

Workshop on Living and Ageing Well with Multiple Long-term Conditions

Background

NorthHFutures is a collaborative, people-powered research programme that brings together the expertise and resources of six universities in the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) region to provide opportunities for everyone to engage in digital health and health-tech initiatives. These universities are Newcastle, Cumbria, Durham, Northumbria, Sunderland, and Teesside. They lead the academic partners in the hub consortium.

The hub also involves global technology companies, small to medium-sized businesses, and other enterprises and initiatives that have funding to promote research and innovation. We also work with organisations in the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, with advocacy groups, and with citizens.

We are motivated to address healthcare needs in our region that are currently not being met, and work to reduce inequalities and digital exclusion.

Research Collaborations

NorthHFutures will facilitate and fund new research collaborations. Collaborative teams will undertake a research project addressing specific themes:

- Promoting Health and Nutrition for Children and Young People;
- Developing Digital Surgical Pathways (about care before, during and following an operation);
- Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing;
- Living and Ageing Well with Multiple Long-term Conditions.

Each team can bid for up to £50k, and the project can be up to 12 months in duration.

We aim to address health and care needs in our region that are currently not being met, and work to reduce inequalities and digital exclusion.

To apply for our funding, you need to attend one of our upcoming workshops to form a collaborative team and develop a new research proposal.

Join a Workshop

The workshops will bring together people from different fields to connect, share ideas, and tackle real-world challenges. They will be professionally led, making them accessible for those who are new to research to take part.

All experience and expertise relating to the topic area will be valuable; there is no expectation around prior knowledge about research, or being an expert in the workshop topic. In addition to working with others to develop ideas into a proposal, there will be supportive guidance and mentoring from NorthHFutures researchers and collaborators - on hand at each workshop.

What does taking part in a NorthHFutures workshop involve?

We will need participants to commit to being available for the full day of the workshop. Given the focus of the workshops on collaboration, everyone will be expected to engage with each other to develop and refine their ideas. Where relevant, there may be some suggested reading or videos provided before and during the workshops to help participants explore and benefit from relevant research or other literature.

Who can join a workshop or project team?

Everyone can apply to take part. Our workshops will be focused so we're asking interested people to demonstrate enthusiasm and interest in cross-sector, collaborative research activities.

There are funding rules from EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) about who can lead a project team and how different organisations can receive funds from the award – find out more about this in the call guidance document, or get in touch with the NorthHFutures Hub Programme Manager Jen Wood: jennifer.wood@newcastle.ac.uk.

After the Workshop: Application and Assessment Process

If you apply for funding from NorthHFutures, your application will be reviewed by our Research Board. This board includes representatives from the Health and Care sector, the VCSE sector, and academics from our six partner universities.

The board uses a juried process to review applications. This means that the board members will discuss each application together before making decisions about funding. They will use specific criteria to assess each bid.

How to apply

To participate in the workshop, applicants need to show enthusiasm and interest in pursuing cross-sector, collaborative research.

We invite expressions of interest for workshops from those in:

- Academic roles - including researchers at any stage of their research career from all disciplines;
- Professional practitioner roles (non-academic) - including NHS, industry, VCSE, local government.

Please complete the expression of interest form: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V2ML6JV>.

Contact

If you have any questions about this Call for Participation, or about your eligibility to take part, please contact NorthHFutures Manager, Jen Wood: jennifer.wood@ncl.ac.uk.

Living and Ageing Well with Multiple Long-term Conditions: Theme Summary

northfutures.org



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Why this theme?

One-third of the global population is estimated to be living with two or more long-term health conditions (MLTC), commonly termed multimorbidity [1-3]. In the UK, multimorbidity has been described as the greatest clinical challenge facing the National Health Service and Social Care [4].

Northern England consistently faces challenges in Multiple Long-term Conditions. Despite the quality of our health and care services being rated amongst some of the best in England, the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) region still has some unsatisfactory health outcomes. For instance, men living in the region spend almost a quarter of their lives in ill health, and NENC has the second highest rates of heart disease and liver disease in the country and rates of respiratory disease are 42% higher than the national average. Furthermore, in 9 of the 13 local authority areas there is a healthy life expectancy of less than 60 years (in contrast to the South of England where only four areas out of 67 fall into this group) [5].

What is the population in focus and unmet health needs?

This workshop focuses on supporting people living with MLTCs, which is common in older NENC populations. There is an urgent need to develop a deep understanding of living and ageing well with MLTC, with the corresponding actionable outcome to improve people's quality of life.

EPSRC Northern Health Futures Hub for the North East & North Cumbria

Why is this important to the NENC region?

Poor social and economic circumstances affect health throughout life. People living in poverty and multiple disadvantages have greater risks of serious illness and premature death. They face increasing health inequalities and spend a greater proportion of their shorter lives living with MLTC. In NENC, this is a major challenge. Our population overall has much lower levels of wealth, and a much higher percentage of our population live in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England [5].

What health outcomes we are looking to improve?

To support people living and aging well with MLTC, a deeper understanding is required:

- Investigating diverse lived experiences, e.g. exploring challenges and opportunities individuals face;
- Examining the impact of multimorbidity and understanding how MLTCs influence individual health, well-being, and daily life;
- Analysing gaps in current care and support systems to address needs not currently met;
- Presenting feasible MLTC pilots to underpin MLTC designs.

Through the above, we aim to deliver actionable outcomes for living and ageing well with MLTC:

- Developing practical tools and resources to tackle MLTC;
- Designing (digital or other) tools and resources, such as self-management programs, educational materials, or technological solutions, to support the management of health and wellbeing;
- Informing MLTC policy and practice: Generating evidence-based recommendations to improve healthcare practices, social support systems, and policy approaches for individuals with MLTCs;
- Promoting the scalability and sustainability of MLTC solutions: evaluating the potential to be implemented and sustained within existing healthcare systems and communities.

References [1] Johnston MC, et al. Defining and measuring multimorbidity: a systematic review of systematic reviews. *Eur J Public Health* 2019; 29:182–9. [2] Garin N, et al. Global multimorbidity patterns: a cross-sectional, population-based, Multi-Country study. *J Gerontol A Biol Sci Med Sci* 2016; 71:205–14. 3. [3] Nguyen H, et al. Prevalence of multimorbidity in community settings: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies. *J Comorb* 2019; 9 [4] Spiers G, et al. What matters to people with multiple long-term conditions and their carers? *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 2023. 99, 1169, 159-165 [5] Donaldson L Sir, A forward In: North East North Cumbria Health and Care Partnership. Better Health and wellbeing for all, a strategy for the NENC. 16 Dec 2022.

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