

**NIHR**

Health Determinants  
Research Collaboration  
Cumberland



# Turn research into action

## Cumberland HDRC research skills training programme

Open to all Cumberland Council staff, elected members, and community. Available for booking now on iLearn for Cumberland Council staff and Eventbrite for third sector organisations.



# About Our Training Programme

The HDRC training programme is a series of practical sessions designed to help you to feel more confident finding and using research to enhance your work, capture what you already know and share what works (and what doesn't) and to make and support your decisions.

No research background necessary, this is about building on the skills you use every day like asking good questions, gathering insights, learning from what's already out there and turning this into impactful outcomes. At its core, research covers collecting existing and first hand information, and using this to create stronger ways of working. By honing these skills this ensures credible data use, reduces risks, and strengthens collaboration, creating a council that thrives and delivers sustainable outcomes.

Pave the way to a culture of research and tackle complex challenges confidently, generate credible evidence, improve services, and design interventions that address the root causes of inequality, ultimately improving health and wellbeing for all.

**Bespoke training can be delivered. Contact Training Office Jae-Llane Ditchburn: [jae-llane.ditchburn@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:jae-llane.ditchburn@cumberland.gov.uk) for more information.**

**The programme  
combines short,  
practical sessions  
across four areas:**

**04**

**Champion: take the lead**

**03**

**Co-Production: working together**

**02**

**Capability: your guide to the 'how'**

**01**

**Curiosity: finding the 'who' and 'what'**

## Polishing practical skills such as:

- Asking better questions
- Capturing what you already know and sharing what works (and what doesn't)
- Finding and using evidence more confidently and to support decisions
- Evaluating what's working and what could be improved
- Working together with communities
- Applying straightforward methods and frameworks to break down projects and tasks into its core components, the changes you want to see, and the steps needed to get there

This programme reflects the priorities set out in the Cumberland Council Plan 2023–2027 – boosting health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities, and delivering excellent public services developed by working together and using evidence.

# How to book



If you work for  
Cumberland Council  
you can find us in the  
iLearn directory



If you work for a  
community  
organisation, you can  
find us on Eventbrite



# 01

## Curiosity: Finding the ‘who’ and ‘what’

Being curious leads to better questions, which leads to a fuller view of situations, people, and contexts. It’s about being professionally nosey: looking, listening, asking direct questions, checking out and reflecting on them. By actively listening to and seeking a better understanding of what people may be facing, this drives innovation, improves communication, connection and relationships.

### **Practical skills you’ll leave with:**

- How to use curiosity to spot issues early, find creative solutions and adapt to change
- Promoting openness to diverse perspectives
- Straightforward methods to explore your ideas and projects and how to put them into action

**Who this training is for:** All staff who work with people, information or make decisions. Which is all of us!

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## **Session 1: Ask, Explore, Connect**

This interactive session explores what makes us curious and how curiosity can be used as a tool for innovation. You will learn how to ask better questions, explore ideas from multiple cultural and personal perspectives, and use curiosity to spark ideas and solve problems.

## **Session 2: Mapping Your Research Journey – Imagine, Discover, Create**

You've thought about the questions, now explore how to answer them. This session explores the key stages of research, starting with your curiosity-driven questions and aiming for actionable insights, and understanding how each step contributes to meaningful change.

The session emphasises resilience, adaptability, and collaboration as essential qualities for navigating the research process.



## **Session 3: Blueprint of Curiosity with Theory of Change**

The Theory of Change tool is a clear and simple way to break down your project ideas and set out the changes you want to see and map the steps needed to get there.

In this hands-on interactive workshop, you'll build your own visual pathway by identifying the core components, adding structure and what you will need to evaluate your impact. No big, heavy frameworks full of jargon here, you'll leave with a clearer plan, a stronger story about your impact, and a straightforward tool you can use in the every day.

# 02 Capability: Your guide to the ‘how’

Build on your experience and everyday skills to hone them into practical research skills and knowledge to strengthen evidence-based decision-making.

## **Practical skills you’ll leave with:**

- Transferable research skills you can apply to your day to day role and real-world challenges
- How to use evidence to back up your work and ideas and best practice
- Evaluating what you have done and what you can do next time

## **Who this training is for: All staff**

“But I don’t need to carry out research in my role . . .”

It’s not about extra paperwork, academic language or adding more pressure and work to your day. It’s using techniques that lead to less guesswork, more confidence and strength in your decisions, more efficient problem solving and evidence to back up what you already know. When your experiences and insights are gathered, supported, and shared properly, your ideas can turn into real change.

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## **Session 1: Numbers, Stories and Insights – That’s Data, That’s Evidence**

A practical workshop designed to build your confidence in understanding and using data. You’ll learn why data matters, ways to interpret it, how to work collaboratively to explore datasets and how it can be applied to your day to day.

## **Session 2: Evaluation – Measuring and Improving**

A hands-on module on evaluation and continuous quality improvement. It’s taking what you’ve done, holding it up and looking at it from different angles and asking, ‘did we achieve what we wanted to?’.

Break down the components of an evaluation process to develop practical plans and learn how to apply principles and practical methods to assessing to your day-to-day work, projects or services and turning this into data-driven decisions, and driving ongoing improvement.

# 03 Co-Production

## Working together to build a culture of participation

Cumberland Council's vision is to work consistently and effectively with communities, so residents feel heard, valued, and able to shape the services that affect their lives. Co-production is finding different and creative ways to work together for the best outcomes.

