YH ARC ELP Best Start Steering Group

Terms of Reference

# Background

Best Start is part of the Early Life and Prevention theme (ELP) of the Yorkshire and Humber (YH) Applied Research Collaboration (ARC). Funded by the NIHR, 15 regional ARCs provide supported research infrastructure, helping to foster partnerships between NHS providers, universities, third sector organisations, local authorities and industry. The YH ARC is hosted within the Bradford Institute for Health Research and offers a wide range of support for linked projects including access to specialist knowledge and expertise, networking and connection opportunities, researcher capacity development and training, support for grant proposals and access to PPI groups.

Each regional ARC has its own themes and areas of expertise and interest. Within the YH ARC there are nine themes including Healthy Childhood also known as the Early Life and Prevention (ELP) theme. ELP “aims to promote healthier, fairer futures for families in deprived areas, co-producing with the community systems-level change in the determinants of health and wellbeing” (1). There are five core topics within ELP including Healthy Places, Healthy Learning, Best Start, Healthy Bodies and Oral Health, as well as three cross cutting topics, Health Equity, Minority Ethnic Health and Systems Change. Each topic offers expertise and insight to all members within the wider ELP theme.

Led by Dr Sarah Blower at the University of York, the Best Start Topic has several objectives including:

* Co-producing acceptable tools of screening and outcome assessment of mental health and attachment in pregnancy and postnatally.
* Piloting and feasibility testing interventions to improve mental wellbeing in early years.
* Testing models of improving engagement and referral processes to early life services.
* Exploring the use of volunteers as means of promoting access to, and aiding delivery of, interventions.
* Working with communities to understand why some groups do not access services.
* Developing new innovations addressing community and stakeholder priorities.

# Purpose

The Best Start Steering Group will act as a platform for driving ARC linked projects forward and to help members take advantage of what the YH ARC has to offer.

# Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Best Start Steering Group members to:

* Provide advice on and oversight of Best Start linked projects.
* Showcase projects and share learning.
* Support Best Start linked PhD students.
* Review potential funding opportunities, provide a sounding board for initial ideas and to facilitate collaboration on grants as appropriate.
* Share relevant updates and opportunities, including from national and regional ARCs.
* Provide letters of support for grant applications.
* Consider and record the impact of Best Start linked projects.

# Membership

Membership to the group is open to all career stage researchers, PhD students, practitioners and professionals working with expectant parents and/or parents, carers and families of babies and young children within the YH ARC region. The group remains open to new membership and current members are encouraged to invite colleagues from their own networks working in this area.

# Meetings

* The group will meet quarterly until the end of the current funding cycle (Dec 2024).
* Meetings may take place online or in person and will last no longer than two hours.
* The group aims to have a ‘project spotlight’ at each meeting. Members are encouraged to think ahead and plan to deliver a short presentation/talk about either an ongoing project or a research idea to the group at a future meeting. Please contact Sarah Compton to confirm which meeting you would like to present at. Details of your talk can be confirmed nearer the time.
* Group members may offer feedback on agendas and final copies will be circulated one week in advance of the meeting.
* Meetings will be recorded for those who have been unable to attend (only if permission is given by members in attendance).
* Action notes will be written up and circulated within ten working days of the meeting.

# Confidentiality and sharing information

All members of the group will respect the confidentiality and integrity of the group and will not share sensitive information outside of the meetings, for example information relating to grants in development.

# Document History

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Version | Date approved | Reason for change |
| 0.1 |  |  |

# References

1. NIHR ELP. (2021). *YHARC Early Life and Prevention: Compendium of Opportunities*. NIHR. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hphkym5wgpyAR2PIz39Ry6COENiOQHNI/view?usp=share_link>