

The Prevention Research Network: Terms of Reference

The UKPRP Prevention Research Network (PRN - formerly known as the Community of Practice) is a community of individuals formed to share ideas, experiences, opportunities, and challenges across the prevention research community. Through discussion and collaboration, we can learn from one another to improve our ways of working to support non-communicable disease (NCD) prevention.

The PRN provides a place to discuss and capture learning on topics of mutual interest. The network retains the ethos of a 'Community of Practice'^{1,2}, and so aims at its core to be iterative and responsive to the diverse needs of the group. Over time, we will continue to build a body of publicly available knowledge, methods, and tools to share learning with each other and the wider prevention research community. Our core functions as a network are:

1. **Bringing people together** as a prevention research community to discuss, reflect and make connections in prevention research (still with an emphasis on the practice of research).
2. **Capturing good and innovative research practices**, in areas of shared interest, writing them up in accessible ways, and sharing them with those in the prevention research field (outputs, toolkit etc.).

1. Our objectives

Objective 1: Strengthen and expand mechanisms for communication across UKPRP Networks and Consortia to include the wider prevention research community.

Objective 2: Continue and expand forums for joined-up conversations and reflection across multiple Networks/Consortia and the wider prevention research community on specific topics of new or ongoing shared interest ('[Interest Groups](#)'), to compare and review current practice, avoid duplication and add value beyond that which could be achieved by working separately

Objective 3: Additional publicly-available [outputs](#) – guidance, methods, and tools to share learning with each other and the wider prevention research community from current and new Interest Groups.

Objective 4: Maximizing value from the expected step change in the profile and brand identity for UKPRP by recruiting colleagues (including from outside UKPRP-funded groups) to Interest Groups, continuing online fora, dissemination of outputs and a second conference 'Prevention Research 2025/26'.

2. Our Activities

To fulfil these objectives, the PRN will engage in the following activities:

- Provide a forum to discuss and share best practice of NCD prevention research in its widest sense.

¹ Lave J, Wenger E. Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press; 1991.

² Wenger E, McDermott R.A., Snyder W. Cultivating communities of practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press; 2002



- Establish and support specific Interest Groups on topics of mutual interest, identified by members, to help researchers improve their knowledge, skills and quality of research in that topic.
- Organises bi-annual conferences for the presentation of research papers and discussion of science and methodological issues in NCD prevention research.
- Expand on the existing body of knowledge, methods, and supporting resources to enhance the effectiveness and societal impact of prevention research in the current and new Interest Group areas.
- Communicate and disseminate PRN Interest Group outputs widely to support other interdisciplinary, systems informed research collaborations that inform and enable upstream prevention of NCDs.

3. Membership and Management of the PRN

Membership of the PRN is open to the following, subject to our policy on conflicts of interest as outlined in Section 4 below.

- academic researchers, or
- members of a charity, advocacy, government, NHS, local authorities or other public or third sector organisations interested in the prevention of NCDs.

An individual will become a Network member by completing the registration form online via [the PRN website](#) and, if accepted as a member, will be eligible to attend Interest Group and other members' meetings, be nominated as a co-ordinating committee member (subject to an available position becoming vacant), and access PRN recourses.

3.1. Co-ordinating Committee

The PRN Co-ordinating Committee will be consulted on all key decisions, major financial decisions, and the future direction of the PRN, including conference preparations.

The Co-ordinating committee will be made up of:

- Members (max of 14) nominated and appointed by the seven UKPRP funded Consortia that helped to form the PRN's predecessor, the UKPRP Community of Practice, until the end of September 2026
- Additional members (up to 6) appointed to the end of September 2026 by being nominated by another PRN member, and by completing an application form. If there is greater interest than 6 places, an online election will be run.

3.2. Core Management Group

The core management group will be responsible for day to day running of the PRN and will be accountable to the UK Prevention Research Partnership in accordance with the grant provided to the network by UKPRP. The Core Management Group will be made up of two Co-Principal Investigators (co-PI), one Manager (M) and one Research Fellow (RF). This is currently:

- Niamh Fitzgerald & Ruth Dundas (co-PIs)
- Anna Orme (M)
- Jack Martin (RF)



The core management group will be supported by other research or administrative staff at the University of Stirling as provided for within the grant from UKPRP.

4. Management and Declarations of Interests

4.1. Principles:

The PRN is committed to the principle of transparency in matters of conflict of interest and to ensuring that PRN activities proceed without including or benefitting unhealthy commodity industry actors.

