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# Newsletter

**CHSS**  
University of Kent

Centre for Health Services Studies

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## New challenges, new opportunities – NIHR Research Design Service looks ahead!

Professors Stephen Peckham and Tricia Wilson joined the Q&A panel at the NIHR RDS SE 'Looking Ahead' event on 31 October in London.

The day launched a new five-year contract for the service to support health and social researchers across the region.

*Read more on page 2*

# Excellence in health research

- 1 Professor Sally Kendall with the Greek Health Minister
- 2 The CHSS EPFC delegation: l-r Boniface Oyugi, Erica Gadsby, Tamsyn Eida, Olena Nizalova, Sally Kendall, Catherine Marchand, Rosa Vass and Nadine Hendrie
- 3 CHSS delegation dinner

# News and events round up

## Enthusiastic research community gathers for RDS SE ‘Looking ahead’ launch event



The successful and lively NIHR Research Design Service South East event on 31 October at NCVO in London launched a new five-year contract for this valuable service.

Ten regional Research Design Services are funded by the National Institute for Health Research.

Operating from hubs at CHSS in Kent and at the Universities of Brighton and Surrey, RDS SE experts advise NHS, public health and social care staff on developing proposals to apply for research funding.

Around 60 academics, researchers, Trust R&D staff, clinicians, allied health professionals and public shared a networking lunch. It was followed by presentations by guest speakers including CHSS Professors Stephen Peckham and Patricia Wilson. There were interactive workshops and discussions afterwards.

There was great energy and enthusiasm to share knowledge, experiences and ideas around health and social care research. The aim was to look ahead with a view to raising the level and quality of research activity in our region. Follow the Twitter dialogue using #RDSLlaunch.

The RDS SE plans to hold annual stakeholder events. To hear news about these future plans please join the RDS SE mailing list:

[www.rds-se.nihr.ac.uk/join-our-mailing-list](http://www.rds-se.nihr.ac.uk/join-our-mailing-list)

## ‘Vulnerability and Compassion: The role of Primary Care in Europe’ How to overcome the austerity period

### Research Assistant Nadine Hendrie reports on the 2018 EFPC Conference in Heraklion, Crete 24-25 September 2018

**Our large CHSS delegation included Conference Chair Professor Sally Kendall, Dr Erica Gadsby and Dr Olena Nizalova and members of the RISKIT-CJS team. Some of us spent time pre-conference absorbing the Cretan sights, sounds, sunshine and cuisine.**

Chair Professor Sally Kendall opened the conference and reminded us of the key themes of ‘vulnerability and compassion’. We were challenged to share experiences of policy, practice and research in primary care from our respective countries. It was a forum to discuss how primary care does and can respond to the vulnerable. How can we create person-centered, compassionate health care systems that strengthen our communities and the individuals and families we work with?

Our workshop, *Working differently for improved primary care for young people in a difficult financial climate*, showcased CHSS’ high-quality

research. Erica had the difficult task of connecting CHSS projects RISKIT-CJS, Go Golborne and EXCEPT in an interactive session. She achieved this by relating young people’s mental and physical health to a mix of economic, social and emotional problems that health professionals feel powerless to fix. Workshop participants were asked to re-imagine their role in improving young people’s health and wellbeing.

It was great to work together as a team and everyone did a good job. PhD student Boniface Oyugi delivered a seminar on his own work around quality of care, outcomes, and cost of free maternity policies globally. We all attended the session and we felt CHSS pride as he spoke!

Before returning to the UK the delegation had a memorable but VERY wavy swim together, topped off with a Cretan meal. It was a lovely and valuable few hours, getting to know each other a little better as friends and colleagues.



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# CHSS celebrates NHS at 70

Q&A event at Colyer Fergusson Building, University of Kent, Canterbury



**On 12 July 2018 more than 100 members of the public attended our celebratory event and panel discussion on the past, present and future of the NHS.**

A short reception beforehand in the Colyer Fergusson foyer gave attendees the chance for informal discussions and networking.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Karen Cox, opening the event, reflected on her own career in the NHS. She highlighted the importance of CHSS's evidence-based research to the future of the NHS. Karen spoke about the new Kent and Medway Medical School, and the exciting opportunities it offers for South East health care, and also for CHSS.

Our guest panellists then introduced themselves to the audience. They were Professor Sir Nick Black, (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), Professor Steve Smith, (Chair, East Kent Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) and Steve Innett, (CEO Healthwatch Kent). CHSS Director Professor Stephen Peckham took the Chair for the debate.

