



North Wales Organisation for
Randomised Trials in Health & Social Care
Sefydliad Hap-Dreialon Iechyd
a Gofal Cymdeithasol Gogledd Cymru



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

North Wales
Organisation for
Randomised Trials in
Health & Social Care
NORTH

20
21



Ymchwil Iechyd
a Gofal **Cymru**
Health and Care
Research **Wales**



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government

2020 - 21
Annual Report

2020 - 21 Annual Report

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FOREWORD

This is the first year of the new three-year infrastructure grant with Welsh Government and Health and Care Research Wales.

This report highlights our aims and objectives for the next three years (2020-23) and also our achievements during 2020-21. At the start of the funding period, we have set a number of key aims:

This report highlights our aims:

1. To develop our research collaborations and seek to increase the level of research activity across Wales;
2. To maintain the quality of our internal processes in trial management, oversight and delivery;
3. To promote professional and methodological development
 - a. Ensuring all our staff are trained and supported;
 - b. Exploring methodological approaches to promote stakeholder engagement and build capacity in North Wales;
4. To continue to embed the involvement and engagement of patients and the public in all that we do; and
5. To continue our research through the medium of Welsh and provide support for the infrastructure across Wales.

All of these objectives point to the importance of strengthening our regional research environment, further developing local research collaborations and seeking to ensure that patients across North Wales have improved and equitable access to clinical trials, key recommendations of the Reid and the recent Cross-Party report by the Senedd.¹²

This aligns with the broader steer across the United Kingdom to focus on tackling the most pressing healthcare burdens and inequalities, democratizing access to clinical research and ensuring that research participants reflect the populations that will benefit most from the intervention.

We are already starting to conduct research to describe the state of the research infrastructure in North Wales, understanding the challenges of undertaking trials in rural communities, capturing the best way of reporting the results of trials to patients and the public and exploring the value of the Welsh language amongst potential participants in rural communities in North Wales.

During 2021, we have maintained our high grant success rate and level of productivity. Our currently active studies represent £28M in total grant value and we have three new Welsh-led studies in set-up. In addition, our dental research has continued to contribute to important policy decisions, investment decisions in North Wales and the response of policy-makers to the impact of COVID.

In terms of study delivery, the quality of our internal processes remains high and all our studies have been delivered within their agreed timeframe, despite the impact of the pandemic.

We look forward to continue to work cohesively and as a team, to promote a supportive service that delivers impactful research for Wales and beyond.



Professor Paul Brocklehurst
Director of NWORD

¹ Review of Government Funded Research and Innovation in Wales. Reid G. Welsh Government, 2018

² The Next Steps for Wales to Achieve its Potential in Medical Research. The Fifth Senedd Cross Party Group on Medical Research, Feb 2021

NWORTH'S MISSION

NWORTH's mission is to conduct clinical trials and studies of complex interventions of the highest quality; delivering research and impact for Wales and beyond, as well as advancing methodological developments in clinical trials research.

The Unit's ultimate aim is to make a difference to people's health across Wales and beyond and align to key Welsh policy principles. In addition, we seek to contribute to methodological developments to understand local research priorities, promote Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement in North Wales and the delivery of trials in rural and isolated communities.

We have identified an ambitious programme of work for the period of 2020 – 2023 which is driven by five key work streams:-

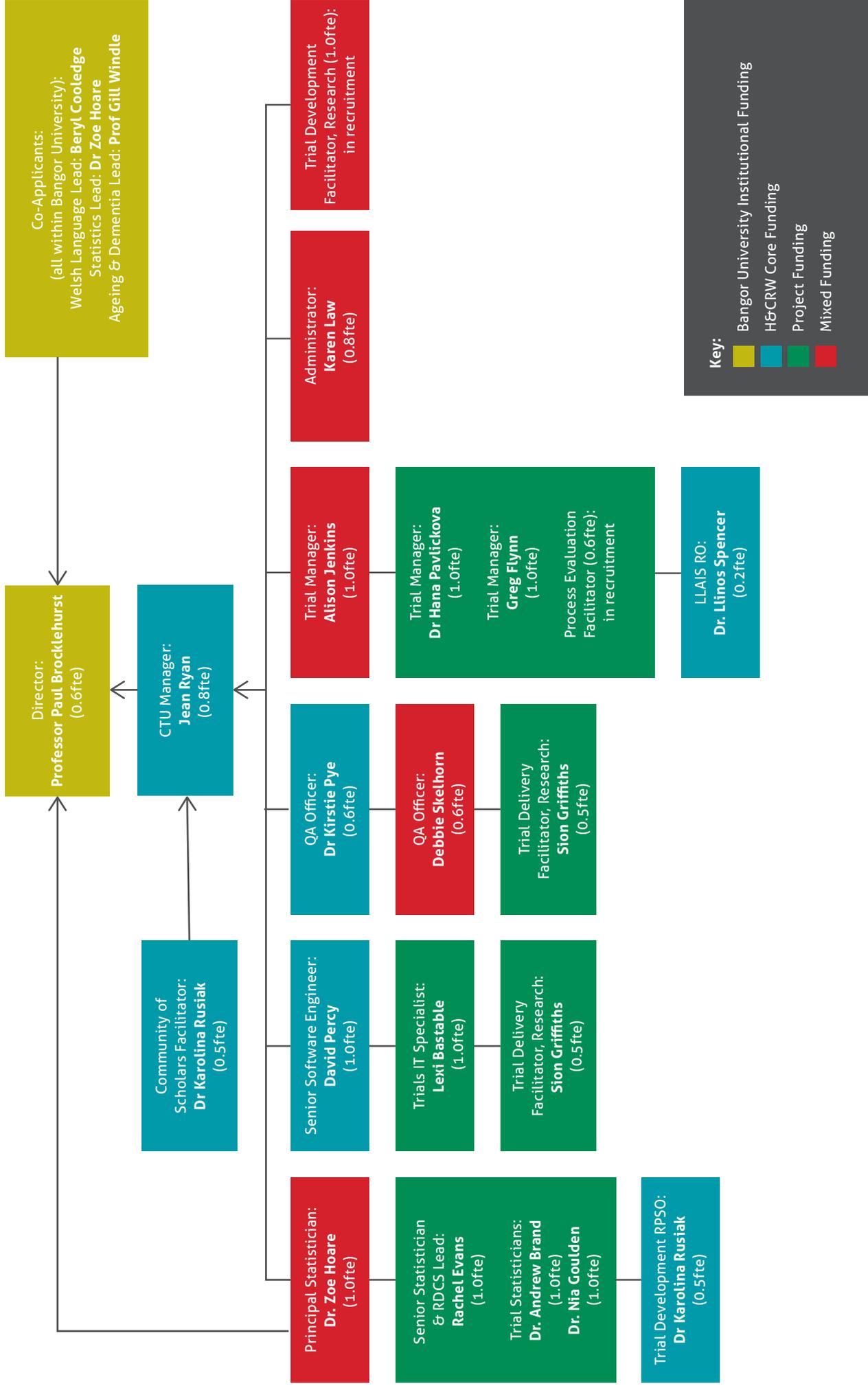
1. Collaboration Development - where we seek to maintain our consistently high success rate whilst also increasing grant activity and grant capture in Wales. Further details on our portfolio development and grant capture activity can be found below.
2. Trial Oversight and Delivery - where we will maintain the high standards of quality, timeliness and governance of all our deliverables and outputs.
3. Professional and methodological development - where we are focusing on methodological approaches to stakeholder engagement and building research capacity in North Wales.
4. Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement – this is central to everything we do at NWORTH and is embedded in all our activities. We plan to expand our public involvement and engagement group, Population Advice for Research Committee, (PARC-Bangor) with special emphasis on diversity. To this end, we have been linking closely with Health and Care Research Wales' Public Engagement and Involvement team and have contributed to the Public Engagement and Involvement Forum. Further details on this below.
5. Research through the medium of Welsh – we will continue our work to increase greater awareness and access to research opportunities through the medium of Welsh and the "active offer" of this.

Through these work packages, we aim to increase the level of Welsh-led activity at the Unit and build local research capacity to foster a healthy research environment across North Wales.

We seek to understand the local research environment and the barriers that many healthcare professionals experience in starting out on their research journey. Only by understanding these local issues will we be able to address them and take the steps required to foster research development and growth.



NWORTH ORGANOGRAM FOR REPORTING YEAR 2020-2021



THE TEAM

NWORTH has a current staff of 15.6FTE, (with another 1.0FTE out to recruitment), who are delivering a portfolio of 18 active studies (with a further six studies currently in submission).

Staffing is divided into the essential functions required for UKCRC registration: Statistics, Trial Management, Quality Assurance, IT and Management/Support functions.

NWORTH's Executive plays a key role in the strategic oversight of the Unit and on-going governance. The Executive draws on key trialists and important stakeholders from the local research infrastructure along with a dedicated representative for Patient and Public Involvement.

The Unit is located within a broader University structure that is embedded in its local community, with an over-arching research strategy and a developing clinical-academic programme linked to aspirations of developing a medical school.

We are collaborating with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board on the Community of Scholars pilot which aims to develop the research infrastructure in North Wales. We are also actively linked with the Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research, Wales Centre for Primary and Emergency (including Unscheduled) Care Research and Welsh Dental Branch.

This ensures that we are active in our engagement with the Centres and Units across the Health and Care Research Wales infrastructure. It will also be used to increase the number of opportunities for interdisciplinary working to strengthen research infrastructure development across Wales (e.g. in ageing and dementia, primary care and oral health). We seek to actively disseminate our findings using the Support and Delivery Centre.

We were delighted to appoint Greg Flynn to the post of iSupport Trial Manager this year. Greg has been a Trial Development Facilitator and Data Manager at NWORTH for three years and it is wonderful to see his career progress at the Unit.



