**Role and Person Specification: NIHR ARC Thames Valley Theme Lead**

**Background**

The NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley (ARC OxTV) is a partnership of organisations involved in health, social care, and public health working together to improve health and care in our region. We bring together universities, NHS trusts, councils, charities, patients and public, industry partners, and other key stakeholders from across the region.

Our purpose is to conduct high-quality applied research that addresses pressing health and social care challenges. We focus on:

• **Applied research**: Solving practical problems and finding solutions to local and national health and social care priorities, as well as prevention of poor health.

• **Research into practice**: Working with Health Innovation Oxford and Thames Valley and other partners to translate beneficial research findings into practice.

• **Capacity building**: Increasing our region’s ability to conduct and implement inclusive applied research through training and knowledge sharing.

• **Collaboration**: Partnering locally and nationally to ensure our research addresses real-world needs and contributes to economic gains.

The NIHR has announced the new funding round of ARCs from 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2031. The ARC Thames Valley (note amended name) plans to apply for this funding opportunity with a more ambitious strategic vision. If successful, the next ARC will focus on building on our reputation for conducting high-quality applied research across population health, and health and social care settings, with a greater emphasis on translating research knowledge into adoption for real world impact.

Our vision is to ensure that in achieving our objectives, we promote exceptional, inclusive research that changes policy and practice. A core aspect of the ARC is to continue to drive the talent pipeline through capacity building across the continuum from research priority setting to implementation and impact on health and social care. We will achieve our priorities through a distinctive values framework attracting the right people, promoting the right culture, with an inclusion strategy and underpinning framework for action.

We will build on regional and national collaborations from the current ARC, working with key partners including Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), Health Innovation Networks (HINs), other NIHR infrastructure, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England. A core underpinning of the ARCs is to promote evidence to action approach, prioritising knowledge mobilisation and the implementation of research-based evidence to support the national scaling of effective interventions and models of care.

Read more about the funding call [here.](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/nihr-applied-research-collaborations-arcs-2024-guidance-applicants)

**Opportunity**

The ARC OxTV is inviting expressions of interest for the role of **‘Theme Lead’** as part of the application for an NIHR ARC Thames Valey for the period April 2026 to March 2031. Theme Leads will play a key leadership role, shaping and managing a specific research theme if the application is successful. Theme leads will act as key drivers of the ARCs overall strategic objectives over the course of the 2026-2031 programme period, upholding our values framework in delivery of measures of success. Our values are:

* Inclusive and collaborative
* Innovative and brave
* Elevating lived experience and co-design
* Research excellence through impact
* Sustainable now for tomorrow

**What the role entails**

Expressions of interest are invited for:

* Theme Leads
* Theme Co-Leads - see separate document
* Cross-cutting Theme/ Workstream Leads

Theme lead streams include a mix of core and cross cutting methodological dimensions that are integral to the overarching vision of the ARC. The themes include:

* Start Well- Maternal health and early years, child and adolescent mental health
* Live Well- Lifestyle and prevention, Keeping people in work
* Age Well- Multiple long-term conditions, dementia and social care
* Knowledge Mobilisation and Implementation

Cross-cutting themes/ workstreams:

* Health Economics and Real-World Data/ Data Informatics
* Health Equity and Inclusion
* Prevention and parity of mental and physical health

Theme and cross-cutting theme/ workstream leads will commit to working collaboratively and within an ecosystem that prioritises the foundational principles of capacity building, interdisciplinary dialogue, collaboration, and sustainability.

***Please note that theme titles may change as may the final list of themes;*** ***so this list should not be seen as definitive. All will be reviewed and is subject to change dependent upon interest,*** ***budget and evolving ARC structure.***

The ARC Theme Lead will be identified on the ARC application and work closely with the ARC Theme Co-Lead and other members of the theme to advance and fulfil specific overarching objectives (if application is successful). Drawing on their own research track record in areas aligned with a theme, the Lead will engage collaboratively with universities and partner organisations throughout the Thames Valley region and nationally including with other ARCs, to drive the development of innovative initiatives with a clear, scalable implementation pathway.

