

## High level overview of the Older People and Frailty Policy Research Unit's research and evidence outputs January 2019 - June 2023.

Professor Chris Todd, Director, University of Manchester

Professor Barbara Hanratty, Deputy Director, Newcastle University

Professor Martin Knapp OBE, Deputy Director, London School of Economics and Political Science

Jane McDermott, Head of Collaboration and Operations, University of Manchester

For further information please contact

[j.mcdermott@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:j.mcdermott@manchester.ac.uk) and/or [anni.bailey@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:anni.bailey@dhsc.gov.uk)

## **Brief Introduction and Overview of the National Institute of Health and Care Older People and Frailty Policy Research Unit**

This document provides a summary of the research and evidence outputs of the National Institute for Health and Care (NIHR) Older People and Frailty Policy Research Unit (OPFPRU), 2019 – 2023. The OPFPRU sits within the NIHR Policy Research Programme (PRP), which is a national programme of high-quality cost-effective research delivering relevant, timely and accessible evidence to inform national policy decisions across health, social care and public health systems. The PRP commissions policy research to support the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Ministers, and Senior Officials in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). As well as across Arm's Length Bodies including the National Health Service England (NHSE), Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID), UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Health Research Authority (HRA) and cross-Government departments.

The Older People and Frailty Policy Research Unit supports a long-term programme of research. PRUs provide a critical mass of experts for research in priority areas for health and social care policy. There are currently 15 PRUs providing both a long-term resource for policy research and a rapid-response service to deliver robust evidence for emerging policy need. The units also act in an advisory and consultancy capacity for senior government officials, policy makers and analysts to ensure the evidence base and options for policy development are well informed, up-to-date and accurate. PRUs are grouped into four broad categories: System Directed; Specialism Specific; Life Course, and Condition Specific. Collaboration across units and wider NIHR infrastructure is a common feature to ensure proficiency in addressing health and social care policy questions, as well as to inform cross-Government priorities. For more information on PRUs, see the NIHR webpage (link [here](#)) where you will find a full list and direct links to websites for each unit.

The OPFPRU is a collaboration across three leading national academic institutions, the University of Manchester, Newcastle University and the London School of Economics. The Unit's joint commitment and critical aims are to:

1. Anticipate, identify and respond to key questions that are important to the public and policymakers.
2. Co-develop and deliver a programme of work that addresses these questions, providing high-quality research evidence.
3. Regularly produce timely findings in formats that are suitable for use by a range of senior stakeholders, including senior ministers, policymakers, analysts, etc.
4. Work in a highly flexible and agile manner, responding promptly to urgent DHSC questions and commissions through consultancy, advice and development of research proposals.
5. Establish, develop and maintain strategic relationships both nationally and locally to influence and deliver policy and practice level impact.
6. Develop effective pathways for sharing research findings that reaches across government and the public, in close consultation with DHSC/NIHR and aligned to contract clauses.
7. Adopt the highest standards of transparency, ethics and research governance.
8. Develop a programme of externally funded research to complement and extend the work of the OPFPRU.
9. Provide a working environment that supports and develops researchers in the early and middle stages of their careers.

10. Advance and develop the strategic vision and submit a next round proposal for a future PRU 2024-2028\*.

\*The next round of Policy Research Units 2024-2028 will be announced imminently and includes some expansion of current units alongside three additional units. For more information on the next round PRUs see the NIHR webpage (link here).

**Overview of the OPFPRU research outputs and publications as aligned to Government strategy.**

This document charts a number of relevant strategic priorities and policies alongside associated and aligned research insight and outputs from the OPFPRU (2019-2023). The purpose is to assist the reader in the navigation of the relevant science, research and evidence outputs delivered to DHSC from the OPFPRU and to help support evidence-based policy making. Our work has some crossover with other PRUs, as it spans a broad range of policy and practice areas. This document may be of use for those currently working on the forthcoming **Major Conditions and Disease Strategy**, see statement to Parliament of the Secretary of State for Health on major conditions and diseases (Jan 23 link [here](#)), as well as across all **Healthy Ageing** domains. The work of the unit is aligned to the DHSC **Areas of Research Interest** (published in Jan 2023 link [here](#)) including having relevance to the cross cutting themes to: **reduce disparities and improve and economic outcomes of the most deprived 20% and improving outcomes for the public, patients, services**. Please also see the OPFPRU website for information related to our full programme of work – [www.opfpru.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.opfpru.nihr.ac.uk) text in green indicates current live projects, all work linked is publicly available.