Greg reflects on his career development at NWORTH below:

When I started working at NWORTH in 2018, one of the first tasks I carried out was helping to put together

Investigator Site Files and liaising with research sites during the set-up of a clinical trial. There were a lot of challenges because various jobs needed to be finished and I was new to this type of work, but I had excellent guidance and individual steps were clearly explained to me by NWORTH's Senior Trial Manager. I also had frequent ongoing support from the CTU Manager in my main role as Trial Development Facilitator, and I have learned a lot from everyone in the team by asking questions.

“ Supporting each other and giving advice is genuinely important to everyone I've worked with at NWORTH!”

As I became more comfortable in my main role, I was able to help organise and roll out an online research skills initiative called the Community of Scholars. This culminated in giving a live run-through of the website to clinicians over Zoom and explaining the objectives of the initiative. Working on this project for several months and reflecting on my work over the years gave me the confidence to apply for, and subsequently become, a Trial Manager. I am now working on the iSupport for Dementia Carers study and have been carrying out some of the tasks I first learned about in 2018, and I look forward to sharing my knowledge with others too.



We were also delighted to welcome a new Senior Software Engineer to the team.

David Percy

graduated from Bradford University with a Master's degree in Electronic, Computer and Communications Engineering back in 1997, working in software development for five years before teaching IT and outdoor education for a 10 year period.

He returned to software work for the intellectual challenge and has since worked in a variety of roles, quickly moving into team leadership and management, drawing on his mentoring skills from his teaching period. He most enjoys working with customers to ensure they get the system they need.

In his spare time he is usually found climbing up a mountain, nipping up a hill or doing his best to emulate the Karate Kid at his local dojo.

As David commenced in post whilst all staff are still working from home, his induction and all team interactions to date have been virtual. Reflecting on his first six months in his role he has stated:

“ NWORTH is a friendly positive team who I've never actually met and had a cup of tea with!”

HIGHLIGHTS:

2020 – 2021 has been another very busy year for NWORD. Notwithstanding the challenging circumstances we've all been working with due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NWORD staff have been as busy as ever! Some of our highlights are summarised below:

Collaboration Development

During 2020-2021 we submitted 12 funding applications and added four large-scale studies to our portfolio – with a total grant value of £2.27M. Three of these studies are being led from North Wales, (two from Bangor University and one from Betsi Cadwaldr University Health Board).

We currently have 18 active studies on our portfolio with a total grant value of £28M. We have an active pipeline of studies in development with another 6 studies currently in submission with a total grant value of £8.7M.

We are also actively working up a further 4 studies with imminent submission dates.

We are very proud of the above figures which reflect a resurgence of activity in the second half of the year following a down-turn at the start of the year due to the COVID pandemic. The second half of the year was extremely busy for studies in development, studies being reactivated following pauses as well as awarded studies being initiated.

Trial Oversight and Delivery

There have been impacts on a number of our projects' timelines and delivery due to COVID but the Unit has worked hard to mitigate these. The quality of our internal processes and regulatory compliance have remained unchanged, as we have moved to a virtual 'sign-off' process internally.

We supported our study teams through the first phase of the pandemic with remote data collection and for some studies, methodological adaptations were required which have necessitated increased input from our Statistics team and additional sensitivity analyses.

Although many studies were paused initially, our work increased in terms of monitoring, risk assessments and adaptations from all team members to ensure rigor in delivery continued going forwards with changed circumstances.

Professional Development

Throughout this year, professional development continued virtually where possible. Team members are certainly well-versed in Zoom, Teams and screen sharing now!

This is largely providing continuity and we have made steps to ensure that all staff feel connected and supported whilst they have worked at home for all of this year due to COVID. Personal Development Reviews were conducted for all staff virtually and staff attendance at training, events and conferences is continuing virtually.

Patient, Public and Stakeholder Involvement and Engagement

In similarity to the above, PPI has been conducted virtually throughout the year.

Although COVID initially limited the extent and scope of the engagement we had planned in this area, we have been pleased with the activities and input we have been able to arrange virtually.

More details on the work of PARC-Bangor are outlined below.





IMPACT:

As reported in our Annual Report of 2020 and in 'Making a difference'³, research from NWRTH has made a difference at a policy-level in NHS service provision for dental services.

Over a three-year period, two separate but interlinked NIHR-funded studies have looked at the impact of paying NHS Dentists differently and whether Dental Care Professionals can manage low-risk patients as well as a dentist.

The first study focused on an NHS pilot project that was taking place in Northern Ireland, looking

at the possibility of changing dental contract policy and paying dentists differently for one year.

This saw a significant drop in clinical activity levels as a result of paying NHS Dentists using a capitation-based system (based on the number of patients in a dental practice), compared to how dentists are usually paid (based on the number and type of treatments carried out).

