

## RDS South Central Newsletter

Issue 4, Oct 2018

### Welcome from our new Director, Dr Issy Reading



In many ways, the retreat epitomises what the RDS is all about: collaborative working, both across our staff and with researchers; giving free support and advice from our specific methodological expertise and our researcher experiences; working as a multidisciplinary team; reaching out to a wide variety of researchers at different stages of their research journey; and enabling researchers, many of whom fit research in around their busy day job, to have the time and opportunity to consider and shape their ideas in more depth. I've come back energised and I look forward to hearing about how these research groups take their work forward from here.

Here in RDS SC, situated across our three sites in Oxford, Portsmouth and Southampton, we are delighted to be continuing our support for the regional health and social care research community through the renewal of our service from 2018-2023. We will continue to strive to provide the high quality support and advice that I've already described, through collaboration and multidisciplinary working.

I am honoured to be taking over as director. Prof. Mark Mullee has established RDS South Central over the last 10 years as a knowledgeable, constructive and approachable team, and I intend to continue in this tradition. I encourage researchers across our region to make use of us. We look forward to hearing from you!

**R**ecently I attended the National RDS Grant Development and Writing Retreat. This is a 3-day event, held in Canterbury this year, where advisers from the 10 regional RDS teams gather together to work with teams of health and social care researchers from around the country to develop their research ideas and begin (or even finish!) writing high quality research funding applications destined for open, national, peer-reviewed funding programmes.

### Contact Us

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## PPI Outreach Event at Southampton Mela festival



The Southampton Mela Festival is a long-standing summer highlight in Southampton's events calendar – now in its 16th year, showcasing the city's rich diversity and wide cultural histories. Celebrations include a wide range of music and dance styles from around the world including South Asia, Indian Classical, Bollywood, folk, world music, flamenco and bhangra, plus great activities for families, international food and market stalls and a friendly atmosphere.

The Wessex Public Involvement Network (PIN) Diversity Task and finish group, which is co-lead by RDS Public Involvement advisor Megan Barlow-Pay, attended the festival to do some outreach activities on behalf of the PIN, alongside a wider Southampton university outreach stall organised by the [Community Health & Wellbeing hub](#).

The team were in the process of applying for a small pot of money, to support a more sustainable programme of outreach activities in Southampton with the aim of improving diversity in PPI activities, supporting a reduction in

inequalities in involvement, and ultimately improving the health and wellbeing of marginalised groups.

Families joined the team on a stall making slime for kids, with a range of activities and fun facts about microbes and snot, which was hugely popular! During these activities the team were able to engage with parents and guardians, chatting to them about their communities and the barriers they perceive in becoming involved in research.

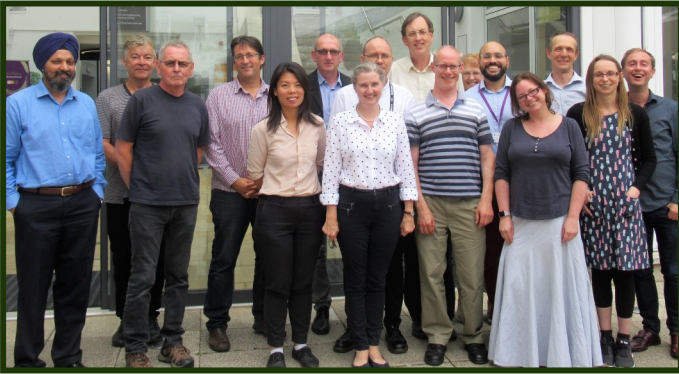
The outreach event was a huge success, and the team were able to chat to 118 people from a wide range of communities including people from Southampton's Afghan, Polish, transgender, Hindu, Muslim and Bulgarian communities (to name just a few). These conversations were crucial in helping shape significant elements of the bid for funding, which it is hoped will improve the quality and appropriateness of activities.

All in all the event was a huge success, lots of fun, and has contributed significant value to future Wessex PIN and RDS PPI activities.





## Success Story: Professor Jim Briggs University of Portsmouth



“Safer and more efficient vital signs monitoring to identify the deteriorating patient: An observational study towards deriving evidence-based protocols for patient surveillance on the general hospital ward.” That’s the full title of the grant we have just been awarded, but we call it simply “frequency of obs” or “FOBS”.

The NIHR HS&DR programme is funding the universities of Portsmouth, Oxford and Southampton plus Portsmouth Hospitals for 2½ years to do the study, which will attempt to answer the question of how frequently nurses should take vital sign observations (pulse, temperature, blood pressure, etc.) of patients on general hospital wards. Current practice is based on much expert opinion, but supported by little empirical evidence.

Observing a patient too often can be an imposition on the patient, potentially interfering

with rest and sleep that are important to recovery, as well as using nurses’ time that might be better used elsewhere. Failing to observe a patient often enough may put the patient at risk because important changes in their clinical condition could be missed. The project aims to identify the correct balance.

The research will analyse vital signs observation data from general wards at Portsmouth and Oxford hospitals. Both hospitals use electronic systems to obtain and score the data and calculate an early warning score to identify clinically important change in a patient’s condition.

Part of the study will also assess the workload implications on nurses. We intend to measure how long they typically spend on taking vital signs observations and performing any follow-up action that is needed. Stakeholders including patients, nurses and doctors will also be consulted, particularly about the factors that influence current practice.

The project team is a large one, but we involved RDS at a very early stage and they have advised us at several steps in the process. Most valuable was the feedback on drafts of the original application and making sure that we addressed all the issues that the funding panel would look at when assessing the proposal.

## Successful RfPB event held in Portsmouth

**O**n 13th September 2018 the Portsmouth RDS team held a free event for researchers interested in applying to the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) funding stream. Thirty-one attendees from the South Central region and beyond attended to find out more about the programme, ask questions and discuss their research proposals.

Ben Morgan, Assistant Director of the RfPB programme presented an overview of the programme, explained the application process

and funding limitations and gave examples of funded projects.

Next, Prof Chris Fife-Shaw, Chair of RfPB South East and South Central Panel, talked about what makes a good funding application, things to consider, possible reasons for failure and examples of feedback from the panel to the applicants. Then, RDS South Central PPI Adviser, Megan Barlow-Pay, gave a presentation on what PPI is, why it is important and what is expected in an NIHR application.



Finally we heard the experiences of Dr Kinda Ibrahim, a Research Fellow and successful RfPB applicant, who gave a reflective presentation on her journey of working with RDS while developing her application and tips for those starting out.

The morning was rounded off with a question and answer session where attendees had the opportunity to question our expert panel Ben Morgan, Professor Chris Fife-Schaw and

Ramnath Elaswarapu (RfPB Programme Manager).

In the afternoon, researchers who wished to discuss a proposal were allocated to one-to-one sessions with the RfPB representatives, RDS advisers and PPI officers, where they had the opportunity to get individual feedback. The event was supported by the University of Portsmouth 'Health & Wellbeing' Research Theme and the feedback from the attendees was very positive.

## Dates for your Diary: Pre-Submission Review Panel

**T**he NIHR RDS South Central Pre-Submission Review Panel is an innovative service that enables researchers to submit their draft health and social care grant application for review by a panel of experienced methodologists, clinicians and a lay representative, who collectively critique the strengths and weaknesses of the application.

The next panel will take place on Wednesday 14th November 2018. In order to allow time for review, the deadline for receiving a draft application is **9 am on Monday 5th November 2018**. The draft application will need to be **submitted on the application form for your intended funding stream**.

**Deadline for draft:**

**Monday 5th Nov 2018 (9 am)**

**Panel:**

**Wednesday 14th November 2018**

To find out more about how a Pre-Submission Review Panel could enhance your application, and/or to submit your project for review, please contact: Phil Saunders at [phillip.saunders@dph.ox.ac.uk](mailto:phillip.saunders@dph.ox.ac.uk)