

# **Qualitative Methods in Implementation Research (QMIR) Symposium 2023**

Woburn House, London  
23-24 March 2023

Hosted by **NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC)**  
**North Thames (NT) and North East North Cumbria (NENC)**

## Contents

<b>Welcome.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>QMIR 2022/2023 Symposium .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>NIHR ARCs NENC and NT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Implementation Research Agendas .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Important information about the event .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Plenary .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Insight Discussion .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Critical Discussion .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Workshops.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Poster presentations .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Symposium Programme.....</b>	<b>10</b>

# Welcome

A very warm welcome to the **Qualitative methods in implementation research (Q-MIR) Symposium 2022/2023**. This is a major event to explore theory-informed qualitative research in implementation research, and the event is co-hosted by ARC North East and North Cumbria (ARC NENC) and ARC North Thames (ARC NT).

**Q-MIR 2022/2023** brings together researchers from ARC NENC, ARC NT, national and international groups to discuss current opportunities and challenges in qualitative implementation research, build a community and network across the group, share practice and showcase research. This event began with **online plenary presentations** in a [webinar](#) which took place on **2 November 2022**. We were delighted to welcome Prof. Anne MacFarlane and Dr. Cory Bradley for a discussion about the ways that qualitative methods make possible discovery research around implementation processes. In the presentations Prof. MacFarlane and Dr. Bradley shared important insights from their own research journeys as implementation researchers.

On **23-24 March 2023**, we welcome you to the Symposium, taking place at Woburn House, in Bloomsbury, Central London.

## Symposium overview:

The Symposium opens with a welcome from Prof. Carl May and plenary from Prof. Tracy Finch and Prof. Tim Rapley on *Challenges and opportunities for qualitative methods in implementation research* and closes with a panel discussion chaired by Prof. Annette Boaz on *Future directions for qualitative implementation research*. We are glad to be welcoming invited speakers for an insight session chaired by Prof. Fiona Stevenson showcasing *Innovation for implementation research in practice and policy*.

Workshops will be led by Prof. Finch, Prof. Rapley, Prof. Stevenson, Prof. Boaz and Prof. May across the two days of the Symposium. Topics include *Theory-informed implementation research*; *Applied methods using Normalisation Process Theory*; *Practice-based implementation research*; and *Policy-based implementation research*. We are excited to be bringing this community together with several networking opportunities available throughout the Symposium and we are hosting a poster tour during the drink's reception on the first evening.

This booklet contains further information about the day, including the full programme, keynote information, oral and poster presentation details, information on the organising committee and other details about the event and venue.

# QMIR 2022/2023 Symposium

**Convenors: Prof. Annette Boaz, Prof. Tracy Finch, Prof. Carl May, Prof. Tim Rapley, and Prof. Fiona Stevenson**



**Annette** is Professor in the Department of Health Services Research and Policy at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Annette has more than 25 years of experience in supporting the use of evidence across a range of policy domains. Annette was part of one of the largest UK investments in the evidence use landscape, the ESRC Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice and have undertaken an international leadership role in promoting the use of evidence. Annette is a Founding Editor of the International Journal Evidence & Policy and have recently published a book on evidence use: 'What Works Now.'

With Kathryn Oliver, Annette leads Transforming Evidence, an international initiative designed to support the use of research evidence in different policy fields and contexts. Annette's particular research interest in stakeholder involvement, the role of partnerships in promoting research use, implementation science and service improvement. Annette has worked in the UK Department of Health and the Government Office for Science. Annette is a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and a member of the WHO European Advisory Committee on Health Research.



**Tracy** is Professor of Healthcare & Implementation Science in the Department of Nursing, Midwifery & Health, having joined Northumbria University in November 2017. Tracy has a background in health psychology, with broad experience in teaching and research. She has built her academic career in the UK with appointments at Manchester University & Newcastle University, after completing her PhD in 1999, from Deakin University, Australia.

Tracy's research focuses on the social, psychological and organisational aspects of implementing new interventions in health and wellbeing. Her research interests include applied health research (qualitative/mixed methods) in relation to a broad range of health issues, including mental health, intervention and services for older people, patient safety systems, health care experiences, and e-health interventions.

Tracy is known for her work in implementation science, most notably Normalization Process Theory (NPT), of which she is co-developer. This work includes applying theoretical perspectives and novel research methodologies to understand and shape the processes of healthcare improvement through implementation of changes in practice; development and application of theory based tools and assessment instruments to support non-academic users conducting implementation work in practice settings; and development of qualitative and mixed methods process evaluation methodology in trials of therapeutic and healthcare delivery interventions.