More than 30,000 NHS patients and 34 NHS Dentists took part in the study from eleven practices. We have already reported that the results of the study influenced the Chief Dental Officer not to pursue this form of payment as part of the NHS dental contract reform process in Wales. However,

the results of the study have also been critical in helping the Acting Chief Dental Officer for Northern Ireland model the impact of COVID and in 2020, informing the most appropriate level of dental remuneration across the Province at a time when clinical activity was no longer possible as a result of the pandemic.

The second study tested whether other members of the NHS dental team (Dental Care Professionals) could undertake the low-risk patient check-ups instead of the dentist. Currently, the use of Dentists as front-line clinicians in NHS dental practices is costly, with over half of the 21.7 million check-ups undertaken each year in the UK resulting in no further treatment.

³ Making a difference: The impact of health and care research in Wales, (Health and Care Research Wales, October 2020)



The team conducted a pilot trial and also a detailed process evaluation alongside the study, which informed the development of the All-Wales Faculty of Dental Care Professionals. As highlighted in our previous report, the Faculty was officially launched in 2019 by Vaughan Gething.

However, the findings have also subsequently informed the development of a new £1.5M per annum Dental Teaching Unit in North Wales (launching in 2021) and the submission of an application for the training of Dental Care Professionals with Health Education and Improvement Wales.

This links with the development of new care-pathways for the Dental Contract Reform process in Wales, making greater use of Dental Care Professionals, as alluded to in the results of the NWORDH study.

The findings were also recently fed into the Chief Professions Officers' Medicines Mechanisms consultation exercise to lift the current restrictions on Dental Care Professionals' ability to prescribe medicines (another significant finding from our study).

Rare Dementia Group

NWORTH is contributing to the ongoing Rare Dementia Support research programme, (being led by Professor Seb Crutch at UCL). This research programme is exploring the impact of multicomponent support groups for those living with rare dementias, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, (ESRC) and national Institute for Health Research, (NIHR).

When the first lockdown hit in March 2020, the research team was mobilised to deliver some of the support they delivered online but were also interested in the impact of the lockdown on their members within the group. A survey was developed and circulated to examine this. This enabled the group to capture quickly the impact of the public health measures imposed to contain COVID-19 on this particular group of rare dementia service users.

The results of the survey are currently being written up for peer-review (although are available in pre-print format to aid in rapid dissemination) but give an insight into the effect of the pandemic on service users who usually rely on a network of support.

Mental Health Resilience

Mental health resilience in people living with dementia and the impact loneliness can have on cognitive decline is a public health priority.

CFAS Wales (Cognitive Function and Ageing Study) was a longitudinal population-based study funded by the ESRC, looking at health and cognitive function in older people living in Wales (2011-2016).

NWORTH has been involved in some secondary data analysis which became the first exploration of mental health resilience and loneliness of older people with

cognitive impairment in Wales. The study identified a group of people who appear to be remarkably resilient and those with mental health resilience were also less likely to experience loneliness.

A video clip has been produced to summarise the main findings of the analysis conducted:
<https://youtu.be/FddgZxVpSf4>



Prescribing Virtual Reality

As part of its programme “Prescribing Virtual Reality” – released on 13th May 2021, BBC Radio Wales included details of ongoing research being conducted by University College London in collaboration with NWORTH.

Led by John King, the iCOPE study is NIHR-funded and will examine how compassion-focused therapy delivered via virtual reality and with avatar re-embodiment can provide an alternative treatment for depression.

NWORTH is collaborating to design and deliver a feasibility trial followed by a full RCT.

WHELD

Improving mental health and reducing antipsychotic use in people with dementia in care homes: the WHELD research programme included two randomised controlled trials supported by NWO.

Led by Professor Clive Ballard, (University of Exeter), the entire programme of work has now been published (July 2020) as part of the NIHR journal

<https://doi.org/10.3310/pgfar08060>

<https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/alert/wheld-dementia-care-homes-person-centred-care/>

WHELD was a 5 year research project funded by the NIHR programme grant for applied research funding stream which began in 2010. The overall intention of the programme was to develop and evaluate an intervention based upon the most effective current therapies.

The specific aims of the project were to; improve mental health and quality of life, improve the quality of prescription of antipsychotic drugs and reduce agitation for people with dementia in care homes. The research programme developed a person-centred intervention, which reduced anti-psychotic use and improved quality of life when compared to treatment as usual.

The developed training programme for care home staff focused on person-centred care and a range of non-drug approaches.