Strategic priority areas and conditions/diseases featured	OPFPRU outputs (core projects and rapid response research) Reports and briefing papers in the public domain <i>For copies of full reports not currently available via our website please contact the project team</i>	Associated and/or relevant journal publications where applicable - not all OPFPRUs outputs have been published in journals. A number of manuscripts are in the process of publication (submitted/accepted).
Increase Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) and narrow the gap between local areas where it is highest and lowest by 2030 and achieve 5 extra years of HLE by 2035	<p><b>Comparison of trends in life expectancy and disability-free life expectancy between the UK and the remaining countries of the EU28</b> <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p> <p><b>The contribution of single and multiple chronic conditions to the deteriorating time trends in later-life disability:</b>  <b>Part 1: Incidence, recovery or longer survival?</b>  <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a>  <b>Part 2: Single and multiple conditions</b>  <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p> <p><b>Trends in healthy and disability-free life expectancy in the UK and other high-income countries: a systematic review</b>  <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p> <p><b>Future trends in disability in old age</b>  <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p>	<p>Bennett, H Q., Kingston, A., Spiers, G., Robinson, L., Corner, L., Bamba, C., Brayne, C., Matthews, F.E., Jagger, C., <b>Healthy ageing for all? Comparisons of socioeconomic inequalities in health expectancies over two decades in the Cognitive Function and Ageing Studies I and II</b>, International Journal of Epidemiology, Volume 50, Issue 3, June 2021, Pages 841–851,2021;  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyaa271">https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyaa271</a></p> <p>Welsh, C., Matthews, F.E., Jagger, C. <b>Trends in life expectancy and healthy life years at birth and age 65 in the UK, 2008–2016, and other countries of the EU28: An observational cross-sectional study</b>. The Lancet Regional Health-Europe, 2, p.100023. March 2021.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanep.2020.100023">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanep.2020.100023</a></p>

	<p><b>How to narrow the gap in disability free life expectancy between rich and poor, with a focus on long-term conditions: a rapid evidence synthesis</b> <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p> <p><b>Live project:</b> producing estimates of the size of effects needed to narrow the gap in Disability Free Life Expectancy between the richest and the poorest, along with estimates of the intervention size required alongside time frame to make an impact. (November 2023)</p> <p>Associated presentations: Trends in health expectancies by late-life disadvantage - <a href="#">slides</a></p> <p>Multi-morbidity, disadvantage and trends in disability free life expectancy - <a href="#">slides</a></p>	<p>Bennett H Q, Kingston A, Lourida I, Robinson L, Corner L, Brayne CE, Matthews FE, Jagger C. <b>The contribution of multiple long-term conditions to widening inequalities in disability-free life expectancy over two decades: Longitudinal analysis of two cohorts using the Cognitive Function and Ageing Studies.</b> EClinicalMedicine. September 2021, 1;39:101041. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2021.101041">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2021.101041</a></p> <p>Bennett H Q et al. <b>A comparison over two decades of disability-free life expectancy at age 65 years for those with long term conditions in England: Analysis of the two longitudinal Cognitive Function and Ageing Studies.</b> (PMEDICINE-D-21-02730R3) PLOS Medicine. March 2022 <a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1003936">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1003936</a></p> <p>Spiers GF, Kunonga TP, Beyer F, Craig D, Hanratty B, Jagger C. <b>Trends in health expectancies: a systematic review of international evidence.</b> BMJ Open. May 2021 1;11(5):e045567. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-045567">https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-045567</a></p> <p>Kunonga TP, Spiers G, Richmond C, Beyer F, Bower B, Hanratty B, Craig D. <b>Health Interventions and the unseen impact on equality.</b> The Lancet (Healthy Longevity). Jan 2023. 4(1). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-7568(22)00268-9">https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-7568(22)00268-9</a></p> <p>Kingston, A; Wittenberg, R; Hu, B; Jagger, C. <b>Projections of dependency and associated social care expenditure for the older population in England to 2038: effect of varying disability progression.</b> Age &amp; Ageing. 23.07.22. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afac158">https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afac158</a></p>
<p>Early detection and treatment of disease</p>	<p><b>The use of the Clinical Frailty Scale in intensive and critical care settings</b> <a href="#">Briefing Paper</a></p> <p><b>Which interventions are cost effective for preventing, slowing or reversing the progression of frailty?</b> <a href="#">Briefing Paper</a></p>	<p>Spiers GF, Kunonga TP, Hall A, <i>et al.</i> <b>Measuring frailty in younger populations: a rapid review of evidence.</b> BMJ Open March 2021;11:e047051. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-047051">https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-047051</a></p>