### **Practical skills you'll leave with:**

- Reaching more people and giving everyone a voice by creating and supporting spaces to work together and encouraging and enabling everyone to be involved
- Ensuring that inclusive engagement and lived experience meaningfully influence research decisions, design, and impact
- Understanding the different levels between engagement, involvement, participation, coproduction, and co-research
- Applying strategies as practical frameworks
- How to strengthen your work and outcomes through collaborative approaches

**Who this training is for:** Co-production – it's for everyone, by everyone!

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## **Session 1: The Co-Production Journey**

Dive into the principles of co-production, community engagement, and working together to design solutions that reflect shared priorities.

You'll break down collaborative practice to understand the different levels between engagement, involvement, participation, coproduction, and co-research.

Covering key participation models and the history that shaped modern coproduction, you will also learn how to apply the PICE strategy (Planning, Inclusion, Collaboration, Evaluation) as a practical framework for working collaboratively in real world settings.



## **Session 2: The Health Equation: Understanding Drivers and Disparities**

Every directorate in the Council delivers a service that has an impact on the health and wellbeing of Cumberland's communities, and this session staff across all areas to understand your role in reducing inequalities. Health inequalities are unjust and avoidable differences in health across communities, shaped by the conditions in which people are born, live, work and grow.

At the end of this session, you'll have a deeper understanding of health equity and wellbeing, how to identify and use credible evidence and how your work can influence health and contributes to reducing inequalities.

# 04 Champion: Take the lead

Curious, capable, now take the lead. This is the part where you have a go at putting into action what you've learnt. The best way to get better at something is by doing, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

## **Practical skills you'll leave with:**

- How to plan the key stages of a research project
- What effective research leadership involves.
- Identify common challenges that arise in research and apply practical strategies to address them.
- The confidence to try out research skills and supporting others to do the same

## **Who this training is for:**

- Those ready to take the next step and lead research projects
  - The not-quite-so-ready to build confidence and get prepared to lead in the future
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## **Session 1: Leading Research – Pen to Paper to Action**

A practical session on exploring research fundamentals, including the different types, approaches and tools, and planning the key stages. You'll also learn how to spot common challenges that arise in research and practical strategies to address them.

## **Session 2: Delivering Research – Pathways to Impact**

Covering what you need to do to turn vision into meaningful outcomes by spotting opportunities and shaping them into collaborative projects.

Discuss how to scan the horizon for emerging questions, needs, gaps and strategic priorities, how to connect ideas across teams and build partnerships, and design research that create real value.

Ensure your early-stage ideas and broad organisational visions grow into actionable, well supported initiatives that contribute meaningfully to top priorities.

# What next?

Completing your training is not the end, it's the start to being a part of research culture and collaborative practice. Using evidence, data and lived experience to inform your work leads to better outcomes for communities, more effective services, and supports our Council strategies and priorities.

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## **Cumberland Council staff can become part of the staff research network**

- Become part of a network of new and experienced researchers who share advice, encouragement and experience in a space where it's always ok to ask the 'silly' questions
- Stay informed with updates, information sessions and discussions on key areas in research and professional development
- Support others and be supported
- Influence and shape how we support research and staff across the council
- Learn more about our opportunities for research qualifications, other training and support for you to attend conferences.

**Be the first to hear about upcoming training sessions and bespoke workshops tailored to your team**

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# What next?

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## **Apply learning to your role:**

- Implement changes in your day-to-day practice
  - Test new approaches and evaluate impact
  - Create and co-produce practical tools and processes like how to manage data, forms, templates, or checklists
  - Act as a local champion for learning and improvement and support others to get involved
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## **Develop your skills further (funding for Cumberland Council staff available, subject to criteria)**

- Access further training
  - Explore formal study opportunities, including MRes postgraduate degrees
  - Attend and present at in-house and external conferences
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## **Carry out your own research and evaluation**

- Develop practice-based research questions
- Design and deliver research or evaluation projects

And you can receive support from us at every stage of the process

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# What next?

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## **Share and lead learning**

- Share resources, findings and insights that support consistent and effective practice
  - Take on leadership roles in research, learning, or innovation
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## **Make a difference**

By staying engaged after your training, you help build a Council that learns continuously, uses evidence confidently, works collaboratively and delivers better outcomes for communities.

# About Cumberland HDRC

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The NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) Cumberland is part of the NIHR and hosted by Cumberland Council. In January 2024, Cumberland Council was awarded £5 million by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to become a 'Health Determinants Research Collaboration' (HDRC).

The NIHR funds, enables and delivers world-leading health and social care research that improves people's health and wellbeing and promotes economic growth.

NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaborations enable local authorities to become more research-active, embedding a culture of evidence-based decision making. The NIHR has awarded £150 million to 30 HDRCs across the UK, to provide the capacity and capability for local authorities to undertake public health research to address the wider determinants of health and health inequalities.

This major investment is central to NIHR's offer to local government, providing infrastructure to enable local authorities to become more research active.

**In partnership  
with**



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Cumberland



**CUMBERLAND  
HDRC**

[www.cumberland.gov.uk/hdrc](http://www.cumberland.gov.uk/hdrc)

Read our full research plan:

<https://www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk/health-determinants-research-collaboration-hdrc/>

Contact us at [hdrc@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:hdrc@cumberland.gov.uk)

Find us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn:

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