Rosie Duffield MP, was sadly unable to join the panel due to travel problems. However, she invited local residents to contact her about anything they had planned to ask.

Nick Black first gave a brief overview of the history of the NHS. He acknowledged its resounding success over the past 70 years, but said that the current system discourages innovation. He called for much better integration of its different parts.

These themes continued during a lively audience Q&A session covering a wide variety of topics. They included funding, prevention, NHS staff morale and, perhaps inevitably, the implications of Brexit.

The overwhelming message coming from the panel was that we need better NHS integration and much more support for innovation.

Stephen Peckham closed a fascinating evening by asking what we would take as good practice from NHS70 for the future, and asking the intriguing question of what we might be discussing at NHS 140!

He thanked the panellists and audience, and stressed the crucial need for parties to listen to each other and work together for the future of our NHS.



# CHSS research news

## CHSS and partners design Medical School teaching resources to aid future doctor/patient 'fit to work' discussions

CHSS is co-producing a set of learning resources for medical undergraduates in partnership with Public Health England (PHE) and other organisations. The resulting new knowledge, tools and techniques will improve future doctors' confidence to start conversations with patients around health and work and the 'fit note'.

PHE commissioned and funded this innovative project. The new resources will help doctors use the fit note as a practical advice system, as well as for certifying sickness.

Patients should feel better supported by health professionals and have greater understanding of the value and role of work to health and wellbeing.

The CHSS team comprises Professor Stephen Peckham (project lead), Dr Ferhana Hashem, Dr Catherine Marchand, Sabrena Jaswal, Dr Amanda Bates, Dr Lindsay Forbes and Dr Naren Srinivasan. University of Kent colleagues Dr Heejung Chung and Dr Ben Baumberg Geiger (SSPSSR), and Dr Peter Nicholls (Dean of KentHealth) are also involved.

CHSS is chairing an external steering panel including representatives from Health Education England, Medical Schools Council, Occupational Health Physicians and academics from other HEIs. Two medical undergraduates are patient and public involvement (PPI) representatives.

Ferhana said: 'this is a wonderful opportunity to co-create a collection of valuable online teaching resources, universally available to all UK medical schools. We want to improve the health and work dialogue between doctors of the future and patients'.



## PREDICTing risk for pregnant women with kidney disease

### Pregnancy-associated progression of chronic kidney disease: development of a clinical predictive tool



**Women with advanced CKD (chronic kidney disease) have high rates of all pregnancy complications which increase incrementally according to how severe their disease is. Around one in three suffers permanent additional kidney damage during or after pregnancy, and may need dialysis to survive. This is extremely challenging for a new mother and her family, and shortens life expectancy.**

At the moment, there is no reliable way to work out *which* women with kidney disease are likely to have pregnancy-associated disease progression. Current risk estimates for progression of pregnancy-associated CKD are based on a small study including pregnancies from up to 40 years ago. They do not reflect current practice nor allow accurate individual risk prediction.

Professor Chris Farmer is now working in collaboration with Dr Kate Bramham, Kings College, London and other research partners on a project funded by Kidney Research UK.



Together they are developing an online calculator to predict how much kidney function women with pre-existing disease are likely to lose in pregnancy. With the UK Renal Rare Diseases registry (RaDaR) and PreKid clinic, Toronto they will use data from from around 54,000 pregnancies complicated by CKD to develop this tool.

Women with CKD face stressful conflict between preserving kidney function and having a family. Recent Patient and Public Involvement work shows that the women view prediction of pregnancy outcomes as a research priority. The majority said that accurate information about risks to their kidneys would influence conception decisions.

The PREDICT tool will be validated externally in individual patient data from three population cohorts from the UK, Canada and Sweden. The research team are developing the predictive tool interface in partnership with patients and it will be available on the RaDaR (UK Renal Rare Diseases registry) website for clinicians and patients to use.

# Who cares for carers?

CHSS Research Assistant Dr Rasa Mikelyte has been working on a research project led by Professor Alisoun Milne of SSPSSR (School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Research). Rasa led on data analysis and project reporting.



Pioneering charity Carers FIRST supports people caring for a relative or friend who due to physical or mental illness, disability, frailty, or addiction cannot manage without support.

