

Welcome to the March 2026 edition of the NIHR School for Primary Care Research (SPCR) Newsletter, bringing you the latest research highlights, mental health programme updates, involvement and inclusion news, publications, and updates from across the SPCR community.

SPCR Opportunities

PhD Studentships in Primary Care 2026

Applications now open 

Please note: Each university runs its own recruitment process and deadlines will vary.



The nine SPCR member universities are now recruiting for their 2026 PhD Studentships. Applications are invited from individuals with a strong academic record who wish to develop a career in primary care research. Each university runs its own recruitment process. For the majority, this will happen in the Spring, for an October start date. More opportunities will be added as they are made available.

Find out more: [PhD Studentships in Primary Care 2026](#)

George Lewith Prize 2026

Essay Competition

Open to all UK Medical Students
Deadline: 12noon, 24 April 2026



The George Lewith Prize undergraduate opportunity is now open for applications. The George Lewith Prize is an essay competition for medical students and aims to raise the profile of academic primary care as a discipline and to encourage talented medical students to consider a career in the field. The award is open to medical undergraduates at any UK medical school. Applications need to be submitted **by 12 noon on Friday 24 April 2026**.

Find out more: [George Lewith Prize for General Practice](#)

SPCR News



SPCR-Funded Research Recognised by BJGP

We are pleased to congratulate our NIHR School for Primary Care Research (SPCR) colleagues whose work has been recognised in the British Journal of General Practice (BJGP) Top Ten most read and published papers of 2025.

[READ MORE](#)



New Research Highlights Prostate Cancer Inequalities and Builds on SPCR Insights

A new study, building on earlier insights from SPCR project, has highlighted significant inequalities in prostate cancer diagnosis and outcomes for men with learning disabilities.

[READ MORE](#)

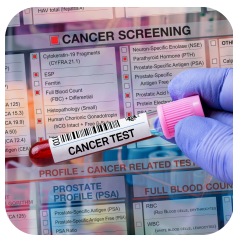
SPCR Blog Posts



Beyond Methods: What TUTOR-PHC taught me about Interdisciplinary Research, Leadership and Impact

Rosina Cross, one of our SPCR Trainees, reflects on her TUTOR-PHC programme visit based at Western University in Canada.

[READ MORE](#)



My experience as an NIHR SPCR intern with the MODE study

Yael Berenblut, one of our NIHR School for Primary Care Research interns, reflects on how her internship with the MODE study team at Queen Mary University of London introduced her to cancer research and strengthened her interest in a future combining medicine and research.

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Women's lived experiences of nipple shields to support breastfeeding

Rebekah Burrow and Dr Emily McFadden at the University of Oxford, reflect on how women's lived experiences have been essential in making this project relevant and impactful.

[READ MORE](#)

SPCR Involvement & Inclusion



SPCR Masterclass Recording | Let's Talk Dementia

The SPCR recently hosted a masterclass titled "Let's Talk Dementia: Supporting communication in research partnerships involving people with dementia." The session explored how researchers and public contributors can work together more inclusively by adapting communication practices to better support people with dementia as active partners in research.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Celebrating Four Years of the Shared Commitment to Public Involvement

On the fourth anniversary of the Shared Commitment to Public Involvement, SPCR reflects on its contribution to strengthening public involvement in health and care research.

[READ MORE](#)

SPCR Masterclass | Engaging people experiencing socioeconomic deprivation in research

19 March 2026, 12.00 - 13.00

This masterclass explores practical ways to involve people experiencing socioeconomic deprivation in research, using examples from NIHR-funded and co-designed studies. It highlights inclusive engagement, building trust with underserved communities, and reducing barriers, leaving attendees with practical strategies to embed inclusive practice in their work.



[REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT](#)

NIHR Three Schools' Updates



Three NIHR Research Schools Mental Health Programme Showcase 2026

We are delighted to reflect on our recent Three Research Schools' Mental Health Programme Showcase, held at The Burlington Hotel, Birmingham on 12 February 2026.

[READ MORE](#)



Three Schools' Mental Health Programme Special Catalogue of Publications

A new collection of journal articles highlights the impact of research funded through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Three Research Schools' Mental Health Programme.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Mental Health Programme Seminar | Meeting the mental health needs of people in agricultural communities



Join us for a free webinar on **Thursday 26 March, 12 - 1pm**. This webinar will offer the opportunity to hear about current research and innovation which aim to improve awareness of, and support for, people in agricultural communities.

