

NIHR | Health Determinants Research Collaboration Southampton

About HDRC Southampton

The conditions in which we live, work and play have a huge influence on our health and wellbeing. These social, economic, and environmental factors are known as the 'wider determinants of health'. Southampton City Council's services, such as education, housing, social care, employment, transport, and access to green spaces, influence these wider determinants.

Improving the conditions in which we live, work and learn will improve health and reduce the unfair differences in health that exist in Southampton, known as 'health inequalities'. Such inequalities mean that, currently, people living in the most deprived parts of the city are twice as likely to die prematurely (under 75 years) than those living in the least deprived areas.

Southampton City Council is one of thirty local authorities across the UK that has been awarded funding from the [National Institute for Health and Care Research \(NIHR\)](#) to establish a Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC). The purpose of this funding is to develop the council's research infrastructure to enable us to become more research active and make better use of research evidence when making decisions on the wider determinants of health.

Our HDRC is building on Southampton's track record of cross-sector engagement and will be a partnership with the University of Southampton, Solent University, Southampton Voluntary Service, and our local communities. Bringing together local government and community knowledge with academic research expertise will improve our local evidence base to better inform policy decisions in important areas that impact on health and health inequalities.

About our work

HDRC Southampton is a five-year programme which started on 1 January 2024. The HDRC will deliver the three work packages below, plus a cross-cutting work package relating to public involvement and community engagement:

Work package 1 – Building research capacity

- Employ a new research team in the council
- Make sure staff have access to the systems and resources needed to use research evidence when making decisions
- Find the best ways to listen to voices from across all communities in Southampton

Work package 2 – Culture of evidence-informed decision making

- Develop a training programme to support staff and elected members in accessing and using evidence
- Setting up processes to support and enable evidence-informed decision making
- Have conversations with our local communities and partner organisations to decide on the priorities for research

Work package 3 – Evaluation, dissemination, and impact

- Make it easier for residents to see how evidence is used in local policy making
- Share what we have learnt from having a HDRC with council colleagues, local communities, and wider partners.
- Continually monitor whether the HDRC is making progress towards achieving its aim.

Cross-cutting public involvement and community engagement

We will work with members the public and our local communities to ensure HDRC Southampton is shaped with and by them. There are five key areas for members of the public and local communities to get involved in the HDRC and these include:

- Involvement in management of the HDRC
- Reaching and involving our communities
- Setting research priorities
- Co-production of research
- Impact from the work of the HDRC

We will regularly update this section with more information and opportunities to get involved.

How you can get involved and find out more

- Contact the team via HDRC@southampton.gov.uk
- See [HDRC Southampton press release](#)
- You can find out more about the NIHR HDRC funding on the [NIHR Website](#)
- Email the team to sign up to our newsletter via HDRC@southampton.gov.uk