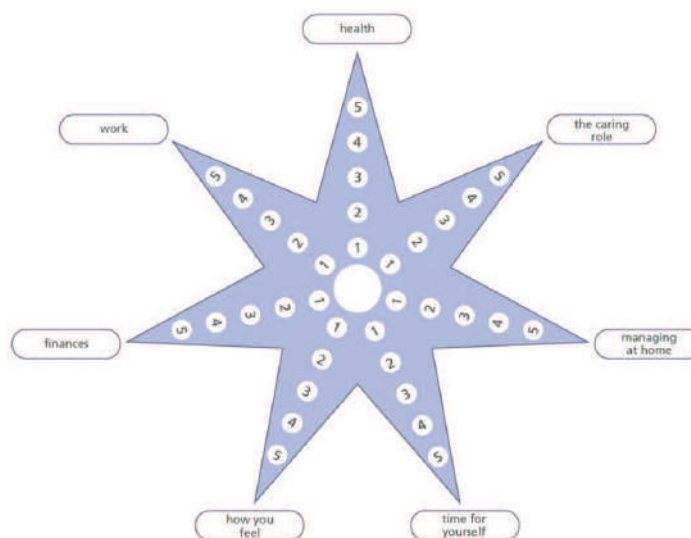
Carers FIRST routinely collects data to measure how it supports carers. For the past four years it has been using a tool called the 'Carers Outcome Star' to measure how carers coming into the service fare on the star's 'points' (see diagram).

The project built a case profile of carers on entry to the service using the Carers Star. After three months, a follow-up Carers Star was completed, which allowed Rasa to evaluate the impact of input by the service.

The study found that baseline Carers Star scores related to numerous demographic characteristics. For example, carers living in more deprived areas were likely to have lower scores on health, the caring role, managing at home, having time for themselves, feelings, finances and work.

Demographic factors alone did not predict carer outcomes, however. Carers FIRST worked equally well with a diverse range of carers and within varied care contexts.

## The Carers Star™



Carers Star™ © Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd  
 Authors: Sara Burns, Joy MacKeith and Amaragita Pearse  
[www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

The level of Carers First engagement with carers was related to the degree of improvement in outcomes.

Rasa said: 'our findings suggest that to achieve equality of outcomes, Carers FIRST needs resources to work more intensely with those carers having low initial scores on the Carers Star. We hope our reports will help show a clear impact of the valuable work of Carers FIRST and help secure the future commissioning of the service'.



## Researchers gather for three-day RDS Grant Development and Writing Retreat

**'It was great to have protected time among experts and to have discussions with other researchers – the retreat was invaluable' .**

Thirty researchers from all around the country attended the RDS national residential Grant Development and Writing Retreat held on 8-10 September at the University of Kent.

It was a chance for them to enjoy protected time working with RDS advisers and develop their ideas into funding proposals.

Guest speakers gave valuable advice and insight into all aspects of the grant application process, and there was plenty of time for networking and sharing experiences.

For more information about the Research Design Service and how it helps researchers, visit the RDS South East website: [www.rds-se.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.rds-se.nihr.ac.uk)



# CHSS people

## Ruth Adams, member of CHSS ‘Opening Doors to Research’, Public Engagement Group

Since 2015, Ruth has been a member of our CHSS Public Engagement Group ‘Opening Doors to Research’ (ODRG). Born in South Africa, she lived in Cape Town, came to England in her thirties and settled first in London before making Canterbury her home.

### Ruth tell us about your background; what brought you to Kent?

I have an undergraduate degree, a Masters in Psychology and a PhD in Health Science. I’ve spent a lot of my working life in Universities combining research, teaching and administration. My first job in an English University was with the University of East London where I worked part-time as a Research Assistant/Lecturer.

I really wanted a garden, so Kent seemed the ideal place! I moved to Dover in 2002, then got a job at Canterbury Christ Church University, lecturing in health promotion and public health. I then settled in Canterbury. I’m lucky to be in a beautiful City with two Universities. Students bring new ideas to a place, and generally are lovely!

### You are retired?

Yes. I loved my job but retired in 2014. I’ve joined the University of the Third Age (U3A). I think it’s important to keep learning all through life. Through U3A I became aware of public engagement in research and I then contacted Amanda (Bates) and joined ODRG.

### How has your experience been?

Very positive. It’s a welcoming group and very interesting. I feel we have all taken a lot from the experience. We have a very clear purpose, to offer views to researchers on public accessibility of research. We can discuss issues that might be difficult, such as ethics. Mostly it’s a chance for CHSS researchers to present their proposals to a very mixed audience. Some of us, myself included, have some research experience but many don’t. You can choose to get more deeply involved if you want to. Some people have been working on research summaries for the CHSS website. Sadly I was too busy to take on a steering group role I was offered on a new NIHR project.

