variations to research projects will need to be approved by the Director following discussion with the Executive Group lead, if needed, RPM and FIM, and, as appropriate, after peer-review of the revised proposal where the work to be undertaken is substantially different to the original proposal. Implications for ethics and governance will also be considered.

5.7   Reporting

A contractual requirement for all research projects will be preparation an End-of-Project report consisting of:

- a short administrative report, including a financial statement

- one or more peer-reviewed paper(s) submitted to top quality journals (in pre-submission manuscript form)

- a short note reflecting on the methods used and any issues/lessons that arise (things that did and did not work)

- a brief, accessible 'Findings' report in line with the School's requirements for this document, to be placed on its website

The End-of-Project report will be peer-reviewed and amendments may be requested before publication of specific parts of the report. In addition projects will be required to confirm feedback has been provided to all participants in studies as appropriate. Final payment will be contingent on the satisfactory delivery of all of these outputs.

All journal articles and other outputs will be required to acknowledge support from NIHR SSCR and carry the required NIHR disclaimer. The School will require all outputs intended for the public domain to be submitted to the School 30 days before publication. Key outputs ('Findings', papers and any final report if a project chooses to prepare one) will be sent to the NIHR Journal's Library for publication on the School's project page.

5.8   Improving complementarity

NIHR SSCR will liaise closely with other current and potential funders of adult social care research to ensure complementarity in the research that each body is intending to commission. To assist in this the School will ensure that NIHR SSCR continues to help to promote awareness and understanding of adult social care research across other parts of NIHR, and for other funders, such as UKRI and charitable funders. The School will continue to develop the profile of NIHR SSCR as a focal point for information about adult social care research and a source of support on this topic to other research funders.

6.   METHODOLOGICAL REPERTOIRE AND RIGOUR

A number of methods have been used in adult social care research, but have not always been selected appropriately, nor are they always employed adequately. This has left some of the empirical evidence in the field lacking in the rigour needed to offer relevant and useful findings to inform the development of care practice. The disciplinary base from which adult social care research has been built might also benefit from broadening, and the repertoire of theoretical and conceptual frameworks and research methods thereby expanded. An important aim of the new phase of the School will therefore be to continue to improve the quality of the research undertaken in and within adult social care practice by helping to broaden the range of research designs and methods, and by ensuring that these are applied appropriately. NIHR SSCR will continue to promote and build on the research

methods papers delivered in previous phases of the School in support of this aim. We will also support the Incubator to further this agenda.

If necessary, Executive Group members and Senior Fellows will work closely with short-listed or funded applicants to ensure that the work to be undertaken is fully relevant to adult social care practice in England and is of the highest standard. The links established between Executive Group members and individual projects are also helpful in this regard, for example through membership of project advisory groups in some instances. To support ongoing development of the methodological base for adult social care research, as noted above, NIHR SSCR requires a reflection on the methods employed as part of End-of-Project reports which will give the researchers an opportunity make recommendations that could help future work.

7.   RESEARCH FOCUS AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

NIHR SSCR continues to provide a focus for adult social care research within the NIHR, aiming to encourage greater understanding and awareness of adult social care and encourage further investment in adult social care research. We have successfully worked with funding streams within NIHR (e.g. Research for Patient Benefit and NETSCC) and with NIHR infrastructure (e.g. Involve, the Research Design Services and the Clinical Research Network) to support their engagement with adult social care research. Developing yet greater awareness of and engagement with adult social care and research within NIHR should be an important ongoing task in Phase III.

The School continues to support, encourage and in some respects lead the development of adult social care research in England, and to forge productive links with adult social care research communities in other parts of the UK and beyond. Many of the activities described in earlier sections of this Business Plan will help in this regard.

NIHR SSCR has established its profile as a key organisation in delivering better evidence and contributing to improving practice. The School's networks are now extensive, building on links established through the Core Members and the Advisory Board, and on links at the levels of individual projects. The School's knowledge exchange activities have further supported this.

Building on achievements in Phases I and II, the School will continue to build its profile and leadership in the field of improving adult social care practice through:

- advice from its Advisory Board, many of whose members are drawn from key national bodies influential in shaping adult social care in England

- guidance and support from the Impact Working Group, many of whose members are drawn from key national bodies alongside user, carer and practitioner membership and academic expertise in knowledge exchange and impact

- jointly organised events with key stakeholder organisations

- utilising the additional resources provided to improve research-practice links as part of developing capacity

- organising the NIHR SSCR Annual conference as a focal point for researchers and users, carers and practitioners to discuss research findings

While NIHR SSCR's focus is on practice, the School recognises that one pathway to improving practice is through policy discussion and development. NIHR SSCR has therefore sought to build strong links with national and local policy communities, including the Department of Health and Social Care's policy team for adult social care and local authorities, and will continue to strengthen these links.

