



A guide to Kent Research Partnership's Community of Practice

What is a Community of Practice?

A Community of Practice (CoP) brings together people with different experiences and expertise around a shared interest in a particular topic. The aim is to consider issues from a range of perspectives and to come up with ways forward based on a diverse range of experience.

Following a series of networking events and prioritisation exercises, Kent Research Partnership launched our two Communities of Practices (CoPs) in June 2022: **Enhancing, diversifying and sustaining the social care workforce** and **Supporting people with complex needs throughout the lifespan**.

Our **Kent Research Partnership** CoPs are specifically research-focused and they are one of the key mechanisms that we are using to build research capacity and confidence in the adult social care workforce, in line with the wider objectives of the partnership. Our members include a range of social care professionals such as social workers, registered managers, and allied health professionals, people who care for others or draw on car and support themselves, and colleagues from academic and policy roles at universities and local and national organisations.

We use the CoPs to try to 'bridge the gap' between research and practice, so typical meetings include:

- Members or guest speakers sharing ideas for research projects
- Using the CoP members as a consultation forum to guide current research projects
- Sharing findings from recent studies relevant to the CoP theme
- Updates from the Research Fellows who are being funded by Kent Research Partnership to complete a research project aligned with the CoP themes

How do I join?

You are welcome to join either or both CoPs by emailing KentResearchPartnership@kent.ac.uk. You will then receive calendar invites for the CoP(s) you want to register for, and you will gain access to our online platform where members continue the discussions between CoP meetings. Both CoPs meet monthly via Zoom but there is no minimum commitment.

The meeting dates for 2025 are:

2025	Enhancing, diversifying and sustaining the social care workforce	Supporting people with complex needs throughout the lifespan
Jan	<p>Joint CoP – 15 January 2025 (12pm-1pm) Topic – New Partnership in Social Care & Next Steps with the Kent Research Partnership Speakers: - Professor Ann-Marie Towers (King’s College London) - Gina Walton (Kent County Council)</p> <p>An engaging discussion on the latest developments and next steps in social care research collaboration and capacity building.</p>	
Feb	<p>February 2025 12pm-1pm tba Care Workers from Abroad Guest Speaker: Dr Kalpa Kharicha Kalpa has over 25 years’ experience as a social science researcher, mostly gained at the Centre for Ageing Population Studies, Research Department of Primary Care & Population health, UCL, and recently applied in the third sector to inform evidence-based change.</p>	<p>11 February 2025 Better mealtime care for people living with dementia Guest Speaker: James Faraday James is a speech and language therapist, and dementia care researcher. His research focuses on making mealtimes better for people living with dementia, and helping care homes to engage in research. He has worked with experts by experience to create a range of resources, including animation, video and training course.</p>
March	<p>To be advised Dementia Care Co-ordinators Further details to be confirmed shortly</p>	<p>5 March 2025 12pm-1pm Kent, Surrey, Sussex Learning Disability CoP: How to run and sustain a vibrant CoP Speakers: Daniel Marsden (CCCU), Marina Russ (Kingston University), Sammy Lamb (Bemix) and Cathy Bernal (KMMS) The discussion will focus on the formation and history of the CoP briefly, before moving on to present an account of its current structure, communications and output, as well as the challenges to sustainability encountered along the way.</p>
April	<p>Joint CoP – 29 April 2025 Reality in the Research World Previous speakers will be invited back to provide updates on their CoP topics.</p>	
May	<p>Kent Research Partnership End of Project Event 14 May 2025 Darwin Conference Suite, University of Kent Details to be advised</p>	

Contact us

Please contact the team by emailing KentResearchPartnership@kent.ac.uk