### Does lack of experience affect meetings?

Personally, I feel it’s outsiders with a blank view who come up with the best comments. What’s been great is having training to help us to do what’s required, learning about research process and searching the literature. We are encouraged to suggest what we might like to know. It’s a fantastic opportunity!

### What do you bring to the CHSS ODRG? What are your main interests and are there any difficulties in being part of this group?

I have a bit of experience of looking at and commenting on research proposals. Working in academia has helped. I personally don’t want to get too close to certain research areas and generally I’m much more interested in health than in disease. One of my favourite areas is youth and adult homelessness. I’m passionately interested in health inequalities and how they transfer to different areas of life. I’m also interested in the work CHSS is doing around social prescribing and exercise and health.

### Other benefits of being involved?

It’s good to be kept updated with issues going on in healthcare and learning about integrated care. You can choose how involved to get. But we are all there to provide input to research. Meetings are nice, everyone is very friendly and the researchers are lovely, always happy to explain anything.

### What do you think is the value of PPI?

It is really important to ensure that research is understandable and isn’t seen as going on in ivory towers. More people should get involved in research in all ways. We all need to consider our health and have more of a role in something so fundamentally important to all our lives. I have never been a research participant, but would certainly consider it if I didn’t have so much else going on! I would recommend a group like this to anyone! We need a wide range of people. At the moment it’s quite female-dominated and it would be good to have a more diverse mix. Another important consideration is money, as researchers must demonstrate the value and public relevance of what they propose.



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### What do you enjoy when you’re not opening doors to research?

I love walking, and am a member of Canterbury Ramblers. I do circle dancing with the U3A which is great fun! Another thing I really love is volunteering for the University of Kent ‘BOING’ festival. I’ve done that for the past few years. I enjoy playing Bridge, films and opera. I treat myself to a London opera trip now and then. I enjoy travelling in Europe and try and fit in about three trips a year. My favourite place, without hesitation, is Italy. I love the food, the people, the cities and that very healthy Mediterranean lifestyle! Just what the doctor – and the researcher – ordered!

Also see page 7. If you would like to know more about Opening Doors to Research, please contact Amanda Bates: A.J.Bates@kent.ac.uk

# Public engagement and publications

## Celebrating our public research contributors



On 2 August CHSS held a special afternoon tea event to thank, and mark the contribution of, our wonderful 'Opening Doors to Research' Public Engagement Group (ODRG).

There was a great turnout, with tea, scones, cakes, drinks and healthy fruit organised by CHSS Patient Experience and Public Involvement Lead Amanda Bates. CHSS staff got together with around a dozen of our public members – all are volunteers giving time to support CHSS research (see CHSS people page 6).

CHSS Director Professor Stephen Peckham's opening thanks highlighted the vital role of the public as start and end points of health research. Social Sciences Faculty Director of Public Engagement, Professor Alex Stevens presented each member of the group with a certificate recognising their commitment and hard work.

### Clean Air Matters...

#### CHSS exhibit marries science with art

The Beane House of Art & Knowledge recently commissioned CHSS to produce an interactive piece for 'Breathing Canterbury', an exhibition highlighting Canterbury's air pollution problem from different perspectives. The Beane worked with CHSS and other local partners – including schools, the local environmental health department, and a knitting group to create awareness-raising exhibits.

Dr Ashley Mills and Professor Stephen Peckham designed print materials showing how air pollution adversely affects health, along with a computer programme for visitors to discover levels of pollution in their postcode area. This was the most visited exhibit!

### Clean Air Matters workshop

In the Summer, Ashley and Amanda Bates also ran a workshop for parents in Wincheap to raise awareness of air pollution in homes, on commuter routes and discuss safer routes to take in Canterbury. Keep an eye out for more workshops in the future.

### Join the Opening Doors group

If you are interested in joining our Opening Doors to Research Group, fill out our expression of interest form: [www.kent.ac.uk/chss/public/openingdoors.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/chss/public/openingdoors.html). Postal forms and accessible formats available on request.

For more information about ODRG and all our Public Engagement activity, see our webpages, or contact Amanda Bates: [A.J.Bates@kent.ac.uk](mailto:A.J.Bates@kent.ac.uk).