8.   IDENTIFYING EVIDENCE GAPS

NIHR SSCR will actively consult with a wide range of stakeholders in adult social care about research questions, the methods needed to answer them, the processes through which these methods are to be implemented, and the ways in which findings may be translated into a form that can aid the development of practice. The purpose will be to identify topics, methods and processes on an ongoing basis during the 5-year period to support the School's Executive as it prioritises research activities.

Ongoing review of the School's scoping reviews and funded studies will provide information on current evidence gaps identified through Phases I and II activities.

A range of processes will be used, including discussions with the User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group, open consultation with researchers, commissioners, providers, people who use services, carers, frontline professionals and other key individuals in order to develop the School's research and capacity-building activities. The various links set out above are also important as sources of consultation on research priorities.

We will continue to support research prioritisation work by others as opportunities arise, such as continuing our link with the James Lind Alliance. Additionally, we will support work to encourage research funders to address research priorities identified in, for example, the James Lind Alliance-led Prioritisation Partnership on Adult Social Work, and those identified in relevant NICE guidance.

To establish a yardstick for development, the School will host a further event on the current position of adult social care research (following events in 2005 and 2010) early in the first year of Phase III.

9.   BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY

Adult social care research in England is still conducted by a relatively small group of experienced people, certainly in comparison to the number of health services researchers. In support of its principal aims to conduct and commission world class research, NIHR SSCR will contribute to the development of greater capacity, in terms of both the generation of research and its utilisation by decision-makers throughout the statutory, third and private sectors.

The School will build on achievements under Phases I and II and explore other avenues for investing in greater capacity development in care research. In particular, consideration will be given to:

- examining the potential for supporting NIHR fellowships and other capacity-building opportunities in adult social care through liaison with the NIHR Academy

- identifying more ways to promote the School's growing body of methods papers, especially to undergraduate and postgraduate students to help attract more researchers into adult social care research as well as developing the abilities of those who have already entered this field

- liaising with other research funders and associated initiatives to encourage greater investment in adult social care practice research

- working closely with professional bodies representing social workers, occupational therapists and care workers to encourage greater participation in research, including by supporting investment in research skill development

- continuing to promote and develop the Journal of Long-term Care

- supporting the academic development of research co-produced with or led by people who use services, carers and practitioners

The School's Executive will review a report of a survey of research use and capacity within local authorities commissioned from the Social Services Research Group (now part of LARIA) early in Phase II, and will consider developing an action plan in consultation with the School's Advisory Group.

The School will receive additional funding to support capacity-building activities, as well as linking with the NIHR Social Care Incubator, arrangements for which will be set out in a separate contract between the NIHR Academy and LSE.

10. USER, CARER, PRACTITIONER AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The School's involvement initiatives will focus on four broad groups: i) people who use adult social care services (service users); ii) unpaid family carers of service users; iii) adult social care practitioners; and iv) the public. Practitioners are explicitly included: unlike health care, there is no model for practitioner academics and, hence, the divide between researchers and practitioners is marked. Each of the four groups has an important contribution to make to the definition of research priorities and the details of individual projects, and in planning how best to achieve impact from research.

Building on the work of the School in Phases I and II, user, carer and practitioner (UCP) groups will be involved in the School's strategic management through the work of the UCPRG and the Advisory Board, and in research programmes through individual projects. The School will explore ways to ensure involvement is appropriate to individual projects and to facilitate greater involvement (through user-, carer- and practitioner-led groups, or with these groups playing a significant role in project teams).

NIHR SSCR has an extensive network of stakeholders with links to UCP groups. The School will utilise these links to support further engagement with the School's activities.

Phase II's approach to user, carer and practitioner involvement will be reviewed and developed for Phase III (see Annex A). In particular, a review of the School's UCP Involvement Strategy will be carried out by the UCPRG early in Phase III. The UCPRG undertook a review of the operationalisation of the School's involvement strategy in phase II and we expect to build on this by using their work to enhance our involvement activity in phase III and through further UCPRG-led reviews of our work.

The School's approach to involvement will follow guidance and standards from NIHR on public involvement.

11. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND IMPACT

Knowledge exchange is an essential element in the School's activities, both in respect of its research programme, and in relation to its various leadership roles. Appropriate knowledge exchange and impact processes and activities are essential to ensure that the School meets its objectives, and that its funded activities have the potential to improve adult social care practice in England.