	<p><b>Factors associated with unmet need for support to maintain independence in later life: a mixed methods systematic review</b>  <a href="#">Briefing Summary</a></p> <p><b>How effective is public health advice for healthy ageing and can it be updated based on any recent research?</b> <a href="#">Briefing Paper</a></p> <p><b>Physical activity: life course trajectories and patterns of strength in the UK</b> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p>	<p>Spiers GF, Kunonga TP, Stow D, Hall A, Kingston A, Williams O, Beyer F, Bower P, Craig D, Todd C, Hanratty B. <b>Factors associated with unmet need for support to maintain independence in later life: a systematic review of quantitative and qualitative evidence.</b> Age and Ageing, Vol 51 (10) October 2022.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afac228">https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afac228</a></p>
<p>Tackling clusters of disadvantages and addressing unwarranted variation (inequalities)</p>	<p><b>Digitalisation of health and social care services for older adults: what can we learn from the COVID-19 pandemic?</b>  Phase 1: <a href="#">Executive Summary</a></p> <p>Live project - ongoing phases of the digitalization project include: analysis of GP consultation data &amp; undertaking focus groups with older people of ethnic minority groups (see web page <a href="#">here</a>)</p> <p><b>Caring for older people as a social determinant of health: who experiences the greatest impacts and what works to support them?</b>  Phase 1: <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p> <p>Live project phase 2 of caring for older people activity is mapping interventions for addressing ill health, report submitted to DHSC May 2023, Stakeholder workshop held in May 2023 and integrated summary being prepared (July 2023)</p> <p><b>Identifying older adults with frailty approaching end of life: a systematic review</b> <a href="#">Research Presentation (video)</a></p> <p><b>The impact of Care Act easements under the Coronavirus Act 2020 on co-resident carers, over the age of 70, with spouses or partners living with dementia</b>  <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Summary Briefing</a> <a href="#">Report</a></p> <p><a href="#">Associated presentations</a>  Older carers and their spouses living at home with dementia: a relational approach to understanding responses to service disengagement during the pandemic - <a href="#">slides</a> Care Act duties and</p>	<p>Kunonga TP, Spiers G, Richmond C, Beyer F, Bower B, Hanratty B, Crag D. <b>Health Interventions and the unseen impact on equality.</b> The Lancet (Healthy Longevity). Jan 2023. 4(1). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-7568(22)00268-9">https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-7568(22)00268-9</a></p> <p>Kunonga TP, Hanratty B, Bower P, Craig D. <b>A systematic review finds a lack of consensus in methodological approaches in health inequality/inequity focused reviews.</b> Journal of Clinical Epidemiology. Vol 156, Pages 76-84, March 2023.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2023.02.013">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2023.02.013</a></p> <p>Spiers GF, Kunonga TP, Beyer F, Craig D, Hanratty B, Jagger C. <b>Trends in health expectancies: a systematic review of international evidence.</b> BMJ Open. 2021 May 1;11(5):e045567. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-045567">https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-045567</a></p> <p>Hall, A., Spiers, G. and Hanratty, B. (October 2022), <b>Constructions of childlessness and ageing: legitimising dependency on unpaid care?</b> Quality in Ageing and Older Adults. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1108/QAOA-10-2021-0078">https://doi.org/10.1108/QAOA-10-2021-0078</a></p> <p>Sinclair DR, Maharani A, Stow D, Welsh CE, Matthews FE (Nov 2021) <b>Can vaccination roll-out be more equitable if population risk is taken into account?</b> PLoS ONE 16(11): e0259990. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0259990">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0259990</a></p>

COVID-10: Reflections on the rationing of social care - [slides](#) The Impact of Care Easements Webinar - [slides](#)  
HSR UK Conference Workshop - [slides](#)

