

Information item ii.

Report for the Health and Wellbeing Boards in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, from the Avon Primary Care Research Collaborative (APCRC)

The purpose of this paper is twofold:

- (i) to set out the role and remit of the APCRC, explain the funding of the APCRC and describe how the APCRC fits into the national NHS picture

And

- (ii) to investigate the scope for cooperation between the Health and Wellbeing Boards in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, and the APCRC.

The Avon Primary Care Research Collaborative (APCRC):

What is the APCRC?

The APCRC staff provide a comprehensive research and development, service evaluation and research governance service for Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire CCGs. APCRC are also developing a system for provision of advice around evidence – how to access it, appraise it and use it. The vision for the APCRC is to ensure that:

Commissioners in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire will achieve excellence in supporting research and in routinely using the best available evidence to commission the highest quality services and deliver better health.

APCRC staff work hard to ensure that the important link between robust evidence and outcomes, for people using health services, is highlighted.

What does the APCRC actually do?

APCRC activity focusses on five areas:

- Supporting and managing Research
- NHS Service Evaluation and Clinical Audit
- Creating a hub for Best Evidence
- Undertaking Research Governance
- Promoting funding opportunities for service improvement in the health and social care arena

A key objective for the APCRC staff is to help CCGs embed research, robust evaluation and the use of evidence into their core business. A culture of routinely using evidence and evaluation will lead to better commissioning and to better patient care. The APCRC staff are a source of expertise for commissioners around research, academia and the various structures and funding opportunities available.

Where does the APCRC fit in the National NHS Picture?

The 2012 Health and Social Care Act specifically states that commissioners in CCGs and NHS England have a duty to promote research and the use of evidence in the exercise of their functions. These commissioning organisations are required to devise innovative care pathways and deliver effective care, and to do that they need to be able to access the best research evidence, and be able to evaluate the services they provide. This is both a challenge and an opportunity, and is an area in which the support of an effective and efficient R&D team is crucial. This is where the APCRC fit in – we help the CCG commissioners fulfil their obligations in this arena.

How is the APCRC Funded?

The APCRC receive core funding from each of the three CCGs. In addition to this, the DH funds APCRC to ensure adequate research governance for all studies being undertaken in the area. APCRC also receive funding from the DH in recognition of the excellent research work being undertaken in our geographical area – (hosted within Bristol CCG on behalf of the Collaborative) and the links between the NHS and the Universities that underpin that research. This support is called 'Research Capability and Flexibility Funding' (RCF), and the APCRC receive the highest RCF award to any Primary Care Research support team in England.

How does APCRC work overlap with the work of the Councils and the Health and Wellbeing Boards?

One of the aims of the Health and Wellbeing Boards is the improvement and coordination of commissioning. As such, research, evaluation and the use of evidence could be pivotal to the decision making and ways of working of the Health and Wellbeing Boards. The remit of the APCRC and the Health and Wellbeing boards overlap here, and there appears to be scope for the Health and Wellbeing boards to reinforce the messages of the APCRC, through their own work.

The APCRC work around evaluation and evidence, and the work that the Public Health Teams in the councils undertake, is closely linked. PH staff provide a high quality service around evidence appraisals and rapid reviews for commissioners seeking high quality information to support all decisions. The APCRC staff work with commissioners to make sure they know how to access the right person, in the right area, at the right time, with the right expertise, someone who can help them with their evidence needs.

For many years, APCRC and the public health staff worked alongside one another providing a seamless service to commissioners. The key now is to continue to provide that seamless service and work around the practical challenges of working in different physical locations.

Which Organisations are the APCRC working with?

The APCRC is engaged with a range of emerging organisations in the health and research arena. Primarily these are:

- The West of England Academic Health Sciences Network (WEAHSN),

- The Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRCwest),
- The Local Clinical Research Network (CRN) and
- Bristol Health Partners.

(An appendix, detailing the role of each can be found at the end of this document)

APCRC work as an advocate for commissioners in these fora, and as a conduit for information between each of these organisations and the CCGs.

In summary

The Health and Wellbeing Boards have close links with patients and groups representing patient views. Evidence shows that patients want to take part in research studies, that research active organisations are better environments for patients (even those patients not in an active trial do better in a research active environment), and that patients are more likely to do well in environments where the service design is based on sound evidence. The APCRC works to promote the role of research and the use of evidence, across the three CCGs.

The Health and Wellbeing boards can help promote the ideals of the APCRC, by working with their members to ensure they use appropriate evidence when considering service design, and that they make decisions on the basis of adequate evaluation and evidence.

The APCRC is focussed on fostering an 'evidence based culture' within the commissioning organisations. The Health and Wellbeing Boards can support this by promoting the concept of ongoing, rigorous evaluation, decision making processes that are built on a solid foundation of evidence, and continuous improvement on the basis of robust evidence.

The APCRC are keen to work with the Health and Wellbeing Boards and to secure their support for the overall aims and objectives of the APCRC, by championing evaluation and evidence based decision making amongst their members.

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Appendix - explaining the key local organisations the APCRC work with

AHSN – Academic Health Science Network

The AHSN is a vibrant and diverse network of partners committed to excellence. The West of England Academic Health Science Network (WEAHSN) will accelerate the spread of innovative, evidence-based care to improve health and care quality. This shared commitment to excellence will deliver economic benefits through regional investment, job creation and effective procurement. More details here: www.weahsn.org.uk

Bristol Health Partners

Bristol Health Partners is a dynamic collaboration between six NHS bodies, the city's two universities and its local authority. The purpose of Bristol Health Partners is to transform the understanding, prevention and treatment of key health problems in Bristol. The organisations that comprise Bristol Health Partners have formidable strengths in a range of health-related fields and a long history of joint working. This collaboration brings a new dynamic approach to the way that innovative health benefits will be delivered to patients.

www.bristolhealthpartners.org.uk/

CLAHRCwest – Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care

The NIHR CLAHRCwest, hosted by University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust (UHB), was set up on January 1st 2014. It is directed by Professor Jenny Donovan and has funding up to 31st December 2018. The overall mission of the NIHR CLAHRC West is to actively engage its partners in the conduct of applied health research and the implementation of relevant research evidence to improve health and healthcare across its area. Its ethos is to focus on research and implementation that is equitable (fair), appropriate (providing optimum advice or care at the right time and place for prevention or care), and sustainable (taking account of resource-use and future continuation). There are two broad thematic areas of 'improving the management of chronic diseases' and 'public health interventions and population health'.

<http://clahrc-west.nihr.ac.uk/>

Clinical Research Network West of England (CRN)

The NIHR Clinical Research Network: West of England helps to increase the opportunities for patients to take part in clinical research, ensures that studies are carried out efficiently, and supports the Government's Strategy for UK Life Sciences by improving the environment for commercial contract clinical research in the NHS in the West of England area.

<http://www.crn.nihr.ac.uk/west-of-england/>