

Summer 2020 Newsletter

In this issue we introduce you to some of our newer advisers and our engagement manager. Our funding focus is on public health and the Research Design Service (RDS) Blog is about equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in health and social care research.

We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter and welcome your feedback.

Research Design Service North West



We provide free advice and confidential support on all aspects of developing and writing a research grant application including research design, research methods, identifying funding sources and involving patients and the public.

We assist researchers across the North West of England.

Email: rds-nw@lancaster.ac.uk

Tel: 01524 593209

Featured articles



An interview with one of our clients



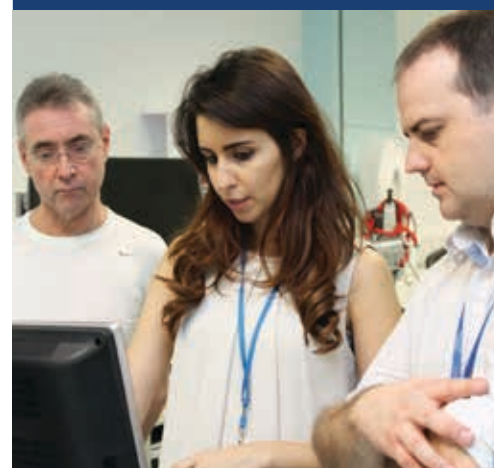
RDS Blog: EDI in research



Meet our Engagement Manager



Funding focus: Public Health



An interview with one of our clients

Mr Shalom Srirangam

RDS NW advises many people and project teams. We particularly aim to advise health and social care personnel including people with clinical backgrounds.

One such clinician, Mr Shalom Srirangam, Consultant Urological Surgeon from East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust (ELHT) came to us for advice on a research idea he had and his subsequent research funding application to The Urology Foundation.

We met with Shalom at ELHT to find out about his experience with the Research Design Service North West. As we are running our "Barriers to Research" campaign, we also asked about his experience of carrying out research, particularly as he was new to applying for research funding. Here are a few highlights from the interview.



Mr Shalom Srirangam

Q: How did the RDS help with your funding proposal?

Shalom: "I think it would have been impossible really without early RDS [NW] support. An area I had not thought about is, having involvement from the patients and public early on in helping design the study. When I spoke to one of the advisers from the North West RDS they told me that it would be very helpful and they also told me that there is a Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) fund as well."

Q: What advice would you give to those considering research?

Shalom: If you are considering developing your portfolio as a researcher or setting up a study then you begin with the North West RDS. Use them for as long as you feel the partnership is benefiting but I suspect they will probably be able to guide you through the whole process.

"In my mind they [RDS NW] are your go to person, outside the Trust, as a first port of call."

Watch Shalom's full video interview about his research study and [why it is important here](#).

There are more case studies and client stories on our website, [find them here](#).

Whether you are new to research or an experienced researcher we can help overcome some of the barriers to applying for research funding, helping you on your research journey #MyResearchJourney

Meet our advisers

In this article we introduce you to some of RDS NW's newer advisers and find out a bit more about their expertise and interests.

Advisers provide one to one advice and guidance to a caseload of clients. They can call on the expertise of other advisers from across the north west. Once you complete an advice request form you will be allocated an adviser, usually in your locality.



Katie Stocking

Katie Stocking is based at the Greater Manchester office, her core advice area is quantitative studies. A medical statistician, Katie has expertise in the design and analysis of studies. Katie is mainly interested in biostatistics, women's health, meta-analysis and intervention studies.

Dr Hazel Morbey is an adviser in the Lancashire and South Cumbria office. Her core skills are with qualitative research methods and patient and public involvement. Hazel has experience of participative/action research methods, specifically in the field of dementia, later life and social care research. Hazel has a professional background in mental health nursing and social work. Hazel is one of three patient and public involvement specialists at RDS NW.



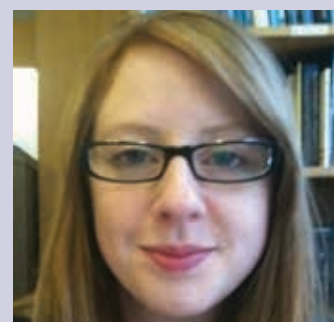
Dr Hazel Morbey



Calvin Heal

Calvin Heal joined RDS NW in November 2019 as an adviser, he is based at the Greater Manchester office. Calvin is a statistician with expertise in biostatistics and statistical modelling. He has expertise in Delphi studies, clinical prediction modelling, randomised and non-randomised interventions studies and mediation analysis.

Dr Christine Rowland is also based at our Greater Manchester office where she works as an adviser. Christine is a psychologist working in health services research with a particular focus on quality of life and end of life. She is very interested in survey methodology and can provide advice on qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods.



Dr Christine Rowland

Meet our advisers continued

Our advisers will call on the expertise of other regional senior advisers from RDS NW, as required for your particular research proposal. Here we introduce you to one of our senior advisers appointed recently.

Dr Caroline Swarbrick is a senior methods lead on qualitative research methods. Caroline's interests are in research related to ageing, specifically in the field of dementia, co-research, social care and the lived experience. She also has expertise in patient and public involvement.

