

## The team aiming to make our area an 'international beacon'



An exciting new partnership geared towards improving health outcomes for people around Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland is up and running.

In this first edition of a quarterly newsletter, you can meet the team behind HDRC South Tees and find out more how staff from the two councils and Teesside University can get involved.

Firstly, we'll quickly explain what the HDRC is and how important it will be.

### It's a bit of a mouthful, isn't it?

It is! HDRC stands for Health Determinants Research Collaboration.

The HDRC South Tees is part of a network of over 30 others in local authorities across the country. They're funded by the National Institute of Health and Care Research.

### How is the HDRC linked to the councils?

The HDRC is part of Public Health South Tees with Director of Public Health Mark Adams acting as the programme's lead within Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland councils.

## What about the university?

The HDRC brings the two councils closer to the university, with Professor Dorothy Newbury-Birch as our Academic lead.

## What will it do?

This is the bold part.

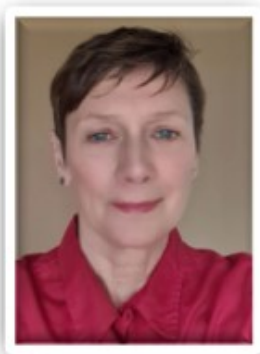
The vision is that our area will become an international beacon for research and innovation in tackling poor health outcomes and inequalities.

The HDRC will establish new ways of working and improve the understanding of long-term factors which affect people's chances to lead healthy lives.

It will develop a culture of research and evidence-based working practices. It will involve us bidding for new funding and building capacity and capability across both councils by developing staff.

This is all about getting better outcomes for the people we serve and there are lots of opportunities for you to benefit.

## Meet the team



### Jan Lecouturier

Jan Lecouturier is the Head of the HDRC South Tees.

Jan was previously with the National Institute for Health and Care Research Policy Research Unit in Behavioural and Social Science, leading on research exploring the use of research evidence in policy, and public health initiatives to improve Covid 19 vaccination uptake in disadvantaged groups.

Prior to that she was a senior research advisor with the Research Design Service Northeast and North Cumbria.



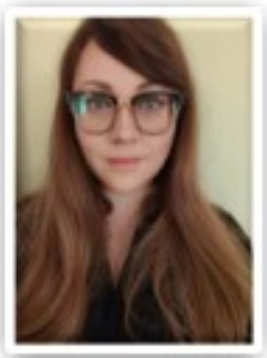
## **Scott Lloyd**

Scott is Advanced Public Health Practitioner for Public Health South Tees, the shared service of Middlesbrough Council and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council.

He has worked in public health policy and practice for over 20 years, mainly on the physical activity, nutrition and healthy weight agendas.

Along with colleagues, he was one of the core team that wrote the HDRC South Tees bid.

He has recently completed a NIHR Pre-Doctoral Local Authority Fellowship (PLAF) and has applied for funding to undertake a NIHR Doctoral Local Authority Fellowship (DLAF).



## **Rachel Summerhill**

Rachel is HDRC South Tees' Senior Organisational Development Partner and she and her team lead on the culture change work across both local authorities. Prior to joining the team, Rachel worked in Social Housing as a Senior officer, and has worked and led on a range of innovative and progressive culture change interventions throughout her career.

Rachel is currently in the first year of a PhD in Organisational Change. This was awarded as a Studentship with Teesside University, made possible through the HDRC.

Rachel has a passion for the colleague experience in complex organisations and is thrilled to be working with the HDRC to implement a positive and inclusive research

culture that will be impactful and sustainable for years to come.

## **Jen Berger**



As a Making Research Happen Manager for the HDRC, Jen's role focuses on creating the infrastructure and policies that will enable the South Tees to become an 'international beacon' in tackling health inequalities.

Prior to this role, Jen worked as the insight and analytics lead for You've Got This, a Sport England local delivery pilot, which is taking a whole-systems and place-based approach to tackling physical inactivity in the South Tees.