**Carl** is Professor of Medical Sociology in the Faculty of Public Health and Policy at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Carl is also the Theme Lead for the Lead of the Innovation and Implementation Science research theme in NIHR ARC NT.

Carl is a medical sociologist and implementation scientist with a wide range of research interests across the sociology of health technologies and human relations. His research examines how interactions between professionals and patients are shaped by clinical knowledge, technique and technology, and how new knowledge, techniques and technologies are implemented in health care organisations.



**Tim** is a medical sociologist with an interest in social studies of medical and social care work, research and practice. He is Deputy Theme Lead, Enabling Methodologies, North East & North Cumbria Applied Research Collaboration

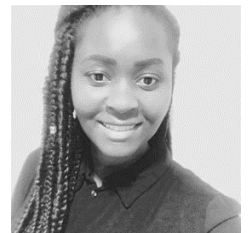
Tim undertakes detailed empirical studies that seek to understand the everyday, taken-for-granted, aspects of medical, health and social care work. A focus on what people actually do, as opposed to only what they think they do, or they tell you they do, can offer unique, practical and tailored solutions. His work focuses on three substantive areas: the implementation of care, the organisation of care and social studies of qualitative research.



**Fiona** is Professor of Medical Sociology and Head of the Department of Primary Care and Population Health at University College London. Fiona is also the Deputy Theme Lead of the Innovation and Implementation Science research theme in NIHR ARC NT.

Fiona's expertise is in qualitative research and her particular research interests are the construction of decision-making about medical care; the impact of complex interventions, technology and treatment adherence on communication between health care professionals and patients; the implementation of research findings into practice and patient and public involvement in medical research and education.

**Organising committee: Prof. Angela Harden, Dr. Silvie Cooper, Dr. Harpreet Kaur Sihre, Dr. Fran Zanatta and Sharlene Mutyasira**



# NIHR ARCs NENC and NT

## Implementation Research Agendas

### *ARC NENC*

#### **How do we use research and knowledge to improve health and care?**

Our work within this theme is based on the Science of Knowledge Implementation and Mobilisation (SKIM). SKIM helps us to use research evidence – and other knowledge – to improve health and social care practice and policy in the North East and North Cumbria. Our team works collaboratively across the ARC NENC, and our work falls broadly into three areas:

- Helping colleagues and partners to understand how their knowledge is currently mobilised (used)
- Generating new knowledge about how mobilisation can be improved
- Applying learning from the work of SKIM to evaluate and influence activity across the ARC.

#### **Our SKIM work:**

Our SKIM work draws on theory-based approaches from implementation science and knowledge mobilisation. We work to co-develop new, applied versions of these tools in partnership with academics, practitioners, and service users so that they can be used in society. Many SKIM approaches are not currently 'fit for purpose' for health and social care practitioners who are innovating care and service provision in their fields. Our work will aim to improve this, by creating structures for finding, sharing and enhancing our collective knowledge. This will include looking at how we can use service-users' contributions to make improvements to health and social care provision.

#### **Working with other ARCs**

We are a member of an emerging Cross-ARC Improvement/Implementation Science Theme Lead Network. As part of this network, we share relevant projects, particularly related to COVID-19, and look for future opportunities to develop new projects together.

### *ARC NT*

Our innovation and implementation science research aims to evaluate new models of care, digital technologies and approaches to improving health system performance. We want to improve implementation in diverse settings, provide frameworks and tools for practitioners and reduce the delay between innovation and putting it into everyday practice. This work supports research across all our themes. Through this theme ARC NT aims to make a major contribution to understanding, planning and evaluating implementation processes through which evidence and innovations are translated into practice. We build mutual understanding between providers, users and researchers, and develop methodological and explanatory models that are framed around real-world conditions.

Our team and approach will apply usable knowledge about the dynamics of adoption, implementation and sustainability to a range of different contexts. We have assembled a community of practice who possess internationally acknowledged methodological, conceptual and clinical expertise. and who can rise to the challenges of socio-technical transformation and system restructuring in health and care over the next five years.

# Important information about the event

## Event aims

To bring together researchers from ARC NENC, ARC NT, and beyond (national and international) to discuss current opportunities and challenges in qualitative implementation research, build a community and network across the group, share practice, and showcase research.

## Twitter and websites

Follow us on Twitter **@arc\_nt** and tweet about today's event using **#QMIR2023**.

For more information, please visit: <https://arc-nenc.nihr.ac.uk/our-research-themes/knowledge/> and <https://www.arc-nt.nihr.ac.uk/>.

## Photography and recording

Photographs will be taken throughout the day. The plenary, insight and critical discussions will be recorded but not the audience or workshops. If you do not want any photographs of you to be used by us, or have any questions about their future use, please speak to one of the committee members (See page 3).