As part of the programme there were three systematic reviews undertaken, adaptation of the most effective approaches to make an optimised intervention



The WHELD programme for people with dementia helps care home staff deliver person-centred care

Published on 26 November 2020

doi: 10.3310/alert_42713

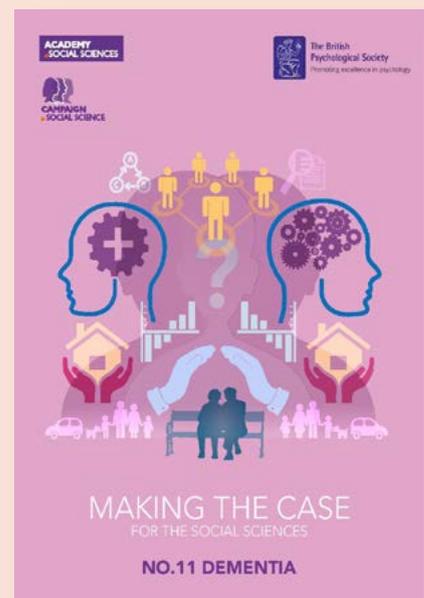
An evidence-based programme for care home residents living with dementia improved their quality of life and reduced agitation and other symptoms of dementia. A major study across the UK found that the Well-being and Health for People Living with Dementia (WHELD) programme was effective and cost less to deliver than usual care.

and two cluster randomised trials of the developed intervention were completed, incorporating 85 care homes and over a thousand participants within those homes.

Results of the trials indicated that the developed intervention reduced anti-psychotic use and improved quality of life when compared to treatment as usual. NWO supported this programme of work by providing methodological and statistical advice throughout the lifecycle of the programme. This culminated in the design, delivery and analysis of a complex cluster randomised trial incorporating both resident, staff and care home level data to evaluate the complex intervention package that had been developed.

Subsequently the dissemination of the intervention has been through workshops, written communications, and roadshows.

An e-learning module has been developed for GPs and the intervention was selected as a case example of good practice at the Making the Case for the Social Sciences event.



WHELD programme trial

Papers generated from this research are now reaching over 100 citations each as the outcomes are being fed into further research, resulting in better outcomes for those in residential care.

Methodological Developments

Our new programme of work focusing on methodological developments began at pace during the year.

Three methodological work streams are centred on the research infrastructure in North Wales: what activity is taking place and where, how trials are being undertaken in rural communities, and how do Welsh-speaking communities view research. Portfolio data analysis and data visualization has been completed to explore the current activity and landscape. Two online surveys have been developed and focus groups are being organised to address these questions.

Another work stream is a broad UK-wide survey to members of the public which will assess respondents' thoughts on the purpose of clinical research and the public's perception of clinical research, examining issues of trust.

This survey has been co-produced with members of our PARC-Bangor PPI group.

A number of work packages are being undertaken by our Statistics team which will examine:

- Composite measures in complex interventions – initial scoping and mapping work has been undertaken developing a route map for further development.
- Mapping the behaviour of the dynamic adaptive randomization algorithm – two internal technical reports have been developed examining how the algorithm behaves in specific circumstances ensuring our team optimises the algorithm for full benefit within studies.

- Summary of trial results – enabling the researcher to elicit the full story from the tabular results by using visual aids – initial plots for past studies are being generated to see how they link in with the results story.
- Researcher bias – a successfully defended MPhil study from a statistics team member who is now refining the results of this into a paper for submission. This study looked at the impact of consistency of researcher attendance at outcome assessments within a trial context.
- MCID defining/estimating – linking the estimation of effect sizes and sample sizes – a discussion paper has been drafted and is due for submission shortly.

Research Design & Conduct Service

The Research Design and Conduct Service for North and Mid Wales, hosted by NWORD, provides advice and comprehensive support and guidance to health and social care staff across North and Mid Wales to enable them to develop and submit high quality applications to research funding streams.

This year we arranged an online RfPPB seminar in advance of the stage one submission date in October 2020. We also co-hosted an event in November 2020

with PARC-Bangor to encourage greater uptake of the service and highlight the importance of public involvement in developing proposals.

We were delighted that one of our RDCS supported studies from last year, Joanne Goss' HEARIT study was successful in securing RfPPB funding this year. The study is now live and open to recruitment. Two research proposals were developed into RfPPB applications this year and one has proceeded to stage 2 of the scheme.

We provided support to six clinicians, although we are still receiving a significant number of ineligible requests for support.

LLAIS is on the All Wales Group for the RDCS and provides guidance to researchers on the use of the Welsh language in research projects and trial related matters in accordance with Welsh Government language policies.

Another RDCS virtual webinar is planned for June 2021 to promote this year's RfPPB funding call with two speakers who have previously benefitted from RDCS support reflecting on their respective RfPPB journeys.

LLAIS

LLAIS aims to embed Welsh language awareness in health and social care research in Wales through LLAIS language awareness activities, NWORD trials unit activities, and other research avenues such as the Research Design and Conduct Service (RDCS).

LLAIS has worked on a number of projects throughout 2020-21.

The Oxford Cognitive Screen (OCS) linguistic validation is a collaborative project with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, (BCUHB).

The OCS is a cognitive assessment test for people who have had a stroke. The English version is used in BCUHB and Dr Conor Martin, from the Care of the Elderly Service at BCUHB contacted LLAIS directly to ask if this measure could be prioritised as a measure for LLAIS to linguistically validate. The final Welsh version has been produced and is now being discussed with professionals and lay individuals.

The LLAIS Arm A/Braich A poster was displayed as part of the Health and Care Research Wales Conference online in October 2020.

