



The Joseph Cowen Health Centre in Byker, Newcastle, operates as a health and wellbeing drop-in service for people experiencing homelessness in the city.

Jan 11, 2023 09:15 GMT

Northumbria Professor leads research aimed at providing better support for people facing homelessness

Researchers at Northumbria University have been awarded almost £250,000 to work with service providers and community organisations on developing improved data sharing techniques to support people experiencing homelessness.

Working with housing services, NHS providers, charities and community

groups, people from across the North East and North Cumbria who have experienced periods of homelessness, will be recruited as experts by experience to guide aspects of the research, led by [Professor Monique Lhussier](#).

The objectives of the nine-month project include the creation of a virtual directory which will map the services and options available for those facing homelessness and associated complex social and healthcare needs as well as being available to the service providers to further develop integrated ways of working.

Professor Lhussier, who has expertise in marginalisation, welfare and wellbeing, said: “The project will bring together a range of services, academics and people who have been homeless to work together to improve the health and wellbeing of all community members. We will work in direct and equal collaboration with people who have experienced homelessness so that all people can have access to the support they need, when they need it, and in the way they need it.

“We know, for example, that if someone is homeless and also dealing with mental health issues and addiction, they will be faced with disconnected support services to deal with each challenge. But often support with addictions will not be activated until mental health issues are stabilised, and vice versa, leaving people to fall between the cracks, as housing can also be dependent on those issues being resolved. People’s lives do not fit into neat boxes and this project is about building a network of services that can be shaped more around the person, rather than the other way around.”

Information gathered during the research will also be used to build on the existing model of the [Joseph Cowen Health Centre](#) in Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne, which is operated by one of the project partners, Tyne Housing. With support from the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board and Newcastle City Council, the centre operates as a health and wellbeing drop-in service for people experiencing homelessness in the city.

Steve McKinlay, Chief Executive of [Tyne Housing](#), said: “This project will help us to use the knowledge and experience of people who have lived through periods of homelessness and the life challenges that presents, to improve the connectivity of support services for the benefit of all.

“Our housing model is always designed to focus on the individual’s own personal needs, meeting them where they are, building a trusting relationship and working together in partnership to get to a better place.

“We feel working collaboratively on this research with Northumbria University, to find ways of addressing the inequalities faced by people who find themselves homeless, is an important mechanism to help improve the lives of people across the region and beyond.”

Forty stakeholders from across the North East and North Cumbria will be invited to take part in workshops during the research project and other partners will include the [Voluntary Organisations’ Network North East](#); the NIHR [Applied Research Collaboration \(NIHR ARC\) North East and North Cumbria](#); [Fuse](#), the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health; the [Deep End network](#) and the [NENC ICS](#).

The research, *Building and Evidencing Community Asset Partnerships in Housing and Health to Address Health Disparities in North East and North Cumbria*, is one of a wave of projects which form part of a £26 million [UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#) and [Arts and Humanities Council \(AHRC\)](#) investment, aimed at using existing local resources to create a fairer and healthier society.

Professor Helen Chatterjee, AHRC’s Health Inequalities Programme Director, said: “This programme is central to AHRC’s strategic vision and our longstanding commitment to taking an arts and humanities approach to creating a fairer and more equitable society.

“We must think carefully about how we utilise shared infrastructure and spaces to ensure that they are serving the entire community and playing their role in addressing inequality. It is exciting to consider how bringing together and rethinking the use of cultural assets in these regions might change health outcomes for their communities.”

Based within Northumbria’s Department of [Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing](#), Professor Lhussier is also Director of CHASE, [Northumbria’s flagship Centre for Health and Social Equity](#). Ambitious plans for the new centre, which will be developed on the University’s City Campus, have recently been announced following a £5.8 million award from the [Office for Students](#). Its aim is to develop and harness the University’s research, education and knowledge exchange expertise to help meet the health and

social equity issues of multiple stakeholders and communities in the city, region and beyond.

Northumbria is a research-intensive modern university with a global reputation for academic excellence. Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk --- Please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences
rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk
07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences
andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk
07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk
07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk