

£50 million to tackle health inequalities through research

- 50 million awarded to 13 local authorities across the UK – from Aberdeen to Plymouth – to tackle inequalities and improve the health of the public
- Part of the government's commitment to boost growth, level up the health of the nation and empower people to live healthier and longer lives, regardless of their background or where they live

People set to benefit from a £50 million research boost to tackle health inequalities in local areas and improve health outcomes across the country.

The significant investment, overseen by the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR), will enable 13 local authorities to set up pioneering Health Determinants Research Collaborations (HDRCs) between with experts and academics to address knowledge gaps in local areas.

This will enable new high-quality research into the local challenges affecting people's health – such as facilitating research to better understand and introduce interventions to help with childhood obesity, Covid recovery, mental wellbeing and drug use.

Local authorities up and down the UK are being awarded funding – from Plymouth and London to Newcastle and Aberdeen – to ensure health disparities are being addressed across the board.

This forms a key part of the government's Plan for Patients by supporting people to stay well and within the community, easing pressure on health and care services and enabling people to access the care they need, when they need it.

Minister of State for Health, Robert Jenrick, said:

The pandemic shone a light on the stark health inequalities that exist across the country – we are committed to levelling up the health of the nation.

This funding will drive progress to address health challenges locally, particularly in the places and communities most affected by ill health such as high levels of obesity, drug use and poor mental health.

Everyone should be able to live long, healthy lives regardless of their background and where they live, and this new research will help us deliver on our ambition.

This is the first time funding for research into health disparities has been

given to local authorities for them to lead on innovative new projects within their communities, signalling the government's commitment to levelling up.

Every collaboration will be set up in partnership between universities and local government, capitalising on the world-leading experience and skills of the academic community. This will support the development of better data and evidence to inform local decisions to improve people's health and reduce variations in healthy life expectancy between rich and poor.

The funding will also help to stimulate economic growth across the country – particularly in some of the most deprived areas – by creating new jobs within research, as well as identifying local solutions to address some of the key challenges facing our society such as obesity and poor mental wellbeing.

Professor Lucy Chappell, NIHR Chief Executive Officer, said:

Millions of people living in Britain's towns, cities and regions face a huge range of public health challenges, made even more acute during the Covid pandemic. Thanks to NIHR this vitally needed research funding will provide a foundation to galvanise local authorities' capacity and capability to conduct high-quality research.

I'm always personally struck by how people working in local government have the added advantage of knowing their local areas and communities. This investment will equip them to embed a lasting legacy of research culture to help local populations take huge steps forward in tackling health inequalities.

Professor Brian Ferguson, Director of the NIHR Public Health Research Programme, said:

Many people living in communities across the country are facing major challenges that are impacting on their health. Our newly launched HDRCs will serve as nationally recognised centres of excellence, boosting local government's ability to tackle these challenges by enabling breathing space to become more research active.

This is a hugely important step forward in one of NIHR's key aims to help local government develop research that improves health and wellbeing. By focusing on the wider determinants of health such as employment, housing, education and the physical environment, the areas we are supporting have a tremendous opportunity to make a lasting impact on health inequalities and wider deprivation.

Professor Jim McManus, President of the UK Association of Directors of Public Health, said:

We know that health inequalities are one of the major barriers facing communities the length and breadth of the country, especially for disadvantaged groups and areas.

HDRCs will help drive the research culture within local government, building on the local knowledge that authorities already have and enable what is being done to be more readily researched and evaluated to make a difference to local people.

In addition to the research funding, staff working across the health and social care sector will be better equipped to tackle health inequalities from today, following the publication of a new e-learning resource developed by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and Health Education England (HEE).

The free-to-access module brings together bite-size learning on what health inequalities are, as well as the actions and interventions that frontline staff, leaders, and commissioners can take to address them in their day-to-day work.

It has already been proven to give users a deep understanding of health inequalities and how they can be tackled, helping to improve quality of life while reducing costs to the NHS and benefitting the wider economy.

- The HDRCs formally commenced on 1 October 2022, with three of the 13 undertaking additional developmental work to enable HDRC status by 1 October 2023.
- This funding is from existing funding routes devoted to research.
- Funded HDRCs:
 - Tower Hamlets Council
 - Newcastle City Council
 - Doncaster Council
 - Aberdeen City Council
 - City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
 - Plymouth City Council
 - Gateshead Council
 - Blackpool Council
 - Coventry City Council
 - Middlesbrough Council and Redcar & Cleveland Council **
 - The London Borough of Lambeth
 - Medway Council **
 - Islington Council **
- ** these three areas are receiving development award funding during 2022/23 with a view to them becoming full HDRCs in 2023/24.
- The Health Disparities and Health Inequalities resource complements the 30 plus existing modules within the All Our Health programme, covering a range of public health topics including Cardiovascular Disease Prevention, Childhood Obesity and Air Pollution.
- For more information and to access the latest resource in the All Our Health collection, please select the Health Disparities and Health Inequalities session on the [All Our Health eLearning page](#) or visit

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