**Palliative and end of life care experiences of people of African and Caribbean descent during COVID-19** [Executive Summary](#)

**Using individual and neighborhood profiles and trends to understand frailty with nationally representative population data**

- Frailty among older adults and its distribution in England

[Executive Summary](#) [Final Report](#)

- Frailty and receipt for care in England

[Executive Summary](#) [Final Report](#)

**Patience Kunonga PhD** – *“The use of a conceptual framework to underpin the consideration of inequality and inequity in evidence synthesis studies addressing health and social care policy questions”*

[Ageing Without Children](#) - see [publication column](#)

**Can digital technologies enhance older people’s access to health and social care?** [Executive Summary](#) [Full Report](#)

**Women’s Health Strategy for Older People (65+)**

[Executive Summary](#) [‘PREPARE’ Full Life Course Report](#)

**Tackling poor health in older people resulting from cold homes: A rapid review of effective interventions** – [live project due to be delivered by summer 2023](#)

**Quality of homecare: supporting the health and wellbeing of unpaid carers perspectives on quality** – [soon to be live project report due end 2023](#)

**Which unmet social care needs should be prioritised to promote healthy ageing?** – [soon to be live project report due end of 2023](#)

Sinclair D, Maharani A, Chandola T, Bower P, Hanratty B, Nazroo J, Tampubolon G, Todd C, Wittenberg R, Matthews F, Pendleton N. **Frailty among older adults and its distribution in England.** *J Frailty Aging* **11**, 163–168. April 2022. <https://doi.org/10.14283/jfa.2021.55>

Kunonga TP, Hanratty B, Bower P, Craig D. **A systematic review finds a lack of consensus in methodological approaches in health inequality/inequity focused reviews.** *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology.* Vol 156, Pages 76-84, March 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2023.02.013>

Kunonga TP, Spiers G, Beyer F, Hanratty B, Boulton E, Hall A, Bower P, Todd C, Craig D **Effects of Digital Technologies on Older People’s Access to Health and Social Care: Umbrella Review.** *J Med Internet Res.* 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021;23(11):e25887. <https://doi.org/10.2196/25887>

Hall, A., Boulton, E., Kunonga, P., Spiers, G., Beyer, F., Bower, P., Craig, D., Todd, C., & Hanratty, B. (2021). **Identifying older adults with frailty approaching end-of-life: A systematic review.** *Palliative Medicine* 14.09.21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02692163211045917>

<p>Healthy Ageing in a post-pandemic world</p>	<p><b>Preferences for new models of social care for people with high care needs.</b> This is a live project with a first phase report available by request, see the project webpage for more information (<a href="#">link here</a>)</p> <p><b>Improving discussions about resuscitation for relatives in COVID-19</b> <a href="#">Summary Briefing</a> <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> To be published in Age and Ageing May 2023</p> <p><b>Promoting sexual health in older adults: integrated summary of findings</b> <a href="#">Summary Briefing</a></p> <p><b>Rapid scope of UK supported housing research</b> <a href="#">Briefing Report</a></p> <p><b>Preliminary analysis of older people who live in different types of supported housing in England using data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA)</b> <a href="#">Briefing Report</a></p> <p><b>Analysis of older people who live in supported housing using data from the Healthy Survey England (HSE)</b> <a href="#">Briefing Report</a></p> <p><b>Interventions to reduce hospital admissions and attendances from care homes – a review of economic literature</b> live project report due Autumn 2023</p> <p><b>Exploring older people's support needs for making healthier decisions about alcohol during COVID-19</b> <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Briefing Report</a></p>	
<p>Multiple Long-Term Conditions</p>	<p>As mentioned above – see projects on <a href="#">Healthy Life Expectancy</a> relate</p> <p><b>What matters to people with multiple conditions (multimorbidities) and their carers?</b> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p>	<p>Spiers GF, Boulton E, Corner L, <i>et al.</i> <b>What matters to people with multiple long-term conditions and their carers?</b> Postgraduate Medical Journal. Published Online First: 17 December 2021 <a href="https://doi.org/10.1136/postgradmedj-2021-140825">https://doi.org/10.1136/postgradmedj-2021-140825</a></p> <p>Kunonga TP, Spiers G, Richmond C, Beyer F, Bower B, Hanratty B, Crag D. <b>Health Interventions and the unseen impact on equality.</b> The Lancet (Healthy Longevity). Jan 2023. 4(1). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-">https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-</a></p>