Building on lessons from Phases I and II, a knowledge exchange and research implementation action plan forms the basis of the School's activities and processes in Phase III (see Annex B). This action plan operates at several levels in order to reach a range of audiences. Ongoing strategic responsibility rests with the Executive Group and implementation is the responsibility of the Finance and Impact Manager.

As part of the School's emphasis on knowledge exchange and impact, all research proposals will be reviewed independently on the basis of their knowledge exchange and impact activities. Proposal leads will be required to respond to comments on their impact review and reflect amendments in their research design, budget and timetable as part of the peer-review and commissioning process.

The School will continue to work closely with other organisations with expertise in knowledge exchange. Where possible and relevant we will also link with academic research collaborations, and, for example, What Works Centres. Considerable efforts will be made to ensure knowledge exchange processes are embedded into all aspects of the School's activities and particularly in funded research studies to ensure messages are disseminated widely to policy, practice, carer and service user audiences; and also to ensure that there are opportunities for these audiences to feed back their views to the School and the researchers it supports.

The School will implement an Impact Fund and a Celebrating Impact prize in Phase III.

12. RESEARCH PROGRAMME

12.1 Research themes

The School is committed to commissioning research across the spectrum of adult social care practice, across different groups, settings and using a range of methodologies. Through its research, the School aims to address, inter alia, priorities identified through the Department of Health and Social Care's Shared Delivery Plan, the Chief Scientific Officer's cross-cutting themes and priorities identified by practice leaders.

The School's research programme will cover a wide range of topics. Annex C sets out the main research themes that are likely to encompass the majority of proposed work. However, we do not intend those themes to be restrictive. The core criterion for funding will be whether the project meets the School's aims and objectives.

12.2 Research projects

Core Members of the School are developing proposals for specific projects to start in Year 1 of Phase III, and will develop outlines of work that could be undertaken later in the 5-year programme, whether by the Core Members themselves or by external research teams. Studies will be prioritised in order to focus resources on those areas expected to deliver the most benefits in terms of a high-quality evidence base for adult social care practice in England.

It is expected that a number of studies will be commissioned to start in the first year of Phase III.

Full research proposals will be sent for peer-review as proposals are submitted to the RPM, and – subject to satisfactory review, amendment as needed and NIHR SSCR approval – will commence as soon as possible thereafter.

13. PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The School will review its performance against its mission and objectives on an annual basis, with annual reports submitted to NIHR.

NIHR will review the School's performance annually, through a mid-term performance review and through a final review at the end of Phase III.

The performance of individual commissioned projects will be reviewed in line with reporting requirements set out earlier.

14. BUDGET

NIHR SSCR will be funded to a total of £18m over 5 years.

	Year 1 May 19–Mar 20	Year 2 Apr 20–Mar 21	Year 3 Apr 21–Mar 22	Year 4 Apr 22–Mar 23	Year 5 Apr 23–Mar 24	Year 6 Apr-24	Total
Core management costs	£395,589	£442,586	£457,609	£472,500	£489,073	£42,211	£2,299,568
Advisory Board and UCPRG costs	£6,830	£6,330	£6,330	£6,330	£6,830	£3,980	£36,630
Knowledge exchange	£41,000	£41,500	£91,500	£98,000	£41,500	£6,000	£319,500
Core member research	£1,284,718	£3,278,614	£3,515,106	£2,709,306	£1,464,406	£23,295	£12,275,445
Commissioning	£0	£384,233	£1,088,659	£1,088,659	£507,306	£0	£3,068,857
Total	£1,728,137	£4,153,264	£5,159,204	£4,374,795	£2,509,114	£75,486	£18,000,000

15.   TIMETABLE

Phase III of the School runs from 1 May 2019 until 30 April 2024. Annual reports will be submitted to the NIHR, and a mid-term performance review will take place late in Year 3.

ANNEX A:
User, Carer, Practitioner Involvement Strategy

Updated 31 October 2018

Introduction

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) re-commissioned the School for Social Care Research (NIHR SSCR) for a second 5-year period to run from April 2014 until May 2019. From its inception NIHR SSCR has worked to ensure that it sets and lives up to high standards with regard to the involvement of service users, carers and practitioners in its activities. NIHR SSCR believes that such wider engagement and involvement contributes to, amongst other things:

- an environment of trust and co-production in social care research

- best knowledge exchange to inform practice and research

- improved relevance of social care research to the priorities and lives of people using services, their family and other unpaid carers (hereafter 'carers') and those responsible for social care practice

- greater knowledge mobilisation and impact from research activities

During the first five years of the School great strides were made in developing user, carer and practitioner involvement in all of the School's activities. Key developments and activities were:

- establishing the User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group (UCPRG) as a key component of the School's governance structure and processes

- ensuring representation from the UCPRG on the

School's Advisory Board as another significant element of our governance

- review of research applications to NIHR SSCR by a user, carer or practitioner as a norm

- review of research reports and scoping and methods papers by a user, carer or practitioner as a norm

- ensuring that there is representation from UCPRG on all the commissioning panels of NIHR SSCR

- ensuring the culture of the School is supportive of the principles of public involvement and of individuals who are involved in our research

- the expectation that there is appropriate user, carer and practitioner involvement in all the research commissioned by UCPRG

- the involvement of a representative from UCPRG in other research-related activities beyond NIHR SSCR.

- links across NIHR and Involve to share good practice in public involvement in research.

The NIHR SSCR has developed this strategy for user, carer and practitioner involvement up to 2019 to build on these successes. This plan has been developed with the UCPRG, discussed with the School's Advisory Board and agreed by the School's Executive Group.

Key terms

P(P)I – Public (& Patient) Involvement, the term more generally used by the NIHR to cover wider involvement of those with an interest in research beyond traditional research groups.

The groups we seek to engage with and involve from amongst the public and adult social care practitioners for SSCR are defined in the following definitions of user, carer and practitioner.

User – service user is a term generally used in social care for someone who is receiving some care and support from social care services. Services may be in the statutory, third or private sectors of the economy. The needs of the service user and the support being received can be very diverse across populations, including support for mental and/or physical health needs, and learning and/or physical disabilities. Services may be funded by the state or paid for by

the person (or by family/friends) themselves (known as self-funders) or subsidised/funded by charities.

Carer – someone who provides unpaid care and support to a service user. Often it is a relative of the service user, though not always.

Practitioner – someone who works in delivering social care. This can mean managers and commissioners as well as frontline care workers such as care assistants, social workers, and occupational therapists.

Involvement – people being supported to have an active role in shaping research and related activities. Currently, the evidence base on which to define the best approaches to involvement is equivocal, but we aspire to develop good practice and contribute to learning and improving the evidence.

Strategic aims

The key strategic aims for user, carer and practitioner involvement across NIHR SSCR are to:

1. provide leadership for best practice in UCP involvement in social care research

2. embed UCP involvement in the governance of the NIHR SSC

3. continue to require best practice in involvement in all research commissioned by NIHR SSCR

4. continue to explore further modes of involvement in NIHR SSCR and its research

5. share good practice on involvement with NIHR and Involve

6. seek to develop the quantity of and capacity for involvement across the social care research sector generally

7. learn about good practice, develop the evidence and evolve our practice and strategy for wider involvement in research

Key activities

To achieve these strategic aims our key activities will be:

1. **Provide leadership for best practice in UCP involvement in social care research**

   Ensure that all the work of the School, its Executive Group (EG), Advisory Board (AB) and UCPRG consistently promote the values and importance of UCP involvement in social care research and examples of good practice.

   Ensure that the School's EG, AB and UCPRG are all appropriately supported to promote involvement.

   Continue to review practices for involvement in NIHR SSCR.

2. **Embed UCP involvement in the governance of the NIHR SSCR**

   Build on the existing structures, practices and capacity for involvement in the governance of NIHR SSCR by continuing to make resources available for these activities, supporting those currently involved and seeking to recruit new members.

   Ensure that users, carers and practitioners are engaged in the work of NIHR SSCR.

   Provide group and individual support to UCPRG members as required.

   Develop a wider network of people beyond UCPRG to involve, for example, for periods of peak activities such as reviewing research applications.

3. **Require high quality practice in involvement in all research commissioned by NIHR SSCR**

   Continue to make clear NIHR SSCR requirements about appropriate involvement in all research it commissions.

   Continue to ensure that involvement is a key element in all decisions about what research to commission.

   Share examples of good practice in social care research.

   Reflect on current involvement in NIHR SSCR research and make appropriate changes to ensure best practice.

   Ensure that the methods note of the formal report required for all NIHR SSCR projects includes a section 'Reflections on UCP involvement in the project' to generate lessons across projects which could contribute to effective involvement in future social care research.

4. **Continue to explore further modes of involvement in NIHR SSCR and its research.**

   Work with UCPRG and others outside NIHR SSCR to identify opportunities for new modes of involvement.

5. **Share good practice on involvement with NIHR and Involve**

   Continue to participate in opportunities across NIHR and with Involve to share the good practice in NIHR SSCR and to learn from best practice in public involvement in research more generally.