## Acknowledgements

This event was supported by the National Institute for Health and Care Research ARC North Thames. The views expressed are those of the attendees and presenters and not necessarily those of the National Institute for Health and Care Research or the Department of Health and Social Care.

Thank you to all the staff at Woburn House, London.

## Feedback

Please scan this QR code to link to an evaluation questionnaire at the end of the event. We would be grateful if you are able to complete this questionnaire to provide us with feedback about the Symposium.





# Plenary

**Presentation title:** *Thinking with qualitative research in implementation science.*

**Speakers:** Prof. Tracy Finch and Prof. Tim Rapley (Northumbria University)

## Abstract

Qualitative methods are ideally positioned to advance our understanding of implementation processes, mechanisms, and outcomes. In implementation research, qualitative approaches allow depth of exploration, and development of explanation. As implementation science continues to evolve, with increasingly sophisticated research designs for studying implementation 'at scale' and the proliferation of taxonomies and frameworks, considering the place and potential for qualitative methods in implementation research is timely. We do not need special qualitative methods for implementation science; but we can develop innovative thinking and resources. This talk will explore how we can advance implementation research through qualitative work.

## Insight Discussion

***Innovative qualitative implementation research for practice and policy***

**Chair:** Prof. Fiona Stevenson (UCL)

**Speakers:** Dr. Sarah Beardon (UCL) - ***Implementing Health Justice Partnerships: Comparative Case Study Design and Qualitative Analysis.***

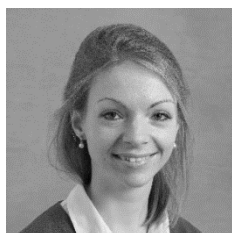
Dr. Kristian Hudson (Improvement Academy, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) - ***Rapid, relevant and responsive - Evolving how we evaluate implementation.***

Dr. Charitini Stavropoulou (City, University of London) - ***We have more pilots than British Airways! The role of pilot studies in mobilising evidence for the spread of innovation in the English NHS.***

## Overview

In this session chaired by Prof. Stevenson, we will hear from researchers working across different practice and policy settings to understand implementation processes and drawing on novel and innovative qualitative methods in this process. Each presenter will share insight from their research before a panel discussion with questions from the chair and audience.

## Biographies:

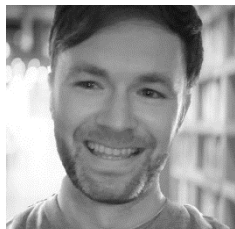


**Sarah** is Senior Research Fellow in Health Justice Research and Policy at the UCL Faculty of Laws. Sarah's work focusses on health-justice partnerships, in which welfare rights advice services are integrated with patient care. These partnerships provide assistance for patients with social welfare legal issues, such as welfare benefits, debt, housing, and employment. They provide an integrated response to complex needs, recognising the close links between social justice and health.

Sarah's role supports the national strategy for health-justice partnership, which aims to increase awareness and action on health justice



partnerships across the country. Her work includes undertaking research, delivering education and events, developing information resources, and building a professional network. She completed her PhD in 2022, undertaking research on the implementation of health justice partnerships. Sarah is an interdisciplinary researcher with wider interests in health inequalities, social determinants of health and delivery of healthcare services.



**Kristian** is an implementation specialist with experience of applying implementation science theories, models and frameworks in both school and healthcare settings. Kristian also has clinical experience which he obtained while working as an assistant psychologist in the NHS along with experience of working in the private sector. For his Doctoral thesis, Kristian spent three years working with a steering group responsible for implementing mindfulness across 320 schools in Cumbria. Within his current role at the Yorkshire and Humber Improvement Academy Kristian provides implementation support to the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Yorkshire and Humber (YHARC). There are several skills he offers including implementation training, coaching and action learning sets to help researchers and clinical staff optimise their intervention design for implementation success and prepare for, roll out and evaluate implementation. He has been particularly interested in working with NHS healthcare professionals, researchers, and policy makers to generate action orientated knowledge to complement the current academic implementation knowledge present in the literature. Kristian ran a monthly podcast last year where he talks to implementation specialists and researchers around the world.



**Charitini** is a Reader in Health Services Research in the School of Health and Psychological Sciences and at City, University of London. She works in the area of Health Economics with applications to health services research. As a co-director of the [Centre for Healthcare Innovation Research](#) she is interested in understanding the barriers and facilitators in embedding innovation in healthcare.