LLAIS has provided input and support to the iSupport project throughout its set-up. This has included providing input to developing three Welsh measures for the iSupport study.

These included:

- Graddfa Unigrwydd 3 Eitem UCLA (UCLA 3 item loneliness scale)
- Rhestr Galar (Bereavement scale)
- Graddfa Gwynwch (Resilience scale)

LLAIS also supported the focus groups with Dr Catrin Hedd Jones.

The final formatted versions will be added to the micym.org library in due course.

LLAIS will be commencing work on two further measures for the iSupport project in June 2021. The measures are:

- Zarit Burden Interview
- Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale

Dr Seren Roberts approached LLAIS to ask for assistance with linguistically validating the Personal and Social Capital Scale (PSCS)/ Graddfa Cyfalaf Cymdeithasol Personol. LLAIS was able to assist with Focus Group sessions to discuss the measures. This measure in its short form and long form is now available on the micym.org website.

Going forwards, LLAIS will continue to validate one or two patient reported outcome measures into Welsh each year.

LLAIS has also been awarded funding for the validation into Welsh of ONS questions regarding health and well-being.

As part of NWORD's methodology work package, LLAIS is undertaking the SiCym study (Siaradwyr Cymraeg mewn ymchwil iechyd a gofal/Welsh speakers in health and social care research).

Work is ongoing and staff are currently conducting a mixed methods study to investigate Welsh speakers' involvement in research studies. The first aspect of the SiCym study is a systematic review of minority language speakers in health research, which we hope to publish in an academic journal. The second aspect is focus groups with researchers in Wales to inform the development of the questionnaire, and the third aspect is a questionnaire about taking part in health research to disseminate online in Wales. The work on all three aspects is progressing. A Welsh speaking member of the public has been involved in the questionnaire development as a public representative.

No workshops or training has been provided during the pandemic as the Summer School was cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

There is a Mesurau Iechyd Cymraeg Twitter account with the current number of followers at followers 506 @micymraeg

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Key metrics of our performance for 2020-2021 are summarised below:

12 unique
grant applications submitted,
(7 to NIHR NETSCC schemes)

4 grants
awarded

£2.28M
in total grant funding awarded

£1.32M
accruing to Wales

£1.73M
NETSCC income awarded

32 articles
published
in peer-reviewed journals

£8.7M
currently in submission

£320K
commercial income generated

Core Metrics Reporting period: 2020/2021



**Health and Care
Research Wales
infrastructure award
to the group**



Direct
funding
awarded

£333,528

Jobs created
through direct
funding



Grants won during reporting period

| Grants won | Led by group | Group collaborating |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Number | 1 | 3 |
| Value | £1.49M | £789K |
| Funding to Wales | £979K | £339K |
| Funding to group | £285K | £193K |
| Additional jobs created for Wales | 4 | 4 |
| Additional jobs created for group | 2 | 2 |



Number of publications



Number of public
engagement events



Number of public
involvement opportunities

Clinical Trials Unit metrics



4
Number of
studies
awarded



2
Number of studies
led by Welsh Chief
Investigators



311
Total number of
participants
recruited



9
% of Welsh
participants
recruited



Ymchwil Iechyd
a Gofal Cymru
Health and Care
Research Wales



Ulywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PARC-BANGOR

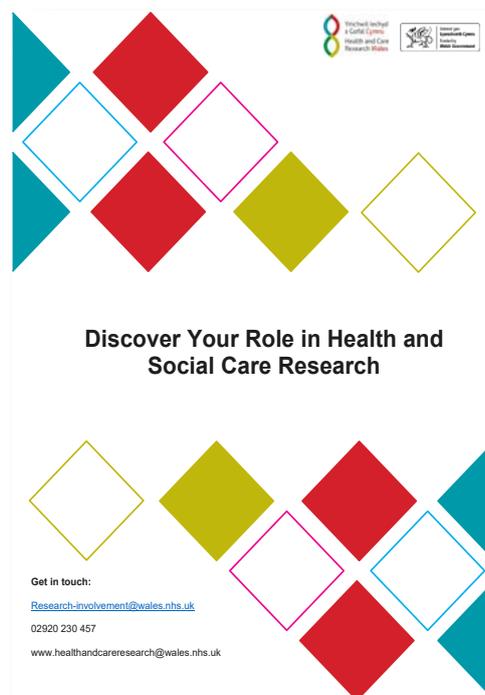
Population Advice for Research Committee, (PARC-Bangor) is our public involvement and engagement group. Members are instrumental in reviewing and inputting to our studies in development.

They use their experience as patients, service users, carers or family members to feedback on research priorities, research design, funding applications, and study documentation. Members also contribute to study committees and management groups. They also input to our Executive meetings and have played a key role in some of our methodological developments this year.

One of our methodological research streams is to undertake a public online survey which will examine respondents' attitudes to clinical research, their trust in clinical research and their willingness to participate in clinical research either as a recruited participant or an advising lay member. We will ask whether respondents can identify any particular training needs to support them in contributing to research in the future and if so, what format would be most preferable.