6. **Develop the quantity of and capacity for involvement across the social care research sector**

   Ensure NIHR SSCR is seen as a leader in best practice in social care research and to extend the influence of NIHR SSCR in promoting this.

   Continue to work with others involved in the commissioning, management and governance of social care research to identify and share opportunities for increasing the amount of public involvement in social care research generally and the capacity amongst the public to be involved.

Review of the strategy

This strategy was reviewed in 2016, led by the UCPRG, supported by the NIHR SSCR Research Programme Manager, and reported to the School's Executive Group and Advisory Board.

A dynamic process will be developed of learning about good practice in involvement, evolving our approaches and strategy.

ANNEX B:
Knowledge Exchange and Research Implementation Action Plan

NIHR SSCR has ten years of experience in commissioning research with the potential to improve adult social care practice in England. Over this period, a number of knowledge exchange, impact and engagement (KEIE) activities have been carried out, some as pilots, to improve the School's processes, our central KEIE channels and the support offered to commissioned studies.

As part of Phase II activities, the School is currently finalising reports and papers on lessons from across these ten years, strengthening guidance to the social care research community on research impact, drawing together impact case studies, and refining recommendations for the research-using community.

A methods review on the role of implementation science is also underway. These outputs will provide the platform for the School's action plan for Phase III.

Our approach for Phase I of the School was to centralise a number of KEIE activities with an ad hoc experimental approach. We then moved to less centralised activities and enhanced support for commissioned studies in Phase II, with a more coordinated strategic approach building on our learning from Phase I. Our approach in Phase III will be to balance between these two approaches to ensure some strategic centralised activities take place, alongside enhanced support to commissioned studies with flexibility to develop initiatives over time.
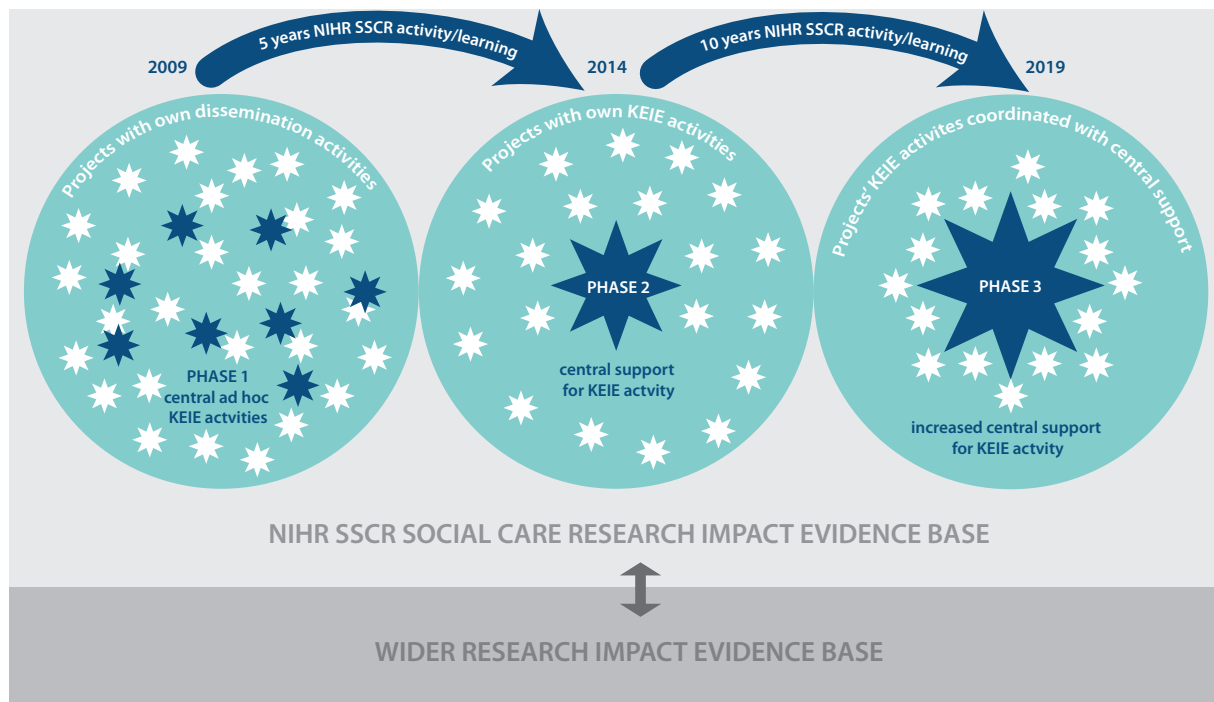
KEIE activity in Phase II

1. Build on existing relationships and developments, and continue to raise the profile of the School.

2. View the central NIHR SSCR role as facilitative, supportive and focused on linkage across the social care research sector, with clear opportunities and expectations of KEIE activity to be conducted by each NIHR SSCR-funded project.