She has a strong interest in Systems Thinking, co-production, asset-based approaches, and research methodologies. She also grew up in Teesside and is passionate about the area and its people!

## **Andy Divers**



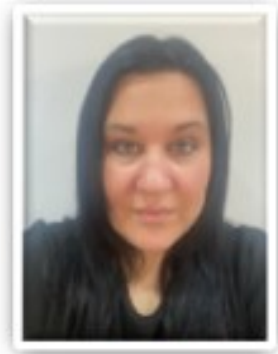
Andy is the HDRC South Tees Community Research and Ethics Lead and a Research Associate at Teesside University, completing his PhD at Lancaster University in 2015, examining the ethical, social and legal implications of behavioural genetic research on the autonomy and agency of young people.

Since joining Teesside University, Andy has worked on a range of projects examining the wider determinants of health.

As a multidisciplinary researcher, he has a wide range of research interests, including metaethics, children's rights, feminist

jurisprudence, bioethics and applied philosophy.

He has a particular interest in engaging marginalised groups in research and co-producing research with communities.



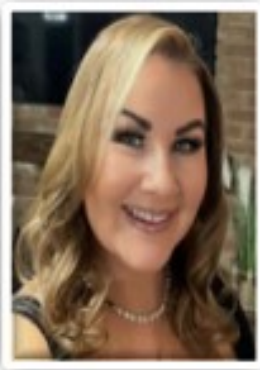
## **Hayley Cotson**

Hayley is the Organisational Development Business Partner for the HDRC South Tees, focusing on working with colleagues in Middlesbrough Council.

Her role is to look at building capacity and capability, focusing on engaging with and upskilling staff, working closely with our academic partner, Teesside University.

Hayley is dedicated in developing training and engaging interventions, to embed a positive research culture and help support colleagues to focus on working in an evidence-based decision-making capacity.

Prior to this position, Hayley worked for a large housing association in Teesside. Working with communities in Middlesbrough, she understands the current health inequalities in the local area and is thrilled to be a part of this exciting project and cannot wait to start making a real difference for the people of South Tees.



## **Kim Upex**

Kim Upex is one of the Organisational Development Business Partners for HDRC South Tees.

Her role has a focus on culture change and building capacity within the Local Authorities to enable research to be conducted and embedded within policies.

Kim has a varied background working across many sectors including the Justice system, Port Authority, Combined Local Authority and the Third Sector.

She brings an abundance of training and development skills with her from previous programmes she has delivered on and has a particular strength in networking and building relationships to work collaboratively with other partners.

Kim has experience of working within the community with schools, colleges, and the charitable sector and her links she has made are a great advantage to HDRC South Tees.



## **Maddi Din**

Maddi Din is the HDRC South Tees Community Research Coordinator and a Research Associate at Teesside University, completing her MSc in Global Development at Northumbria university in 2022.

Since joining Teesside University as a member of Team Alpha in January 2023, Maddi has worked on the HDRC supporting Dr Andrew Divers.

She is a keen advocate of involving diverse participation in research.

## **David Hall**

David Hall is the Administrator for the HDRC South Tees team and provides fundamental support to the entire team and our academic partner.

Before joining the team, David worked with Darlington Borough Council carrying out various duties under the remit of promoting sustainable transport across the Tees Valley.

David's role improved the use of technology and its implementation helping efficiency and data handling of the project.

## **Kathryn Harbin**

Kathryn Harbin's background is in Public Health and Community Development, working across many different public health areas and with diverse populations.

Her key strengths are behaviour change, nutrition, poverty, and deprivation with a keen interest in poverty stigmatisation.



Within HDRC South Tees, Kathryn is our Making Research Happen Officer with a Children and Families focus.

Her main role is to support our children and family's directorates and facilitate the research pathway, from priority setting, funding and collaboration through to dissemination.

She is also undertaking a PhD studentship with Teesside University with the aim to contextualise hyper localised deprivation and poverty in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland as a major contributory factor to health inequality.