## Critical Discussion

### *Future directions for qualitative implementation research*

**Chair:** Prof. Annette Boaz (LSHTM)

**Speakers:** Prof. Fiona Stevenson (UCL), Prof. Tim Rapley (Northumbria University), Prof. Tracy Finch (Northumbria University), Prof. Carl May (LSHTM)

### **Overview**

Bringing together leaders in the field of implementation research, we critique the contribution of qualitative approaches to this landscape and consider future directions for furthering innovations in theory and frameworks, methods and translation from implementation research into policy and practice.

# Workshops

<p><b>Workshop 1: Theory</b></p> <p><b><i>How might theories and frameworks help us design qualitative implementation research?</i></b></p> <p>Implementation theories and frameworks can be useful across all aspects of qualitative study design (aims, design, data collection, analysis). Whilst it can be difficult to know where to start, there is much scope for creativity and innovation in combining theories and methods. Through practical exercises, we will use an implementation theory (NPT) and a determinants framework (CFIR) to explore how these might make different but complementary contributions to qualitative implementation research. We will aim to co-develop a small number of 'guiding principles' for theory informed qualitative design.</p> <p><i>Speakers and facilitators: Tracy Finch, Tim Rapley and Leah Bührmann</i></p> <p><i>UUK Boardroom</i></p>	<p><b>Workshop 2: Applied Methods</b></p> <p><b><i>Explaining implementation processes using qualitative methods</i></b></p> <p>How do we explain the different factors that shape the outcomes of innovations in the organization and delivery of health and social care? Typically, we might use one of the many frameworks, models or theories that circulate in the health services research and implementation science fields. However, working with these approaches often leads to description rather than explanation. In this workshop we will use studies that use normalization process theory as examples to present a simple model of explanation-building through qualitative research. Our aim here is to show how qualitative research can add to the theoretical foundations of a study or evaluation and build better explanations of implementation outcomes.</p> <p><i>Speakers and facilitators: Carl May and Alice Hillis</i></p> <p><i>Foster and Bloomsbury Room</i></p>
<p><b>Workshop 3: Practice</b></p> <p><b><i>Learning from implementation of a digital intervention for management of long covid</i></b></p> <p>This workshop will start with an overview of implementation into secondary and community care of a digital intervention for the management of long covid during the covid-19 pandemic. The analysis is organised according to the main tenants of normalization process theory (NPT). Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their own work in relation to implementation during and outside of the pandemic. We will consider how learning can be used to identify key aspects of implementation and how this learning can be applied to support the normalization of interventions in future projects.</p> <p><i>Speakers and facilitators: Fiona Stevenson and Harpreet Kaur Sihre</i></p> <p><i>Woburn Hall</i></p>	<p><b>Workshop 4: Policy</b></p> <p><b><i>How can implementation research play a more active role in policy?</i></b></p> <p>This workshop will consider how different types of evidence are useful in shaping policy. It will focus in particular on how implementation research can be used alongside other forms of evidence. Using the experience of working within the Government Office for Science, Annette Boaz will consider how evidence is identified and collated to support policy development and what this means for subsequent implementation in practice. She will argue that we need to take implementation thinking way further back up stream to improve the likelihood of successful implementation.</p> <p><i>Speakers and facilitators: Annette Boaz and Fran Zanatta</i></p> <p><i>Foster and Bloomsbury Room</i></p>
<p><b>Workshop 5: Methods practical</b></p> <p><b><i>NPT in qualitative research – Using the NPT coding manual in practice</i></b></p> <p>Normalization Process Theory helps us to understand the ways that different mechanisms shape and motivate implementation processes. In practice, identifying and 'coding' NPT constructs in qualitative data can sometimes be challenging. The NPT coding manual was developed to provide guidance in identifying implementation contexts, characterising the mechanisms that drive implementation, and explaining their outcomes. In this workshop, we will introduce the manual and explore the ways that it can be used in practice in process evaluations and implementation research.</p> <p><i>Speakers and facilitators: Carl May, Anthony Gilbert, Melissa Girling, Alice Hillis and Tracy Finch</i></p> <p><i>Woburn Hall</i></p>	