The survey has been co-designed and co-produced with members of PARC-Bangor who have been instrumental in steering its design, content and wording.

In November 2020, Members of PARC-Bangor contributed to a webinar session organised by NWORDH which introduced the concepts of public involvement and public engagement to students from the School of Health Sciences at Bangor University.



This was a very well-received and interactive session which resulted in a number of new sign-ups to our PARC-Bangor group.

Members of NWORDH staff and PARC-Bangor have also contributed to consultations and workshops which resulted in the Discover Your Role in Health and Social Care Research document which was launched by Health and Care Research Wales in January 2021.

https://healthandcareresearch.wales.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Discover_Your_Role_in_Health_and_Social_Care_Research_Dec_2020_Eng_0.pdf

NWORDH staff have also been involved in the Health and Care Research Wales Public Engagement and Involvement Forum Organising Group which delivered its first two forums in May 2021 with excellent feedback.

PARC-Bangor now has a total of 24 members who come from all corners of North Wales. One third are Welsh speakers. Our meetings have continued to take place online via Zoom during the pandemic. Not only does this ensure our meetings continue to take place safely with members of the public but it also provides more of our stakeholders across North Wales the opportunity to join us. Unfortunately, our planned face-to-face public event for June 2020 had to be cancelled but we are looking forward to arranging another event in the near future.



COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS

We were very pleased to launch our Community of Scholars Website in February 2021.

Originally planned for March 2020, because of the impacts of COVID, the launch was delayed until the timing was more conducive to health professionals being able to attend. The launch happened virtually with over 70 attendees from across Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Bangor University, Health and Care Research Wales and beyond.

You can visit the website at: <https://communityofscholars.org.uk/>

The Community of Scholars (CoS) is a pilot project being delivered as a co-production between Bangor University, NWORD Clinical Trials Unit and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). It is aimed at applied health researchers and health and social care practitioners across North Wales.

The goal with this new website is to provide CoS members with similar research interests an easy way to network and collaborate. The new website also provides great resources to develop research knowledge, delivered via friendly formats such as podcasts, factsheets, and videos. CoS members can find useful information about funding calls and are able to sign up to a text alert service that will remind them of funding call deadlines.



NWORD_CTU @nworth_ctu · Jan 22

Community of Scholars Virtual Website Launch is on 9th February at 4.30pm!

A pathway for [#research](#) for [#healthcare](#) practitioners and applied health researchers across [#NorthWales](#)

Sign up today by contacting cos.facilitator@bangor.ac.uk

nworth-ctu.bangor.ac.uk/news/community...



BetsiResearch and 4 others



Prof. Paul Brocklehurst, NWORD Director said,

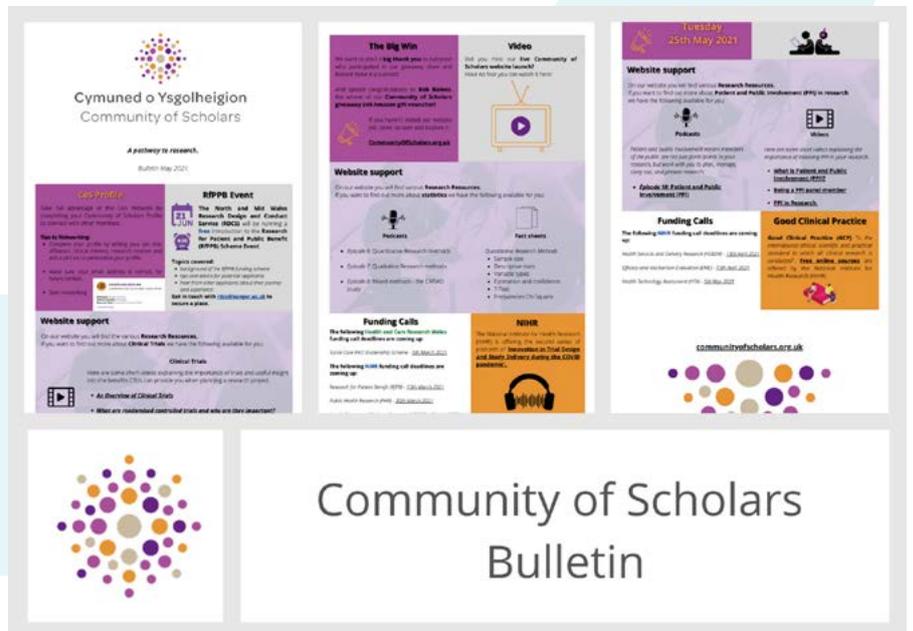
“ With the launch of the Community of Scholars, clinicians from BCUHB at all levels can begin to take the first step into research. Initiated and developed by staff at NWORD and BCUHB R&D and funded by the Welsh Government, the interactive website will enable clinicians to link up with each other and academics across the Bangor University College of Human Sciences, listen to podcasts and receive notifications of future funding calls. Please make sure you sign-up and make this an engaging experience for all.”