Our advisers continue to support people developing research funding applications for health, social care and public health research during the COVID-19 pandemic. RDS NW advisers are available to provide support via non-face to face means to comply with social distancing rules. Our advice can be provided by email, telephone or videoconferencing whichever is easiest for you. Do not hesitate to get in touch if you are considering applying for one of the many open competition peer reviewed funding programmes.

[Download our advice request form here.](#) We look forward to hearing from you.

Guide to COVID-19 clinical evidence generation launched by NIHR and NICE

The NIHR and NICE have developed a guide on clinical evidence generation for developers of medicinal products for COVID-19. The aim is to promote the highest standards possible within the constraints of the pandemic in terms of registration, conduct and reporting of studies, so that research on the new treatments can be translated into clinical practice as fast as possible.

The guide covers both confirmatory trials and real-world evidence collection on disease treatment and prevention, outlining the best practice approaches to a range of issues including trial design, population identification, the length of the trial and trial outcomes. It should be read in conjunction with the [NICE guide to the methods of technology appraisals 2013](#).

Read [Evidence collection guide for medicinal products to prevent or treat COVID-19 here](#).

Are you a researcher in health or social care? Keep up to date with information from NIHR and other organisations in the north west. Follow RDS NW on Twitter.

@NIHR_RDSNW

Meet Maria: RDS NW's Engagement Manager



Maria Thornton

Maria Thornton joined the RDS NW team full time in December 2019 as the Engagement Manager. Here she tells us about her background in supporting health and social care researchers across the region.

Maria previously worked in a local authority and the NHS for over 25 years and she has held senior positions in research management in community and secondary care organisations. She has also worked at a regional level with the North West Strategic Health Authority 2006 to 2012 to develop research collaborations across academe and clinicians and practitioners.

Maria is an enthusiastic advocate of patient and public involvement in research and she has delivered a range of innovative projects to promote research and support recruitment to clinical trials. On taking up the position, Maria said:

"I'm really looking forward to working with you to promote the Research Design Service and support you in engaging with your staff to undertake health and social care research."

Maria along with other RDS NW staff are available to present at research events across the north west. Presentations of 20 minutes to a few hours are available which explain RDS's services and the help available to researchers working in the field of health and social care. Please get in touch if you are arranging an event that you think may be of interest, send an email to the coordinating office rds-nw@lancaster.ac.uk

RDS COVID-19 resources

Research resources and relevant methodological approaches

Research Design Service North West has worked with Research Design Service colleagues across the country to collate appropriate/relevant methodological approaches for research studies being designed or delivered during the COVID-19, or any pandemic.

[View these COVID-19 research resources here.](#)

COVID-19 funding opportunities resource by RDS London

Our colleagues at RDS London have produced a web page which lists the funding opportunities available to support research in health and social care associated with COVID-19.

[View RDS London's COVID-19 resource here.](#)

Funding focus: NIHR Public Health Research Programme

The [Public Health Research \(PHR\) Programme](#) funds research to generate evidence to inform the delivery of non-NHS interventions intended to improve the health of the public and reduce inequalities in health. Here are the latest calls.

[20/68 Targeted mass media interventions for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic populations](#)

Are culturally competent, targeted mass media interventions effective and cost-effective in promoting healthy behaviours to reduce the risk of disease in black, Asian and minority ethnic populations?

[20/46 Health impacts of housing led interventions for homeless people](#)

What are the health impacts of housing led interventions that provide housing plus intensive forms of support for people with histories of chronic/repeat homelessness?

[20/47 Interventions to improve the uptake of the Influenza vaccination in carers](#)

NIHR are interested in proposals for the evaluation of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions that aim to improve the uptake of influenza vaccination.

Deadline for these funding calls is 17 November 2020.

For expert advice on these funding calls or any of the NIHR's funding calls, use our free advice service by completing our [advice request form here](#).

NIHR news: Supporting the restart of paused research activities

With the number of new cases of COVID-19 declining, the NIHR is now working towards the restoration of a diverse and active portfolio of research funded and/or supported by the NIHR - including both non-COVID-19 research and important COVID-19 research which does not meet the NIHR's urgency criteria.

To help initiate this process, the NIHR has developed a 'Framework for restart', which is a guidance document to support local decision-making. [View the framework for restart guidance here](#).

RDS Blog: Equality, diversity and inclusion in health and social care research: COVID-19 and beyond

As the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on everyday life, health and the economy continue to unfold, writer Damian Barr said, 'We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just the one oar' (@Damian_Barr). All of us have been affected by COVID-19 and being in lockdown. However, the impacts will differ according to gender, age, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status, and physical and mental health prior to the pandemic, to name just a few factors.

Emerging statistics show this starkly: Professor Kamlesh Khunti and colleagues highlight data from the Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre which shows that a third of COVID-19 patients admitted to critical care are from ethnic minorities. They point out that this is indisputably disproportionate to the 13% of the UK population that they comprise. They have called for further analysis of ethnic disparities and this will hopefully be delivered through the recent NIHR call for studies focusing on the relationship between COVID-19 and ethnicity.