3. Start early and be ongoing throughout Phase III of the School.

4. Focus on NIHR SSCR contributing to existing and emergent social care sector networks and organisations, not on building its own network.

5. Ensure internal processes are designed to make the most of the information collated from projects and wider NIHR SSCR activities.

6. Focus on developing the evidence base for impact rather than implementing evidence directly.

The resources and staff time required for this have been reflected in the School's budget for Phase III.

Development of Phase III's Knowledge Exchange and Research Implementation Action Plan

As our Action Plan will build on current Phase II activities, it will be finalised between January and June 2019. A draft of the plan will be discussed by the School's Executive Group, and subsequently discussed with the School's Advisory Board and User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group. It will then be reviewed and signed off by the School's Executive Group. Here we set out our priorities for this plan with some examples of activities, rather than the finalised plan itself.

Priorities

The School's priorities in relation to knowledge exchange and research implementation align closely with the School's mission and objectives for Phase III.

1. Strengthen the School's identity and voice in adult social care

The School is now widely known for commissioning high-quality adult social care research with an impact on practice. There remain contextual issues which may limit the School's reach into practice and awareness of the School, and this is an area we would like to focus more on in Phase III (see 5 below).

Our core activities will be integral to sustaining the School's identity. Our website will continue to act as a focal point; enhancements to our current website will be completed by April 2019 and the website will be reviewed annually for further enhancements. Use of social media will be further developed.

We will continue to enforce requirements to use funding acknowledgements to ensure findings are being linked to the School, as well as ensuring compliance with our identity guidance, and continue to share findings from studies through press releases, and in links with the NIHR Dissemination Centre and Journals Library.

In recent years the School's voice has played a significant role in supporting developments in social care, both internally within, and external to, NIHR. This has included support to, for example, the Clinical Research Network, Research Design Service, NIHR Academy, new Academic Research Centres and more recently the NIHR's Social Care campaign, as well as inputs into the recent JLA priority-setting exercise for social work and scoping research priorities for NETSCC. We will continue to support these and similar activities and initiatives.

2. Support the generation of impact from commissioned studies

Over the course of Phase II, we increased our support to commissioned studies, focusing on their impact plans. This has, for example, included regular meetings to discuss impact activities, which has allowed for ideas and guidance to be shared across projects. Our support in this way will be increased in Phase III, building on successes in Phases I and II.

In order for studies to be able to realise their potential for impact they need to develop strong pathways-to-impact plans as part of the initial research proposal. All research proposals will be reviewed independently on the basis of their KEIE activities. Proposal leads will be required to respond to comments on their impact review and reflect amendments in their research design, budget and timetable as part of the commissioning process.

Within six months of a study starting, the research team will be required to complete a more detailed plan for their KEIE activities. They will be provided with a template to ensure consistency across projects, and support will be available to them, for example to discuss aspects of their plan. The information they provide will form the basis of six-monthly reporting processes. Our reporting

processes will include an annual written update on their KEIE plan, and an annual meeting with the School's Impact Manager to discuss progress; these will be timed to ensure these two reporting activities take place six months apart.

Our requirement for summary findings to be produced as part of final reporting will continue, and the School's Impact staff will work closely with the study team to support dissemination of these NIHR SSCR summaries.

We will implement an Impact Fund: its purpose will be to support activities across projects or where additional opportunities have arisen that were not foreseen at the proposal development stage. Proposals to this Fund will need to be led by a NIHR SSCR research champion (see below) and co-produced with one or more non-academic partner.

3. Add value to the School's commissioned research

The School acts as a hub across a broad programme of social care research, and this provides us with opportunities to draw together evidence across this programme. In Phase III we will introduce position papers which draw together evidence in particular themes across all Phases of the School where this might add value to a practice or policy discussion (such as support for carers).

We will produce a 6-monthly report focusing on the School's research, and developments within NIHR, in place of an annual report. These reports will provide a brief reminder of the School's work and will be distributed to stakeholders – such as local authorities, third sector organisations, relevant think tanks, user and carer groups, researchers – and through our mailing lists.

We will discuss other possibilities with the School community.

4. Enhance the sense of community developed by the School

The School has brought together a large number of social care researchers in the last ten years and developed a sense of community. This has been particularly evident in our annual conference, which is now the only event in the country that focuses on adult social care research. The School will continue to host an annual conference, bringing together researchers and other stakeholders to discuss emerging or final research findings, and to discuss key issues in adult social care.