# Poster presentations

1. *Implementing brief and low-intensity psychological interventions for children and young people: A rapid realist review*  
**Anna Roach, University College London**
  2. *A mixed-methods comparative case study evaluation of a Community Health and Wellbeing Worker pilot in three settings in England*  
**Andrew Riley, Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS FT**
  3. *Using NPT to understand implementation in complex interventions: Illustrations from the TANDEM and PETAL studies*  
**Liz Steed, Queen Mary, University of London**
  4. *Using NPT to analyse qualitative interviews conducted for the Evaluation of the Mental Health Navigators scheme*  
**Stephanie Bramley and Lois Armour, University of York**
  5. *Using co-design and NPT to develop an intervention to promote person-centred care in hospitals*  
**Melanie Handley, University of Hertfordshire**
  6. *Developing, optimising and implementing a blended digital self-management tReatmEnt for FatigUe in multiplE scLerosis (REFUEL-MS)*  
**Emma O'Connor, Kings College London**
  7. *Qualitative Methods in the Recovery Navigator Programme evaluation in North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System*  
**Domna Salonen, Newcastle University**
  8. *Exploring indicators of quality in rapid ethnographies that aim to inform quality improvement: A scoping review*  
**Stephanie Kumpunen, University College London**
- Actor – Directors - Parental engagement in early occupational and physiotherapy for infants with cerebral palsy via video calls*  
**Phill Harniess, University College London (display only)**

# Symposium Programme

Thursday 23 March 2023, 13:00 - 17:30

Time	Session and event	
13:00-13:45	<b>Registration, lunch, networking</b> <i>Sakura Cafe</i>	
<b>Session 1. Theory informed implementation research</b>		
13:45-14:00	<b>Welcome</b> <b>Professor Carl May</b> London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine <i>Tavistock Room</i>	
14:00-14:50	<b>Plenary: <i>Thinking with qualitative research in implementation science</i></b> <b>Professor Tim Rapley and Professor Tracy Finch</b> Northumbria University <i>Tavistock Room</i>	
14:50-15:05	<b>Refreshment break</b> <i>Tavistock Room</i>	
15:05-16:00	<b>Workshop 1. Theory</b> <b><i>How might theories and frameworks help us design qualitative implementation research?</i></b>  <i>Speakers and facilitators: Tracy Finch, Tim Rapley and Leah Bührmann</i>  <i>UUK Boardroom</i>	<b>Workshop 2. Applied Methods</b> <b><i>Explaining implementation processes using qualitative methods</i></b>  <i>Speakers and facilitators: Carl May and Alice Hillis</i>  <i>Franks and Bloomsbury Room</i>
16:00-17:30	<b>Drinks reception and networking</b> <i>Sakura Café</i>  <b>Poster showcase</b> <i>UUK Boardroom</i>	

**Friday 24 March 2023, 09:00-16:00**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Session</b>	
<b>09:00-09:20</b>	<b>Coffee, tea and networking</b> <i>Woburn House Foyer</i>	
<b>Session 2. Innovation for Implementation Research in Practice and Policy</b>		
<b>09:20-09:30</b>	<b>Welcome</b> <b>Professor Fiona Stevenson</b> , University College London <i>Woburn Hall</i>	
<b>09:30-11:00</b>	<b>Insight discussion: Innovative qualitative implementation research for practice and policy</b> <b>Chair:</b> Prof. Fiona Stevenson (UCL) <b>Speakers:</b> Dr. Sarah Beardon (UCL), Dr. Kristian Hudson (Improvement Academy, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust), Dr. Charitini Stavropoulou (City, University of London) <i>Woburn Hall</i>	
<b>11:00-11:15</b>	<b>Refreshment break</b> <i>Woburn House Foyer</i>	
<b>Session 3. Future directions in qualitative implementation research</b>		
<b>11:15-12:10</b>	<b>Workshop 3. Practice</b> <b><i>Learning from implementation of a digital intervention for management of long covid</i></b> <i>Speakers and facilitators: Fiona Stevenson and Harpreet Kaur Sihre</i> <i>Woburn Hall</i>	<b>Workshop 4. Policy</b> <b><i>How can implementation research play a more active role in policy?</i></b> <i>Speakers and facilitators: Annette Boaz and Fran Zanatta</i> <i>Franks and Bloomsbury Rooms</i>
<b>12:10-12:30</b>	<b>Refreshment break</b> <i>Woburn House Foyer</i>	
<b>12:30-13:30</b>	<b>Critical discussion: Future directions for qualitative implementation research</b> <b>Chair:</b> Prof. Annette Boaz (LSHTM) <b>Speakers:</b> Prof. Fiona Stevenson (UCL), Prof. Tim Rapley (Northumbria University), Prof. Tracy Finch (Northumbria University), Prof. Carl May (LSHTM) <i>Woburn Hall</i>	
<b>13:30-14:15</b>	<b>Lunch and networking</b> <i>Woburn House Foyer</i>	
<b>14:15-16:00</b>	<b>Workshop 5. Methods practical</b> <b><i>NPT in qualitative research – Using the NPT coding manual in practice</i></b> <i>Speakers and facilitators: Carl May, Anthony Gilbert, Melissa Girling, Alice Hillis and Tracy Finch</i> <i>Woburn Hall</i>	



