



Welcome to our latest Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) Leicestershire newsletter.



Research conference 2025

The second Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) Leicestershire conference was held on 20 November 2025, attracting over 100 delegates, with guests from district councils, universities and health joining council staff. The day included a project update, Coventry HDRC showcase, a poster display and themed workshops to discuss identified local priorities.

The conference was a great success, bringing together academic, professional and public knowledge and experience. The workshops in particular generated lots of ideas for the team to consider for future research bids and collaborations.

The workshop evidence bases, and conference posters can all be found on a dedicated webpage: [HDRC Leicestershire Conference Resources](#).

Learning and development story so far

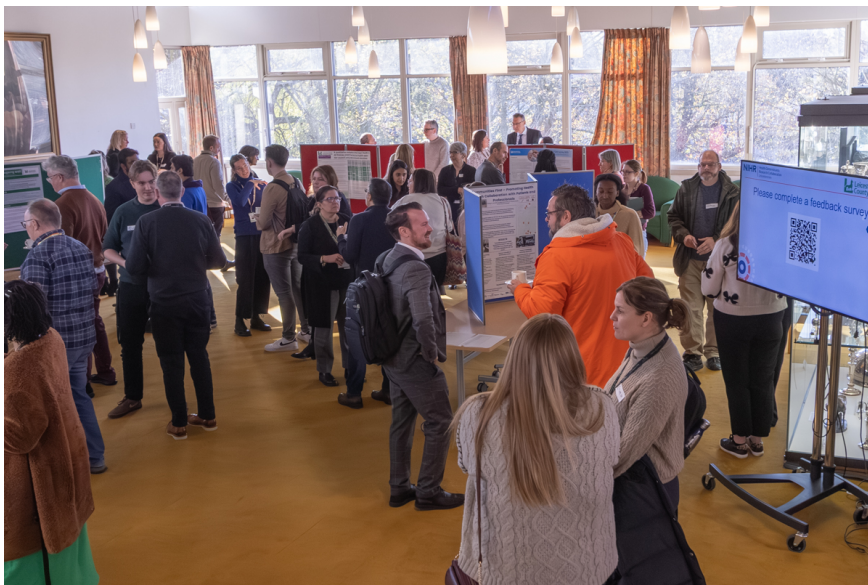
The HDRC Leicestershire 'Research to Reality' training series concluded a successful year in September with 94 attendees across the four session series.

The series is aimed at Leicestershire County Council staff with an interest in research. It starts from the basics of how to access research and working through how to read a research paper, how we use research and concludes with an introduction to research methods. The aim of the sessions is to support staff in using research in day-to-day work and to help engagement with partners, including university collaborators. Each session has been delivered with university partners to provide subject expertise.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with comments from the recent sessions including "Exceptionally helpful sessions looking through the research cycle and governance..." and "Really interesting and stimulating! Thank you so much!".

The programme will continue this year, aiming to deepen colleagues understanding of the research cycle, including topics such as research ethics and using statistics.

Find out more about [our learning and development story](#) so far.



HDRC Leicestershire launch its new evidence hub, *Ask HDRC*

To help foster an evidence-based culture across the council, HDRC Leicestershire is piloting an initiative to support staff in identifying and finding solutions to evidence gaps. *Ask HDRC* can support council staff by analysing and providing reports on council data, conducting wider literature reviews and supporting collaborations with academic partners to seek external funding.

This initiative forms part of our knowledge mobilisation strategy, ensuring that research and evidence are actively translated into practice and operational decisions. There are plans to widen the reach of *Ask HDRC* to partners and wider audiences after the pilot phase.

If you would like to learn more, please contact AskHDRC@leics.go.uk.



Young voices work

In partnership with Loughborough University, we engaged with young people from three Leicestershire schools earlier this year.

We hosted workshops to hear from young people about their priorities for addressing wider determinants of health in Leicestershire.

This work was combined with our public assembly to produce nine research priority areas for HDRC Leicestershire. We produced a separate report to detail the findings from the young people separately. This report and more information can be found on our [Young Voices workshops](#) page.