		<a href="#">7568(22)00268-9</a> (Journal Article relating to Depression / Osteoarthritis / Type II Diabetes)
Dementia	<p><b>As mentioned above – Impact of Care Act easements (this project covered spousal carers of people living with dementia)</b></p> <p>Digital technology to support people living with dementia and their carers <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p> <p>Digital technologies to prevent falls in people living with dementia <a href="#">Executive Summary</a></p> <p>Associated presentations: Digital technologies to prevent falls in people living with dementia - <a href="#">slides</a></p> <p>Living with dementia during the COVID-19 pandemic: coping and support needs of community dwelling people with dementia and their family carers <a href="#">Full Report</a></p> <p>Scoping for a return on investment tool for dementia – live project report due April/May 2023</p>	
Musculoskeletal disorders	<p><b>As mentioned above – Physical activity: life course trajectories and patterns of strength in the UK</b></p> <p>Strength and Balance exercises for falls prevention and musculoskeletal health <a href="#">Briefing Paper</a></p> <p>Delivery of strength and balance exercises for falls prevention amongst older people using digital technologies to replace face to face contact during COVID-19 home isolation <a href="#">Briefing Paper</a></p> <p>Effectiveness of dance interventions on falls prevention in older adults <a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Briefing Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p>	<p>McGarrigle, L., Boulton, E., Todd, C. <b>Map the Apps: a rapid review of digital approaches to support the engagement of older adults in strength and balance exercises.</b> BMC Geriatrics 2020 20:483 <a href="https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-020-01880-6">https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-020-01880-6</a></p> <p>McGarrigle, L., Todd, C. <b>Promotion of physical activity in older people using mHealth and eHealth technologies: Review of reviews.</b> Journal of Medical Internet Research 2020 <a href="https://doi.org/10.2196/22201">https://doi.org/10.2196/22201</a></p>
Mental ill health	<p><b>As mentioned above - Exploring older people's support needs for making healthier decisions about alcohol during COVID-19</b></p> <p><b>What remotely delivered interventions can reduce social isolation and loneliness among older adults?</b></p> <p><a href="#">Executive Summary</a> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p>	<p>Boulton, E., Kneale, D., Stansfield, C., Heron, P., Sutcliffe, K., Hayanga, B., Hall, A., Bower, P., Casey, D., Craig, D., Gilbody, S., Hanratty, B., McMillan, D., Thomas, J., Todd, C. <b>Rapid systematic review of systematic reviews: what befriending, social support and low intensity psychosocial interventions, delivered remotely, are</b></p>



		<p><b>effective in reducing social isolation and loneliness among older adults? How do they work?</b> F1000Research 2020, 9:1368  <a href="https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.27076.1">https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.27076.1</a></p>
Cardiovascular diseases, including stroke and diabetes	<p><b>As mentioned above - How to narrow the gap in disability free life expectancy between rich and poor, with a focus on long-term conditions: a rapid evidence synthesis</b></p>	<p>Kunonga TP, Spiers G, Richmond C, Beyer F, Bower B, Hanratty B, Craig D. <b>Health Interventions and the unseen impact on equality.</b> The Lancet (Healthy Longevity). Jan 2023. 4(1). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-7568(22)00268-9">https://doi.org/10.1016/S2666-7568(22)00268-9</a> (Journal Article relating to Depression / Osteoarthritis / Type II Diabetes)</p>
COVID-19	<p><b>The use of the Clinical Frailty Scale in intensive and critical care settings</b> <a href="#">Briefing Report</a></p> <p><b>National early warning scored and COVID-19 deaths in care homes: a longitudinal study</b> <a href="#">Executive Summary</a></p> <p><b>Family visits to care homes: experiences and perspectives on policies and practices during the COVID-10 pandemic</b> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p> <p><b>The effectiveness of PPE in reducing the transmission of COVID-19 in health and social care settings</b> <a href="#">Full Report</a></p>	<p>Stow D, Barker RO, Matthews FE, et al. <b>National Early Warning Scores and COVID-19 deaths in care homes: an ecological timeseries study.</b> BMJ Open 2021;11:e045579. September 2021 <a href="https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-045579">doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2020-045579</a></p>