

Fuse Behaviour Change (BC) Research Programme Strategy

Web: www.fuse.ac.uk/research/behaviourchange

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Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health, brings together the five North East Universities of Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside in a unique collaboration to share Fuse's mission to transform health and well-being and reduce health inequalities through the conduct of world-class public health research and its translation into value-for-money policy and practice.

In achieving our vision, we focus on three broad aims:

1. To deliver world-class public health research that focuses on generating and translating evidence for cost effective public health policy and practice
2. To build sustainable capacity for translational public health research, both in academia and in policy and practice
3. To build effective and lasting partnerships with policy and practice for collaborative co-production of public health research.

As part of our core mission of translation of research evidence into policy and practice we launched Fuse's responsive research and evaluation facility 'AskFuse' in June 2013. With the support of Fuse researchers, we help our partners to access existing knowledge or to work in collaboration to develop new research evidence that is relevant, timely and tailored to their needs and enabled them to find answers to issues that matter. This innovative model has attracted considerable national interest.

Fuse continues to build international partnerships to share research with leading scientists and organisations across the globe. In April 2011 Fuse was the founder of the first International Knowledge Exchange in Public Health Conference. The 2021 conference is being held in Newcastle in collaboration with Cornell University, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, and Tilburg University. Plans are in place to further develop international secondment opportunities.

Fuse Communications aim to maximise the impact and effectiveness of Fuse work, to raise the profile of Fuse as a Centre for excellence in Research and Knowledge Exchange and to build a unity of purpose within Fuse, and between Fuse and our partners. This is achieved by:

1. Examining and recommending action on all issues relating to internal communications, and communications with our partners and funders
2. Having responsibility for external relations with the public and with practice & policy partners by managing the various media through which we present our message and research findings

3. Developing forms of communication which will share learning and help build research capacity.

Fuse has identified the need to develop its strategy for Public Involvement and Engagement (PIE) in research and to give members of the public an influence in the decision-making processes. Work has started to collate the PIE activity within Fuse, this will help to identify any gaps and achieve a more cohesive approach, to ensure Fuse is in a strong position when applying for continued membership of the NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR) and future funding opportunities.

Fuse is integral to a number of newly funded public health research infrastructures both regionally and nationally, some with similar research agendas. Fuse will work in synergy with infrastructures such as the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) North East and North Cumbria (NENC) and the NIHR Policy Research Unit (PRU) by organising co-badged research meetings with shared agendas. Collaboration opportunities will also be identified within the Fuse research programmes. Work has started to capture the use of Fuse learning and any reference to the success of the Fuse model.

Our six research programmes make substantive contributions to the realisation of Fuse's mission. They also play an important role in achieving our vision. The programmes of research are complementary and collaborative, and explicitly linked together. Some projects draw on skills and expertise from two or more research programmes. The research strategies for each of the six programmes are set out below. They share common deliverables including:

1. Organising engagement events which are a key activity in delivering the Fuse strategy. In particular, Fuse Quarterly Research Meetings which are a key opportunity for research dissemination, dialogue about the implications for policy and practice, making new and strengthening existing contacts, and building a dialogue around research results and potential future projects. All Fuse meetings are free to attend making them available to all of our members.
2. Ensuring research sections on the Fuse website are kept up to date, providing material for research case studies.
3. Highlighting research which has been initiated through AskFuse and showcasing on the Fuse website.
4. Disseminating work through the Fuse blog, research briefs and social media.
5. Developing a strategy for communication with members and maintaining regular contact.
6. Encouraging members to share their relevant existing work and update on a quarterly basis, reporting back to Fuse Research Strategy Group (RSG).
7. Supporting the career development of members through the provision of training, networking, and events to showcase work specifically of early career researchers, practitioner, policy makers, and experts by experience.

8. Meeting regularly with the Fuse Manager to review programme progress and plan for future activity.

Strategic aims and objectives

The Behaviour Change Programme aims to undertake high quality, policy-relevant, collaborative research into the development, evaluation and translation of public health interventions.

The objectives of the programme are to:

- Develop and evaluate public health behaviour change interventions which are scalable (widely applicable and cost effective), replicable and sustainable in delivery and effect as well as personalised to the needs of groups and individuals, accounting for contextual factors and complicatedness.
- Develop frameworks for agile intervention development.
- Develop methodology to evaluate behavioural interventions, measure behaviour change, and understand mechanisms of change.
- Develop feedback procedures so that further understanding on mechanisms of change can be used to refine models of behaviour change.
- Translate evidence-based behaviour change interventions into standard services and study the processes involved in implementing evidence based interventions: by health professionals, policy makers and other practice partners.
- Contribute to the discourse on ethos and procedures associated both with assessment, and process evaluation of, any interventions implemented in practice.
- Design practical interventions assuring good value for money, return on investment, as well as advances in learning: facilitating refinement, sustainability and feeding into scientific knowledge production.
- Contribute to capacity building within Fuse and across the region.

We anticipate working collaboratively with the other Fuse research programmes. Behaviour change in public health is usually implemented within complex systems, often applied in early life settings or to ageing populations, addressing health inequalities and involving knowledge translation. We will ensure to further establish effective networks with policy partners and practitioners allowing us to jointly understand and address the main challenges of promoting public health in the region.

The Behaviour Change programme involves national collaborations with the 'Changing behaviour at population level' theme within the NIHR SPHR, Public Health England and the ARC NENC. We also have international collaborations with the European Health Psychology Society (EHPS, a Non-Governmental Organisation with Expert interest at the United Nations Economic and Social Council), the EHPS United Nations Committee, as well as several universities across Europe, Australia and Malaysia.

The Behaviour Change programme will also investigate ways of connecting with the new NIHR Policy Research Unit (PRU) in Behavioural Science led by Professor Falko Sniehotta.

Behaviour Change projects and research questions

Based on the profile of research excellence in our host universities and national public health priorities, the current projects and research interests can be categorised into the following: healthy eating and physical activity for a range of health benefits (including

obesity and diabetes), smoking and alcohol consumption, and healthcare professionals' behaviours.

Timeline and deliverables in addition to common deliverables (as listed above)

Over the 3 year period (up to August 2022), we plan to achieve the following:

- Year 1 (September 2019 to August 2020)
 - Conduct a Behaviour Change membership survey
 - Inaugural Behaviour Change event (March 2020).

- Year 2 (September 2020 to August 2021)
 - Collaborate on at least one new Behaviour Change research project with policy and practice partners (in preparation)
 - Maintain regular communication with members via:
 - Twice-yearly webinars, focused on mini (30 minute) training sessions for members (e.g. research methods, co-production, intervention development training)
 - Twice-yearly face-to-face theme meetings
 - Regular email updates to members.

- Year 3 (September 2021 to August 2022)
 - Collaborate on at least one new Behaviour Change research project with policy and practice partners
 - Maintain regular communication with members via:
 - Twice-yearly webinars (as described above)
 - Twice-yearly face-to-face theme meetings
 - Regular email updates to members
 - Final Behaviour Change event to synthesise and disseminate research portfolio.