We will explore further opportunities for members of the School community to discuss research or key priorities in carrying out research (such as recruitment, engagement with local authorities, use of big data)

with each other. Although some workshops took place in Phase II, in discussions on impact it became evident that it would be useful to bring studies together more often to share experiences and learning. For Phase III, we are exploring introducing a webinar series where NIHR Senior Fellows and Fellows could discuss aspects of their research, be it on a thematic basis or study-specific basis. These would be closed webinars for the School's community – Executive Group, Senior Fellows, Fellows, Advisory Board and UCPRG – to allow discussion on emerging findings without these being publicised too early. However, some webinars could potentially be open to other colleagues within NIHR where topics may be of interest. These might be fixed slots in a 6-weekly format.

The School introduced a "Celebrating Impact" prize recently, and the expectation is that this will continue on an annual basis.

5. Effectively engage with key stakeholders

A number of lessons are emerging from the School's engagement with stakeholders in Phases I and II. Individual members of the School's community and individual studies have been successful in engaging, for example, specific local authorities or regional groups representing directors or assistant directors of adult social services; lessons from these studies are feeding into a Phase II report on engagement.

Core Members within Phase II have also been successful at a regional level in engaging with key stakeholders, and the School has enhanced links through the ambassadorial role of our Executive Group and Advisory Board members. A more strategic approach will be developed in Phase III.

Each Core Member will host an annual regional engagement workshop. Where Core Members are closely positioned, such as LSE, Kent and King's College London, workshops may be jointly organised. The School's Executive Group will discuss the arrangements for these workshops to ensure all English regions can participate. The workshops will provide opportunities to engage with regional stakeholders on particular topics or through an open showcase event.

We will continue to explore opportunities to organise regular research showcases for policy customers at DHSC, providing evidence that may be relevant to policy discussions.

We will work closely with relevant social care organisations, such as the Social Care Institute for Excellence, Making Research Count and research in practice for adults. Links will be further developed within NIHR to join-up engagement activities where this might be beneficial.

We will develop 'research champions' in practice who can support the School to promote research use and enhance links between the School and key stakeholders. These champions will have a role in reviewing the research proposals (the KEIE review element) and may also discuss plans with individual project teams as part of the reporting processes outlined above. These champions will include members of the School's Advisory Board, and a more strategic approach will be taken to their role in developing the School's Action Plan.

6. Improve research awareness

Alongside the Executive Group's role in supporting improvements in research awareness, initiatives introduced in Phase II to increase awareness of and access to research evidence will continue to be supported in Phase III, including the Journal of Long-term Care and the Social Care Elf. The School has also committed to managing the ENRICH (Enabling Research in Care Homes) website.

We will be working with the new NIHR Adult Social Care (Policy) Research Unit to bring together information on NIHR-funded (and potential other) social care studies and outputs in one accessible website linked to both the School's and the Research Unit's websites. The aim would be to provide improved (open) access to information on research underway in adult social care. This is initially expected to be limited to NIHR-funded research, but could develop more widely if there is demand to do this.

7. Improve understanding of knowledge exchange, impact and implementation science for social care research

We will continue to explore activities and research to improve understanding of KEIE for social care. In Phase III we will take a more strategic approach – through our reporting processes – to collate evidence to track successes and barriers to implementing research at the project level.

We will continue to prepare impact case studies to show how pathways to impact were implemented and the resulting impact.

Roles

In Phase III, our approach will be to engage all members of NIHR SSCR's community and provide them with the necessary information to act as ambassadors.

Activities will be led by the School's Finance and Impact Manager, supported by a Research Impact and Communications Officer.
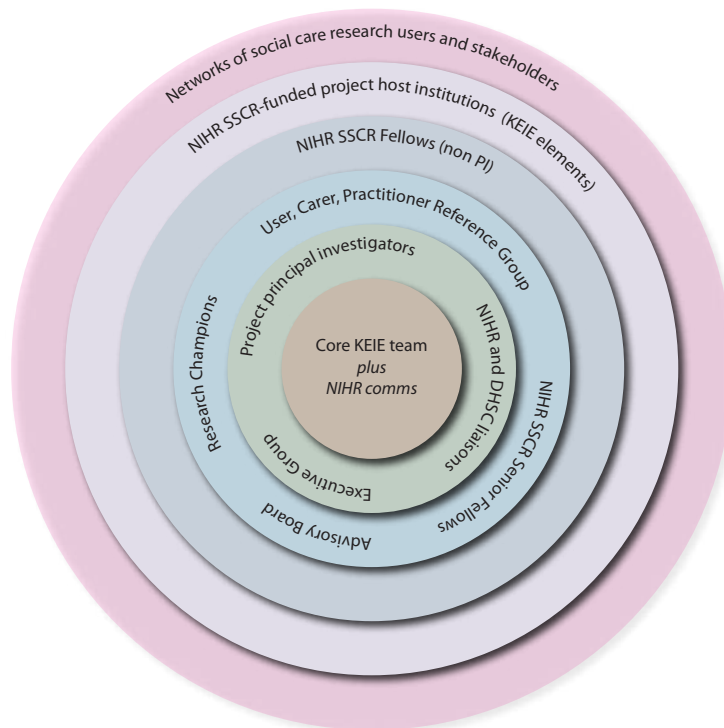
Assessment