## **Abby List**

Abby List is the Making Research Happen Officer for HDRC South Tees. She engages with those working across adult social care in Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland to formalise their directorate's research priorities. Abby is making links with academics locally and nationally who can provide expert knowledge and support with research within our communities.

Abby is also a registered adult nurse with a critical care and clinical research background. Abby has worked across North Tees and South Tees NHS hospitals and has experience in clinical trial delivery within critical care, anaesthesia, and the emergency department.



## Shehzad Raza

Shehzad Raza's work portfolio explores the research and gaps in the regeneration and economic growth sector to reduce the health inequalities and to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population.

Part of his role is to facilitate research via collaboration/co-production work with the aim to create evidence-based culture in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland councils.

Shehzad also acts as a bridge between the academia and other stakeholders to facilitate local research and to explore any possible funding opportunities.

A commonwealth pharmacist with Masters in Public Health and with more than 20 years of experience of working and providing a range of public health and pharmaceutical services within local government, civil services, community, hospital, and pharmaceutical IT sectors across UK, Australia, Canada, United Arab Emirates and Pakistan.



## How research has enhanced services in Redcar

This example from Redcar and Cleveland's Children and Families' directorate shows how powerful research can be and the benefits of closer working between local authorities and the university.

The Adults First Model is a way of working developed by educational psychologist Christine Sketchley. It's used at Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and is a unique way of working that differs from traditional educational psychology approaches.

The model seeks to understand a child's challenges, behaviour, life and experiences by bringing together parents and carers with the professionals from different agencies.

The focus is on understanding the past and current experiences of the child, the impact this has had on them and how this is affecting their current challenges and/or behaviour. The group then 'co-construct' a plan to support the child.

The development of the plan is parent-led and supported by all the involved professionals. This might include strategies to help a child deal with past trauma or encourage engagement with services or support to help address any broader issues that are identified in a family, for example the mental health of a parent.

Research into the model found parents had an extremely positive experience. They noted huge improvements in school engagement, the mental wellbeing of both child and parent and feelings of relief, hope and being listened to.

The HDRC helped Christine's evaluation work secure funding by National Institute for Health and Social Care Research Clinical Research Network CRN. The model is now attracting interest from the Department for Education and is influencing practice elsewhere, benefiting the lives of children and their families.

## **PHD award success**

One of the HDRC's main objectives is to increase the research skills of staff at the two councils, which in turn will lead to better decision making and outcomes for residents.

We are pleased to announce that two team members have been awarded fee-funded PhDs with Teesside University. Kathryn Harbin and Rachel Summerhill's PhD themes are closely aligned to the mission and values of the HDRC.

We think they will make a positive difference to our communities and our work to drive organisational culture change.

Congratulations to Kathryn and Rachel.

## **Masters, Modules and Fellowships**

Another way we're developing research skills of staff at the two councils is by offering masters module courses at Teesside University.

With the agreement of your line manager, you can access ten fully funded 20-credit masters modules from September.

Find out the details of the modules and [apply online here](#).

Applications close on June 30.

Email [HDRC@Middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:HDRC@Middlesbrough.gov.uk) for more information and advice.

The team can also advise staff how they can access fellowship schemes and short placement awards to develop as health and/or social care researchers while retaining their existing employment and salary.

You can [find out more information here](#).

## **Online training**

Spaces are available now for a series of short online lunchtime sessions that provide advice on applications, funding and possibilities of research.

Coming next, on June 18, Professor Dorothy Newbury-Birch will discuss what you need to know before submitting your first research grant bid and describe

her experiences from starting with a £10,000 grant to leading multi-million pound programmes.

To book a place [email Professor Newbury-Birch here](#).

## Keep in touch

We'll send our next newsletter in September. In the meantime, if you want to ask any questions about HDRC or find out more about you can get involved, [email the HRDC team](#).



### Middlesbrough Council

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