This means that a person who has worked for or on behalf of an unhealthy commodity industry organisation in the past three years, as defined in section 4.2, may not be eligible to be a member of the PRN or to attend PRN events.

All declarations will be considered individually, so, for example, a person who has merely been in casual employment in a bar or shop selling unhealthy commodity products would not normally be excluded on that basis.

4.2. Definitions:

Unhealthy commodity industry (UCI)

This term is used to collectively refer to companies who manufacture, produce, process, distribute, import, sell and/or market products or services that are considered detrimental to physical or mental health, or a risk factor for non-communicable disease, as well as other organisations or actors representing or largely funded by such companies including business associations, social aspects organisations, charities, thinktanks, lobbyists, trade bodies, or professional services. Such products include but are not limited to alcohol, tobacco, ultra-processed/high salt/high sugar/high fat foods/beverages, breastmilk substitutes, cannabis arms/munitions, fossil fuels, and gambling. For the purposes of transparency, it also includes products where the risks or benefits are contested including, but not limited to, vaping and pharmaceutical industries.

4.3. Management of Declarations

All PRN members will be asked to make a declaration; you can do so [here](#). Existing members will be asked to update this at regular intervals to be decided by the Co-ordinating Committee.

All members of the Co-ordinating Committee are asked to make a similar declaration prior to being accepted on the committee. Declarations will be reviewed by the leads of the PRN 'Commercial Interactions' Interest group, with support from the PRN RF & M and at least one of the Co-PIs, who may request further information. The leads of this interest group will provide advice to the core management group on eligibility as a PRN member or Co-ordinating Committee member, or to attend an event, and on other matters relating to management of interests and transparency with reference to contemporary standards within public health. Final decisions on eligibility will rest with the Core Management Group.

All activities of the PRN that are open to non-PRN members shall be organised to ensure that attendees, participants or speakers who are not members of the PRN provide adequate declarations to enable compliance with the principles set out in sections 4.1 above.



Existing members must notify the PRN Co-PIs should their circumstances change in future and update their declaration accordingly and promptly.

Failure to disclose or clarify relevant information may also constitute grounds for participation to be refused or for membership to be declined or revoked.

Anyone who believes they have been unfairly excluded on the basis of this policy may appeal by writing to the Co-PIs and provide clarification of their circumstances or outline why an exception should apply in their case. The PRN Co-PIs will then make the final decision, taking advice as they see fit.

4.4. What should I declare?

Based on work carried out by the PRN's Management of Commercial Interactions in research Interest Group, it is deemed unfeasible to monitor all PRN members' interests, interactions and past activity with all private sector actors. Due to the PRN having a focus on system level, up-stream drivers of NCDs, inter- and trans- disciplinary working is encouraged and so some PRN members may regularly or occasionally interact with private sector organisations that would not normally fulfil the definition of 'unhealthy commodity industry' provided above. This may include housing developers, town planners, architects, technology companies etc.

Therefore, all PRN members are asked to:

- be wary of the vested interests or alternate motives of private sector and other organisations who engage with academic and other organisations interested in prevention.
- be vigilant with regards to the principle of transparency and therefore declare any relevant interests (including links with private sector organisations) when engaging in PRN discussions and activities.
- demonstrate good practice in these matters, that is the principle of 'if in doubt, declare', therefore declaring any link or interest that might be relevant to PRN discussions and activities, so that listeners/readers are informed.
- declarations are not normally expected to cover a period earlier than the previous three years; however, members should declare any circumstances that could be perceived as a conflict of interest of sufficient significance or size that they are likely to be embarrassing to the individual or to the PRN if not declared and later come to light.

4.5. Declarations relating to presented/submitted work at PRN Conferences and events

A full declaration of relevant interests and support for the presented work must be provided by any speakers or presenters (including of posters) at any PRN events, activities, or conferences. Such a declaration must be included in abstracts for presentation at a Conference at the time of submission and disclosed at the start of any presentation. Particular attention should be paid to declaring any links with or funding from commercial sector organisations, or with bodies funded by such organisations.

"Funding" includes research costs, salaries, speaker fees, accommodation, transportation, and meals, but is not restricted to these. In case of such funding, any role of the funder in design, implementation and write-up of the research or project should be specified. In case there is no such interest to declare, the declaration can be "No conflict of interest to declare".

