Promoting Independence among older people, and disabled people

Research Question(s)

- What are the most effective* interventions which support (or create the conditions for) independence* in the everyday lives of older people, or disabled people** of any age?

*Independence has been defined as "the ability to make choices and to exercise control over your life. This includes being able to live independently with or without support" (1).
**"Disabled people" have been defined as people with impairments who are disabled by society

The Public Health Research programme is particularly interested in evaluations of interventions to support practical everyday living and therefore contribute to independence in:

- Older people
- Disabled people (people with impairments who are disabled by barriers in society)

Whilst these populations are different, there may be overlapping needs, and there may be interventions or groups of interventions that meet the independence support needs of various population groups and therefore offer efficiencies in systems of delivery.

Aspects of everyday living are important, and include:

- the ability to remain at home in clean, warm, affordable accommodation
- remaining socially engaged
- continuing with activities that give life meaning
- contributing to family or community
- feeling safe
- maintaining choice, control, personal appearance and dignity
- being free from discrimination
- not feeling 'burdensome' to their families
- and continuing the role as caregiver

The following research is of interest:

The Public Health Research Programme wishes to commission research on the effectiveness* of interventions outside the NHS in the following areas:

1. Studies that assess the effectiveness of community-based interventions or programmes of interventions that are designed to support independence in the populations of interest. A wide range of interventions are currently in use throughout the UK, research may evaluate one or more interventions appropriate to the target group.
2. Studies that shed light on how community-based interventions can be scaled-up successfully, including across population groups.

In considering interventions to be evaluated, interventions delivered 'at scale' should be prioritised, given these are likely to produce greater impact. Interventions evaluated may include (but are not restricted to) those relating to the built environment and/or the digital environment. Effectiveness may be considered from the perspective of the person themselves, their family or carers or the provider of the initiative. Outcomes of interventions

across different groups according to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status, for example, may be explored. Research which includes collaboration with local authorities and/or relevant third sector organisations would be welcome.

Studies may evaluate **multi-component interventions**. Researchers are asked to specify and justify study design and indicate how long-term impact will be assessed. Interventions to be evaluated must be outside the NHS and the primary outcome must be health-related. Researchers should **identify underlying theory** and should include a logic model to help explain underlying context, theory and mechanisms. Research should consider the impact of the intervention on health inequalities. Proposals should ensure adequate public involvement in the research.

Public health initiatives are complex and wide-reaching. Evaluation should acknowledge this by **adopting a broad perspective**, taking account of costs and benefits to all relevant sectors of society. A **health economic evaluation** to inform affordability and return on investment should be included where appropriate.

For all proposals, applicants should clearly state the **public health utility** of the outcomes and the mechanisms by which they will inform future public health policy and practice. Details about the potential **impact and scalability** of interventions, if shown to be effective, should be provided.

For the evaluation of **time sensitive** naturally occurring interventions applicants may wish to consider the fast-track work stream – www.nihr.ac.uk/phr

*'Effectiveness' in this context relates not only to the size of the effect, but it also takes into account any harmful or negative side effects, including inequitable outcomes.

(1) Bailey J, Mann, S., Wayal, S., Hunter, R., Free, C., Abraham, C. Murray, E. Sexual health promotion for young people delivered via digital media: a scoping review. Public Health Research. 2015; 3(13).

Remit of Call:

All proposals submitted under this call must fall within the remit of the Public Health Research programme. Please go to www.nihr.ac.uk/phr for details.

General Notes:

The NIHR Public Health Research programme evaluates public health interventions, providing new knowledge on the benefits, costs, acceptability and wider impacts of non-NHS interventions intended to improve the health of the public and reduce inequalities in health. The scope of the programme is multi-disciplinary and broad, covering a range of interventions that improve public health delivered in a non-NHS setting.

The NIHR Public Health Research programme is unable to fund intervention costs. The affordability of the intervention, and at least an indication of the public health stakeholder(s) willing to fund the intervention, should be referenced within the outline application. At the full application stage, statements of support confirming stakeholder commitments to funding will be required.

The NIHR Public Health Research programme is interested in and open to the joint funding of research projects with other organisations such as charities and the third sector. If you would like to explore the potential for joint funding, please contact us at phr@nihr.ac.uk with details of your proposal and the other funder prior to submission.

Notes to Applicants

The NIHR Public Health Research programme is funded by the NIHR, with contributions from the CSO in Scotland, NISCHR in Wales, and HSC R&D, Public Health Agency, Northern Ireland. Researchers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are eligible to apply for funding under this programme.

Applicants are recommended to seek advice from suitable methodological support services, at an appropriate stage in the development of their research idea and application. It is advisable to make contact at an early a stage as possible to allow sufficient time for discussion and a considered response.

The NIHR Research Design Service (http://www.nihr.ac.uk/research/Pages/ResearchDesignService.aspx) can advise on appropriate NIHR programme choice, and developing and designing high quality research grant applications.

Clinical Trials Units are regarded as an important component of many trial applications however, they are not essential for all types of studies to the PHR programme. The CTUs can advise and participate throughout the process from initial idea development through to project delivery and reporting. NIHR CTU Support Funding (http://www.netscc.ac.uk/supporting_research/CTUs) provides information on units receiving funding from the NIHR to collaborate on research applications to NIHR programmes and funded projects. In addition, the UKCRC CTU Network (http://www.ukcrc-ctu.org.uk) provides a searchable information resource on all registered units in the UK, and lists key interest areas and contact information.

Transparency agenda

In line with the government's transparency agenda, any contract resulting from this tender may be published in its entirety to the general public. Further information on the transparency agenda is at:

http://transparency.number10.gov.uk/

http://www.ogc.gov.uk/policy_and_standards_framework_transparency.asp
http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/