

**Call for Expressions of Interest:
NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) Wessex Theme Co-Lead
Designates, 2026-2031**

The University of Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS) and University of Southampton (UoS) partnership are inviting expressions of interest for the role of Theme Co-Lead Designate for NIHR ARC Wessex Themes in the areas of:

1. Healthy Communities and Prevention (Prof Nisreen Alwan)
2. Integrated Health and Social Care Systems (Prof Ruth Bartlett & Prof Lee-Ann Fenge)
3. Living Well with Long Term Conditions (Prof Mari Carmen Portillo)
4. Mental Health (Prof Sam Chamberlain)
5. Data and Technology (cross cutting) (Prof Michael Boniface & Prof John McBeth)

See attached supplementary documents 1 and 2 for further context of proposed theme aims and vision.

A Research Theme addresses an identified area of health or care need, possess critical mass in the specific area of applied health and care research, and demonstrate significant depth, breadth and international excellence in applied health and care research. It is expected NIHR ARC Wessex Themes will deliver a structured portfolio of applied health and care research in collaboration with academics, health and care professionals, service managers, commissioners and industry and charitable sector partners in health and social care that builds on, and closely linked to, work supported by other research funders.

NIHR ARC Theme Co-Leads will be identified on the ARC application and will work closely with the relevant Theme Lead to advance and fulfil the theme's overarching objectives. They should be a mid-career researcher, as defined by NIHR: an individual already established as an independent researcher but not yet recognised as an international leader in their field. They should be well established in their respective fields with experience of managing programmes of research that achieve impact. They should also have demonstrable ability to engage significantly with stakeholders in health and care provider organisations and system level organisations and patient and public groups, and to influence the policy and delivery of health and/or care.

Successful applicants will act as Theme Co-Lead designates during preparations for the NIHR ARC Wessex 2026-2031 competition, and subsequently as Theme Co-Leads, subject to the relevant theme being awarded, as part of an overall successful application for an ARC from 2026.

Post holders will be appointed for a period of five years (1st April 2026- 31st March 2031), (end of ARC 2 contract). NIHR have indicated succession planning will be important within the next award cycle.

NIHR ARC 2 (2026-2031) application will build on the success of the previous award and thus Expressions of Interest for Theme Co-Lead roles will be open to senior researchers engaged with the current ARC and / or partners. Theme Co-Lead Designates will be appointed to assist Theme Leads with the application for their theme and contribute to the overall ARC application, working closely with the ARC Director Designate.

Expressions of interests should be made through submission of:

- **An up-to-date CV (using the attached format)**
- **A description of your research career to date (maximum 800 words)**

Please use this question to provide a narrative describing your relevant research experience and career to date and how this demonstrates a steep career trajectory to date over the last 5-10 years. You should also demonstrate your capabilities, and the relevance of your research, as a future research theme leader for the NIHR Applied Health Research Collaboration. Applicants should describe contributions using the following headings:

1. How have you contributed to the generation of knowledge in applied health, public health and / or social care?
2. How have you contributed to the development of individuals, the wider research community and broader society?
3. What are your leadership and development needs to support your personal and professional development as a research leader?

Please send to r.j.hartup@soton.ac.uk.

The deadline for submissions of expressions of interest is 5pm on 28th November 2024

We welcome informal discussion regarding the role. For further information please contact Professor Catherine Bowen, Director Designate.

Expressions of interest will be reviewed, and decisions made informed by the views of an expert panel.

Best wishes,
Professor Catherine Bowen (c.j.bowen@soton.ac.uk)
Director Designate, NIHR ARC Wessex