An annual impact assessment will take place. The format will be finalised as part of the Action Plan building on approaches trialled in Phase II.

ANNEX C:
NIHR SSCR Research Themes

As noted earlier, we use the term 'adult social care' to refer to provision of personal and practical care and support that people may need because of their age, illness, cognition, disability or other circumstances. It also includes support for family members or other unpaid carers. Important aims are to help people remain independent, retain their dignity and achieve a better quality of life. Another important aim is to safeguard adults at risk from abuse and neglect. Care and support are provided in a number of settings: in care homes with or without nursing, in people's own homes (domiciliary or 'home' care) and in other community settings such as day centres. There are also various accommodation settings, such as sheltered housing, extra-care housing, supported living and Shared Lives schemes. Social workers and other staff carry out assessments, provide information and coordinate activities to back up this service provision.

The School's research programme will cover the following key thematic areas in this context of adult social care (in no priority order):

1. Adult social care needs (met and unmet), and prevention.

2. Approaches to adult social care and social work practice, particularly new approaches: covering areas such as usefulness of international models and approaches; user-led, carer-led and other innovation, including digital and other new technologies.

3. The adult social care workforce: covering areas such as development and retention of the existing workforce, including social workers and occupational therapists; new work roles and new ways of working; challenges to the workforce (diversity, quality, Brexit).

4. Care resources: covering areas such as eligibility; innovative approaches to funding; issues for self-funders; equality and value across self- and state-funded services; financial pressures facing older people and other adults needing support; supporting carers.

5. Working with communities and other assets: covering areas such as asset-based working, social prescribing; community and individual capability; personalisation; interdependency.

6. Care systems and markets: covering areas such as how local authorities manage volume and quality in local services/markets; market-shaping and the impact on providers and others; impact of major changes (e.g. legislation) to the system of care; the impact of coproduced service provision.

7. Diversity, inequality and 'marginalised' communities: covering areas such as variations (including inequity) in accessing adult social care; promising practice and support for specific user groups; coproducing solutions to challenge inequality.

8. Adult social care at the interface with other systems (e.g. integration and coordination): covering areas such as housing, criminal justice, hospital inpatient services, primary care, community mental health, employment settings.

The School is committed to commissioning research across the spectrum of adult social care practice, across different groups, settings and using a range of methodologies.

In deciding what studies to commission, the School will ensure that its work does not duplicate research that might be underway in the DHSC Policy Research Units, such as the Adult Social Care PRU or the Health and Social Care Workforce PRU, or research that is funded by other parts of NIHR or by other funding bodies.

ANNEX D:
Key researchers in Core Member universities

The five key researchers in each of the Core Member universities are:

University of Birmingham
- Professor Jon Glasby
- Dr Robin Miller
- Professor Catherine Needham (lead)
- Dr Karen Newbigging
- Professor Jerry Tew

University of Bristol
- Professor David Abbott (lead)
- Ailsa Cameron
- Professor Liz Lloyd
- Professor Geraldine Macdonald
- Dr Paul Willis

University of Kent
- Professor Julie Beadle-Brown
- Professor Julien Forder
- Dr Nick Gore
- Dr Karen Jones (lead)
- Dr Michelle McCarthy

King's College London
- Dr Michelle Cornes
- Professor Jill Manthorpe (lead)
- Jo Moriarty
- Dr Kritika Samsi
- Dr John Woolham

London School of Economics and Political Science
- Dr Jose-Luis Fernandez
- Professor Martin Knapp (lead)
- David McDaid
- Dr Juliette Malley
- Raphael Wittenberg

University of Manchester
- Dr Paul Clarkson
- Professor John Keady
- Professor Catherine Robinson (lead)
- Sue Tucker
- Professor Alys Young

University of York
- Dr Kate Baxter
- Professor Bryony Beresford
- Professor Yvonne Birks (lead)
- Professor Nicholas Pleace
- Professor Martin Webber

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