**Key Responsibilities:**

**Values and Culture:** Promoting lived experience and peer research and driving kind and progressive research cultures.

**Good conduct:** Upholding the principles of research integrity and ethical conduct of research, and Nolan principles for standards in public life**.**

**Strategic Direction and Leadership**: Lead and manage a designated research theme, ensuring alignment with the ARC's overall purpose, objectives, and values, contributing to regional and national health improvement priorities.

**Collaboration and Networking**: Work collaboratively with organisations across the integrated care systems (ICSs) (including local communities), academic institutions, and the wider NIHR networks which are relevant to the theme.

**Research Inclusion:** Embed the ARCs inclusion plan within all theme activities, creating value for those who have been systemically ignored in science. In doing so, advocate for inclusion as an indicator of research excellence.

**Knowledge Mobilisation,** **Implementation and Impact:** Work with the ARC Implementation and Knowledge Mobilisation Leads to prioritise evidence into action approaches in all projects within the theme.

**Research Funding**: Apply for funding to expand ARC research programmes and other applied health research programmes in the Thames Valley aligned to strategic thematic areas.

**Inclusive Capacity Building and Mentorship**: Support the growth and development of all members of the theme and wider ARC, ensuring stage appropriate skill enhancement and professional development.

**Essential requirements**

* A post with a relevant organisation based within the Thames Valley. The position is open to professionals from various disciplines, based in either HEIs, clinical practice, public health, or social care.
* Demonstrable leadership of research programmes, achieving impactful outcomes.
* Strong regional and national professional networks, particularly within the health and social care system, ARC and NIHR infrastructures, and/ or related fields.
* A proven track record of fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and promoting research impact across varied sectors.
* Institutional support to undertake the responsibilities of the Theme Lead role.
* Inclusive, forward-thinking leadership style.

**Time commitment and funding**

The role requires an average commitment of 0.5 days per week (0.1FTE) (Theme Co-Lead also 0.5 days per week). It will primarily be based at the usual employment location, with occasional travel required to various sites across the Thames Valley and nationally.

The role will be funded by ARC Thames Valley with reimbursement of salary costs to the substantive employer. Terms and conditions would remain as per substantive employment contract. Subject to the successful award of the ARC grant application, this will be a fixed term role available from 1 April 2026 until 31 March 2031, subject to achievement against planned objectives.

**Expressions of interest**

Please send a concise letter of application (up to two pages) and CV (highlighting relevant experience- up to four pages) to Paula Wray, ARC OxTV Senior Manager, via email to [paula.wray@phc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:paula.wray@phc.ox.ac.uk) (please cc in Kam Bhui ([kam.bhui@psych.ox.ac.uk](mailto:kam.bhui@psych.ox.ac.uk) ) by **11.59pm** **Tuesday 10th December.**

Your EOI should:

* Clearly state which research theme(s) you are expressing an interest in
* Briefly outline your motivation for the role and how your skills and experience meet the essential requirements
* Demonstrate how your track record is relevant to the advancement of the theme and how you will work to drive integration of activity with other primary and cross cutting themes alongside foundation principles

If you wish to express an interest in more than one theme, please ensure you adequately demonstrate your expertise for each theme of interest.

Interviews for those shortlisted will take place on **Friday 13th December.**

Informal enquiries are welcomed:

Prof Kam Bhui CBE – ARC2 Lead applicant [kam.bhui@psych.ox.ac.uk](mailto:kam.bhui@psych.ox.ac.uk)

Prof Shivani Sharma – ARC2 Co-Lead applicant [s.sharma10@aston.ac.uk](mailto:s.sharma10@aston.ac.uk)

Dr Paula Wray – ARC Senior Manager [paula.wray@phc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:paula.wray@phc.ox.ac.uk)