## Recent selected CHSS publications

Deave T, Kendall S, Lingam R, Day C, Goodenough T, Bailey E et al (2018) A study to evaluate the effectiveness of Best Beginnings' Baby Buddy phone app in England: a protocol paper. *Primary Health Care Research and Development* ISSN 1463-4236

Holdsworth L M, Gage H, Williams P & Butler C (2018) Adaptation of the Ambulatory and Home Care Record for collecting palliative care service utilization data from family carers in the UK: a pilot study. *Pilot and Feasibility Studies* 4 (141) pp 1-10

Oyugi B (2018) A facility-based study of women' satisfaction and perceived quality of reproductive and maternal health services in the Kenya output-based approach voucher program. *BMC Pregnancy and childbirth*.

Barker R (2018) *What does staff engagement mean in the NHS and why is it important?* BMJ Blogs 1620181605

Farmer C K, Patel L, Kilbride H, Stevens P E and Eaglestone G et al (2018) Dimethylarginines in older people – Symmetric Dimethylarginine (SDMA) is a stronger predictor of mortality risk than asymmetric dimethylarginine (ADMA) amongst older people with kidney disease. *Annals of Clinical Biochemistry* ISSN 1758-1001.

Bailey S (2018) Implementing new care models: learning from the Greater Manchester demonstrator pilot experience. *BMC Family Practice* 19 (89) (Full text available)

Barker R (2018) *The case for employee engagement in the NHS*. Point of Care Foundation (Full text available)

Norton E, Nizalova O & Murtazashvili I (2018) Does past unemployment experience explain the transition happiness gap? *Journal of Comparative Economics* ISSN 0147-5967

Abrahamson V & Wilson P M (2018) Positioning the six-month review in the recovery process post-stroke: The ideology of personal responsibility. *Health & Social Care in the Community* ISSN 0966-0410.

Spencer S, Dickinson J & Forbes L (2018) Occurrence, Risk Factors, Prognosis and Prevention of Swimming-Induced Pulmonary Oedema: a Systematic Review. *Sports Medicine – Open* 4 (43). ISSN 0112-1642. E-ISSN 1179-2035. (Full text available)

# CHSS staff news

Information about all CHSS staff is available on our website: [www.kent.ac.uk/chss/staff](http://www.kent.ac.uk/chss/staff)



## CHSS Awayday 2018

CHSS held its 2018 Awayday on 18 October at Canterbury Cricket Ground. Discussion centred on strategic direction and it was a chance to share knowledge and get to know each other better. Highlights included an address from Professor Chris Holland, Foundation Dean of Kent and Medway Medical School.

## Amanda's top Rankin!

CHSS Patient Experience and Public Involvement Lead Amanda Bates, has been involved in a great project challenging conventional media images of 'beauty'. She was photographed by Rankin the renowned photographer as part of the campaign.



Image: © Rankin 2018

## Cuddles for wellbeing

During September's Welcome Week, some of the CHSS' research and admin staff took advantage of baby animal cuddle wellbeing sessions organised for this year's new students! Ahh....



## Welcome to:

### Dr Simon Bailey Research Associate

Simon joined CHSS in October 2018. He will be providing research support to a new NIHR-funded study of GP team composition and will work with Stephen Peckham on projects for PRUComm (Department of Health Policy Research Unit in Commissioning).



### Dr Sabina Hulbert

**RDS SE Research Adviser**  
Sabina joins us one day a week working as an adviser for the RDS SE. She also works as an Academic Research Lead at Canterbury Christ Church University.



### Jennifer Priaux CHSS PhD Scholarship Student

Jennifer will study her PhD on 'Incorporating informed choice into economic evaluations of cancer screening'.



### Amanda Roberts Administration Assistant

Amanda, who has a background in nursing, joined us in October as a part-time CHSS Administration Assistant.



### Maren Sogstadt Visiting Academic

Maren is visiting CHSS from the Center for Care Research at the NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology). She is working with Professor Jenny Billings on integrated care research.



## Farewell!

We sadly said goodbye recently to **Dr David Lowery**, Research Fellow and **Paula Loader**, Secretarial Assistant. We wish them both all the best in their future (respectively) career and retirement.



## About CHSS

CHSS is a centre of research excellence which undertakes high quality research into a wide range of health systems and health services issues at local, national and international levels. CHSS also supports and advises health care staff to develop and undertake research projects. CHSS collaborates with a wide range of partners in Kent, the UK and in other countries to improve the links between research, policy and practice.

Please see the CHSS website for details of current and previous research and publications.

Details of current CHSS vacancies and studentships can be found at: [www.kent.ac.uk/chss/vacancies.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/chss/vacancies.html)