Government statistics concerning socio-economic status show that the COVID-19 mortality rate was more than double in the most deprived areas of England (55.1 per 100,000) compared to the least deprived areas (25.3 per 100,000). In addition, Global Health 50/50's international data tracking by sex indicates that men are more likely to experience more severe symptoms and higher mortality rates.

It is timely that the RDS have identified equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) as one of its national priorities. The RDS is ideally placed to support you to develop studies with inclusive research design, such as identifying appropriate research methods for individuals and groups with different communication needs, cultural values, or mistrust of researchers. We can also advise you on whether your patient and public involvement (PPI) reflects your sample population and how to engage with seldom-heard groups. The NIHR has recently released a checklist for completing the new EDI section of the standard application form, and one of our first tasks will be to produce supporting guidance to enable you to make this a strong and comprehensive section of your application. We also want to explore how the RDS can reach out to under-represented groups of researchers.

EDI is often treated as a tick-box exercise or an optional extra, and it raises issues that can sometimes feel challenging or uncomfortable to acknowledge. Achieving EDI requires ongoing reflection and scrutiny. However, you are not expected to have all of the answers yourself, but rather to be open to seeing your research problem and research design from multiple, diverse perspectives. Remember the RDS is here to support you with your applications so get in touch and we'll help ensure you have meaningful EDI in your plans.

[A full version of the RDS blog for June can be read here.](#) The blog was written by Rebecca Barnes, Senior Research Adviser in Qualitative Methods and Chris Newby, Senior Adviser in Medical Statistics, RDS East Midlands.

NHS service enables people to sign up to be contacted for COVID-19 vaccine studies

A new NHS service has been launched helping people across the UK sign up for information on the new COVID-19 vaccine trials.

The new NHS Covid-19 vaccine research registry will help large numbers of people be recruited into the trials over the coming months, potentially leading to an effective vaccine being identified and made available to the UK public against coronavirus earlier. It has been developed as part of the UK Government's Vaccine Taskforce, in partnership with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), NHS Digital, and the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Governments. They are also collaborating with ZOE, the company behind the Covid-19 symptom study who have 3.5 million UK users of their app, to work together to enrol their volunteers onto vaccine trials.

John Nother, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Chief Digital Officer, said:

"This new online service will be a vital tool in the fight against this disease as large scale vaccine studies get underway within the UK."

"The new system will enable researchers to quickly identify and match suitable and willing volunteers to appropriate vaccine trials. In doing so, it will bring enormous benefits, not only to the NHS and health researchers - but to everyone living in the UK."

"Signing up and giving your permission to be contacted means you may be amongst the first to find out about opportunities to take part in trials and the latest, cutting-edge COVID-19 vaccines. There is no obligation to join in any study, if you are contacted. But by taking part, you could help researchers find a vaccine to protect us all more quickly - which in turn could help the NHS and save lives."

[Read more about this new service here.](#)

Events

Future Learn: Improving Healthcare Through Clinical Research.
Free 4 week online course. [Join the Future Learn course here.](#)

RDS NW Proposal Development Event (NIHR RfPB Programme)
Save the Date: 14 October 2020. Online. [Further details will be announced here.](#)

NIHR Academy Members' Conference
Date: 24 to 25 November 2020. Location: Leeds. [Find out more here.](#)

THIS Institute's Annual Event - THIS Space
Date: 25 November 2020. Online. [Find out more about the event here.](#)



Funding deadlines

UKRI - funding for ideas that address COVID-19:

[open call for research and innovation](#)

The NIHR Themed Call: Injuries, accidents and urgent and emergency care. Stage 1 applications are sought by the following:

[Efficacy and Evaluation \(EME\) Programme](#)

Closes: 1.00 pm on 20 August 2020

[Health Technology Assessment \(HTA\) Programme](#)

Closes: 1.00 pm on 2 September 2020

[Health Services and Delivery Research \(HS&DR\) Programme](#)

Closes: 1.00 pm on 10 September 2020

[NIHR 20/42 HSDR oral and dental health](#)

Closes: 1:00 pm on 10 September 2020

[NIHR Global Effort on COVID-19 \(GECO\) Health Research](#)

Closes: 12.00 noon on 28 September 2020

[NIHR Research for Patient Benefit - Competition 43](#)

Closes: 1:00 pm on 11 November 2020

NIHR Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation Programme

[20/57 Novel strategies and interventions to reduce overtreatment](#)

Closes: 1.00 pm on 1 December 2020

[20/58 Interventions in Paediatric Care](#)

Closes: 1.00 pm on 1 December 2020



And finally...£4.8 billion invested in UK health research

£4.8 billion was invested in UK health research projects in 2018, new report shows. The NIHR is pleased to announce the publication of the UK Health Research Analysis 2018, which provides a comprehensive view of the current levels of health-related research funding in the UK. It reveals that, overall, £4.8 billion was contributed to health research in 2018.

Authored by the Medical Research Council with contribution from the NIHR and 11 other public and charitable funders, the report collates data from 146 charity, professional and public sector organisations and over 22,500 individual research projects. [Read more here.](#)