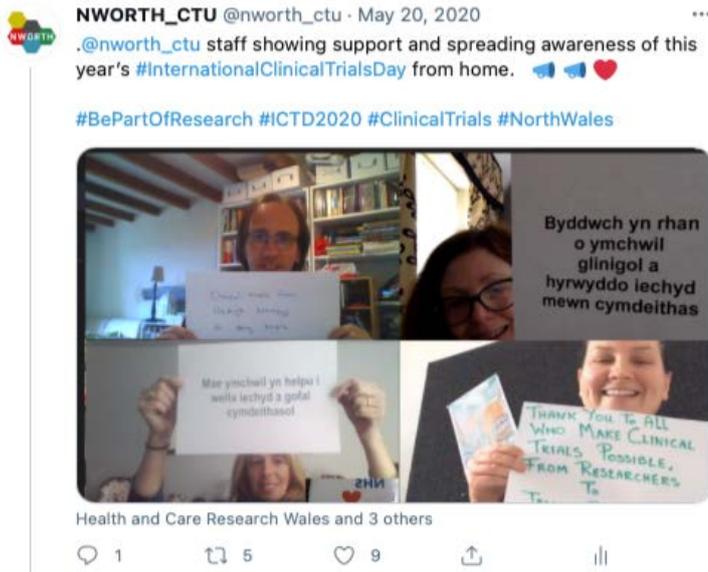


Dr Lynne Grundy, Associate Director, Research & Innovation, BCUHB said,

“ It has been an honour to be a part of the Community of Scholars development, working with colleagues from BCUHB and Bangor University. I was delighted to be part of the CoS launch, and I know it will be a great resource for novice and experienced researchers in North Wales in the future.”

If you have any questions then please get in touch with Dr Karolina Rusiak, Community of Scholars Facilitator, at cos.facilitator@bangor.ac.uk





North Wales Organisation for Randomised Trials in Health & Social Care (NWORDH)

NWORDH Clinical Trials Unit is proud to conduct clinical trials and studies of complex interventions to improve the health and well-being of the people of Wales and beyond. Our team enjoys the engagement in community and research related events, which can be seen on our social media.

nworth-ctu.bangor.ac.uk



Dissemination and Engagement:

It has been another year full of promotional activity and engagement, (albeit virtually).

Unfortunately, a number of planned face-to-face events and activities had to be cancelled due to COVID but we shifted our emphasis and participated virtually in the following campaigns:

- International Clinical Trials Day - May 2020
- Health and Care Research Wales Conference 2020 - October 2020
- RDCS North and Mid Wales - Webinar: Introduction to RfPPB - October 2020
- Promoting Health and Care Research Wales Annual Report - November
- UKCRC CTU Network informing public that 60% of registered CTUs are involved in COVID-19 research

In 2020-21, we had 106,077 impressions on Twitter and 1,272 engagements. We tweeted 230 times and gained 49 followers.

NWORDH looks forward to the year ahead, when we hope to be able to run some face-to-face activities rather than running all activities via virtual platforms.

CONCLUSION

This report has demonstrated that despite the challenges of the COVID pandemic, and significant knock-on effects to the research landscape, the NWORD team continued to be proactive and solution-focused in terms of adapting and maintaining our high standards of delivery.

Staff adapted to working from home full-time and juggled the number of pressures this unexpected crisis served up whilst consistently delivering to our usual high standards. The successes and highlights captured in this report are a testament to the team's professionalism and resilience in the face of crisis.

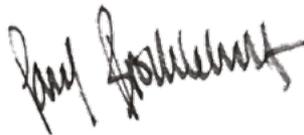
It is difficult to predict how the research landscape will look this time next year, but we hope that NWORD will continue to have adapted and recovered from the effects of the pandemic and will be building further on our success to date.

Our response to the pandemic has resulted in different ways of working and new ways of doing things, many of which have been beneficial and will remain.

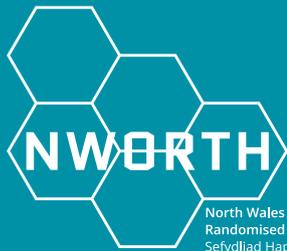
With the team's commitment to our mission, our consistently high success rate in grant capture, together with our responsive and agile approach to collaborations, we can be confident that we will continue to enjoy much repeat business delivering research with impact for all.

Special thanks are due to all members of PARC-Bangor who contribute such a vast and varied amount of expertise to the Unit. All those who have given their time to help develop the Community of Scholars podcasts and resources are deserving of particular thanks this year and we look forward to being able to launch these valuable resources in the not-too-distant future.

NWORD looks forward to the year ahead, when we will build upon our work to date and continue to provide outstanding input to quality research studies which will have positive impacts for the people of Wales and beyond.



Professor Paul Brocklehurst
Director of NWORD Clinical Trials Unit



North Wales Organisation for
Randomised Trials in Health & Social Care
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