

Anti-Poverty & Inequality Committee

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Commissioning
<u>Date:</u>	June 2023
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Health Determinants Research Collaborative – Cost of Living
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UPDATE:

The Committee at their meeting of 10th May 2023 noted that a service update had been provided on the reporting available from the Council’s Data Observatory. In noting this, the Committee requested a further Service Update in respect of the “joint funding collaboration between Aberdeen City Council and the universities to provide information on any research into the Cost of Living and impact on health specifically”.

Aberdeen Health Determinants Research Collaborative (AHDRC)

The AHDRC is an initiative funded by the National Institute of Health & Care Research until October 2027. The objective of the NIHR funding is to develop a “research active culture” within the funded local authorities, with the expectation that this will positively impact on the wider determinants of health. There are currently 10 HDRCs. 9 in England, 1 in Scotland.

Whilst the intended objective focuses on local authorities, the collaboration is between the LA, academia and other potential partners. Members will be aware that in Scotland public health functions sit outside the LA, which is not the case in England, meaning that it is essential that NHS Grampian became a full partner in Aberdeen’s HDRC.

Aberdeen’s HDRC is, formally, a collaboration between Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian, Aberdeen University and Robert Gordon University - each partner having a number of named “co-applicants”¹. Each with shared objectives and complimentary resources which will be used to maximise the benefits of research, evidence and evaluation in improving outcomes for the city and its people.

It is important to note that NIHR have been clear that the award is ***explicitly not to directly fund specific research***. Rather, the focus of the award is to lead and support:

- upskilling LA officers and behavioural change in how research is commissioned, accessed and used

¹ 2 AHDRC co-applicants are also external advisers to the Anti-poverty and Inequality Committee

- creating connections between the LA, academia, other partners and communities. So that i) LAs and communities are active in designing and commissioning research and ii) academic research is applied and impactful
- accessing research funding awards (which can be used for specific research)
- creating a research data eco-system to support research by making research data findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.

Notwithstanding the above, Aberdeen's HDRC is in the process of employing 3 Research Fellows with the skills and capacity to directly support research priorities. In addition, both universities have committed 2 funded PhDs to support HDRC priorities, and we are exploring the use of other resources, including Masters students to provide further direct support.

Identifying Research Priorities

Aberdeen's HDRC has been, throughout the bidding process, aligned with Community Planning Aberdeen on the basis that the levers available to LA's to influence the wider determinants of health are, overwhelmingly, issues for which multi-agency planning and joint working is already in place: including education, employability, safeguarding, housing, community building, criminal justice, mental health, public spaces, transportation, etc.

Through a review of the LOIP and engagement with Community Planning Aberdeen structures, as well as with Council officers, an initial list of potential research priority areas has been identified and is attached as an Appendix to this Service Update.

Work is currently ongoing in each area to agree possible research questions and agree how support can best be provided through the HDRC.

Priorities will also be refined through the forthcoming refresh of the Population Needs Assessment and, subsequently, the LOIP.

Cost of Living

As stated above, work has begun to define research questions for priority research areas. This will be done both with Council colleagues and Community Planning partners. Many of these priorities are directly impacted by the cost of living and this will, of course, be a significant consideration in the development of work programmes.

As the process of engaging on priorities continues, the HDRC is actively working in a number of areas including food insecurity, fuel poverty (warmth prescribing) and early learning and childcare. Planning is underway for the Committee to consider information in relation to food insecurity from HDRC Co-applicant Prof Flora Douglas (RGU).

The impact of the cost of living is, of course, currently monitored through a range of data by the Council and its partners to inform prevention and mitigation of harm. Further work is planned including through the update to the City's Population Needs Assessment and improved surveillance, with partners, of health inequalities. This data will support colleagues in identifying where additional knowledge, potentially research, relating to the cost of living is required and would be of most value.

Draft Research Priorities

Theme	Topic - ACC would support PhDs in these areas	Research Need – Potential research focus in these topics
Children and Young People	Whole Family	- Multiple potential topics focusing on “whole family”
	Care experienced children	- The “edge of care” - factors and prevention
	Early, Learning and Childcare	- Early years assessment of developmental needs - Parental employment
	Mental health & wellbeing	- Impact of lifestyle, relationships on mental wellbeing
		- Identifying and responding to neglect and harm
	Additional Support Needs	- The growing numbers of C&YP with additional support needs
	Transitions	- Starting primary school - Starting secondary school - Positive destinations for children leaving school
Young people charged with an offence	- Prevention	
Adults	Housing Condition	- Refurbishment of existing local social housing – imperatives and challenges re energy efficiency, climate and health impact - The impact of housing physical and social environment, including ASB, on mental health
	Homelessness	- Effectiveness of prevention and response
	Alcohol consumption	- Effectiveness of prevention and response
	Drug related deaths	- Effectiveness of prevention and response
	Criminal convictions & reconvictions	- Violence Against Women
		- Antisocial behaviour
	Healthy life expectancy	- Social Prescribing
- Active ageing		
Food insecurity	- Household food insecurity	
Economy	Poverty / Financial Inclusion	- Financial support
		- Disparity and needs of groups at higher risk of child poverty
	Employment, employability & fair work	- Economic impact on parents and carers - Occupational change

	Energy transition	Just transitions.
Place	Active travel	Modal shift
	Climate change	Impact on health
	Nature crisis / biodiversity	Impact on health
	Place Planning	Blue / green open spaces
	Place Planning	City Centre Masterplan
Participation, Involvement & Engagement	Engagement and Inclusion	Arts based approaches to engagement