Speakers: Tamsin Fisher, Carolyn Chew-Graham, Dan Blake, Kim Bevan, Mat Rawsthorne, Josh Hall, Jordan Tsigarides, Richard West and Daniel James

Queries? Contact: Claire Ashmore – c.ashmore@keele.ac.uk

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Mental Health Programme Seminar | Autistic adults' experiences of dance.



Join us for a free webinar on **Thursday 26 March 7.00 pm to 8.00pm**. This event will share findings from the Ada project (Access to Dance for Autistic adults). Through an online survey and individual interviews, the team explored why autistic people dance, the benefits, barriers and facilitators for dance in these different settings, and why people may not dance.

Speakers: Kelly Birtwell, Christine Rowland, Stephanie Tierney, Emily Corsellis and Claire Planner.

Queries? Contact: Claire Ashmore – c.ashmore@keele.ac.uk

[REGISTER HERE](#)

SPCR Publications



Teamwork and relational infrastructure: a qualitative study of modern UK general practice. Francesca Dakin al writes for British Journal of General Practice. 2026 Feb

Francesca Dakin's DPhil was funded by the NIHR School of Primary Care Research (SPCR) [award number 1189008].



Health visitor and community health nurse perspectives of supporting parents caring for unsettled babies: a qualitative interview study. Samantha J Hornsey et al writes for BMJ Open

SPCR Project: 671



Prescribing of medication to prevent glucocorticoid harms in patients with Polymyalgia Rheumatica: a cross-sectional study and two emulated target trials in the Clinical Practice Research Datalink Aurum. Helen Twohig et al writes for Arthritis & Rheumatology

SPCR Project: 607



Understanding the retention and support needs of UK first contact practitioner physiotherapists in primary care; a realist review. Rob Goodwin et al writes for the BMC Prim. Care 27, 68 (2026)

Rob Goodwin is supported by NIHR Non-Medical SPCR postdoctoral fellowship (C112)

NIHR Updates

NEWS

NIHR Celebrates 20 Years of Life-Changing Research



NIHR Celebrates 20 Years of Life-Changing Research

April 2026 marks the 20th anniversary of the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). The NIHR20 campaign celebrates two decades of impact, highlighting major achievements, sharing personal stories, and looking ahead to future innovations. For NIHR20, NIHR will be celebrating the impact they have made. They will be marking some of their most significant past achievements, reflecting on shared successes with partners and the research community, and looking forward to the future.

Supporters and partners are invited to join the celebrations and help showcase the vital role of research in transforming lives.

Learn more and get involved: [NIHR20 supporters page](#).

SPCR members can find supporting media templates for NIHR20 on our [Resources page](#).

NIHR 2026 Impact Prizes:

Please be advised that NIHR have launched their second NIHR Impact Prizes for 2026. The Impact Prizes coincide with NIHR's 20th anniversary, and will recognise and celebrate researchers and teams who have made a significant impact on the health and wealth of the nation.

Please refer to the website [NIHR Impact Prizes | NIHR](#), and a webinar will be held on the 16th March if you wish to join. Please note the submission deadline is **27 April at 1pm**. Do please share this with your networks, and also the LinkedIn post.

Any questions please email the Impact prizes inbox if you require further information: impact-prizes@nihr.ac.uk

NIHR Chain Network | Is a career in research for me? - Public health 22 April 2026, 2:30pm to 3:45pm

This 75-minute webinar is for anyone interested in exploring research as part of their career in public health. The NIHR funds world-leading health and social care research that improves people's health and wellbeing, while also promoting economic growth.

They also support research careers, offering opportunities to develop new skills, access training and funding, and join a supportive network, while contributing to research that has real-world impact.

The webinar will cover:

- insights into life as a research professional, shared by researchers at different career stages
- an overview of research career pathways and what research work looks like in practice
- key opportunities and challenges within research careers

[For more details please visit the website](#)

SPCR Alumni

If you are a SPCR alumnus we would love to hear from you and find out about what you are doing now and hear your ideas on future alumni activities. You can stay involved with the SPCR by sharing your career journeys and experiences, attending and speaking at future alumni and networking events and mentoring and supporting training for our new trainees. Keep connected with us through spcr@keele.ac.uk and Bluesky: [@nihrspcr.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/nihrspcr.bsky.social)

Communications

Subscribe to the SPCR newsletter

Details of publications and dissemination work, related to SPCR funded research, can be shared with the School by emailing Heather Gibbs: h.g.gibbs@keele.ac.uk

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