Team update

On 1 December, Thomas Barker took up the role of Head of Business Intelligence. He was previously a Business Partner in the council's I&T Service. The HDRC team will welcome Thomas's input to the HDRC Leicestershire project.

Two members (Sacha Webb and Sarah McNeill) of the HDRC Leicestershire team are completing their Masters in Public Health at the University of Nottingham through an NIHR Insight funding scheme.

This is a two-year programme and they are now halfway through the teaching of year one. Sacha and Sarah said of their experience, "We are learning about public health both through the teaching and through connecting with other students, some of whom work at different East Midlands local authorities. We are looking forward to, if a little apprehensive, starting our research projects."

Giulia announced as secretary for a further year for EuGMS

Our Research and Insight Manager Giulia Ogliari, has been confirmed as secretary of the Special Interest Group (SIG) Big Data of the European Geriatric Medicine Society (EuGMS) for her second and final 2-year mandate.

The SIG Big Data aims to: promote data science among the European Geriatric Medicine community; promote ageing research to the data science community; share resources to enable clinicians to use big data to answer ageing research questions; and work to increase dialogue between data scientists and clinicians to improve the quality of big data research in ageing.

The SIG Big Data welcomes new applications from clinicians and data scientists across Europe and beyond. If of interest, please find further information on [the Big Data website](#).



HDRC Leicestershire launches HDRC Knowledge Café

The Knowledge Café will provide an open space for county council staff to discuss key research, data or articles on pertinent topics. The first two cafés will discuss: 'Evaluating a new supported employment internship programme for autistic young adults' and 'Identifying and understanding digital exclusion'.

Each session will begin with a presentation on the research findings, followed by a 40 minute open discussion.

If you are interested in finding out more about the knowledge café, please contact Giulia.Ogliari@leics.gov.uk

Recruitment of Community Champions

We have recruited two community research champions (CRCs), Kateryna Hrachova and Elizabeth Halls in the areas Melton Mowbray and Harborough. Their role is to strengthen the

connection between local people and HDRC Leicestershire. The CRCs will be the eyes and ears of their communities, gathering insights, listening to resident’s experiences and highlighting the issues that matter most to communities. We would like to warmly welcome Kateryna and Elizabeth to HDRC Leicestershire.

Career opportunities and developments

HDRC Leicestershire are encouraging Leicestershire council staff to apply for the following awards:

Public Health Grassroots Awards

NIHR Public Health Grassroots Award is ideal for anyone working in Public Health who wants to dip their toe into research and increase the use of data to support their current or future work.

This award allows local authority staff to join a research team for a placement, this can be within a university or local authority setting.

The council can only have one grassroots placement per round, and our current awardee, Jennifer Fielding, is due to finish her placement with the HDRC team. She states:

“I recommend this award for any staff who have an interest in how research relates to their work, it is an excellent place to start. My only warning would be once you dip your toe, you may find you want to dive right in!”

We can support you with your application. Find more details about the [Public Health Grassroots Awards](#). Closing date for applications: **5pm on Tuesday 27 January 2026**

Master of Public Health, University of Nottingham

If you’re interested in pursuing your Masters in Public Health, talk to the HDRC Leicestershire team, as there are funding opportunities available (**starting September 2026**).

NIHR Pre Doctoral Award

If you are thinking about doing a PhD, the Predoctoral Award will help you to develop the skills and experience you will need to make a competitive PhD application. Applications are open from January to March 2026.

The HDRC Leicestershire team can support you with your application. Find more information about the [Predoctoral Award](#).

NIHR Public Health Intervention Responsive Studies Teams (PHIRST) scheme

There is an opportunity for local government across the UK to apply for NIHR Public Health Intervention Responsive Studies Teams (PHIRST) scheme. This scheme provides academic expertise to evaluate non-NHS public health interventions, providing high-quality, policy-relevant evidence to improve population health and reduce health inequalities. If you are involved in an intervention that may be eligible then read more about the [PHIRST scheme](#).

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