



Prevention Research 2026 – Conference Report

Conference Organisers

The second edition of the Prevention Research Conference saw the [Prevention Research Network](#) (PRN) collaborate with [Population Health Improvement UK](#) (PHI UK) to jointly coordinate the organisation of the conference. PHI UK aims to discover innovative and inclusive ways to improve the health of people, places and communities. As well as reducing health inequalities through the development and evaluation of long-lasting and environmentally sustainable interventions. This aligned well with the PRN's multi/inter/trans-disciplinary, diverse community focused on the practice of prevention research, and so an agreement was made to co-host. The [National Institute for Health and Care Research](#) (NIHR) was then approached to collaborate due to their substantial network of researchers funded through the Public Health Research, Policy Research, Programme Grants for Applied Research, and the School of Public Health and related studies programmes.

Venue

[The Vox Conference Venue](#), Resort World, Marston Green, Birmingham B40 1PU

Overview

Over the two days of 4th & 5th of March 2026, PRN, PHI UK & NIHR brought together a range of prevention research stakeholders to share and discuss the latest research on preventing non-communicable disease and reducing health inequalities across the UK. The conference showcased NCD prevention research from UKPRP-funded consortia, PHI UK funded consortia, NIHR programmes as well as the wider UK research community. The conference handbook can be found [here](#). This includes all details of the programme, all the accepted abstracts that were presented at the conference, those involved in organising the event as well as the attendee list.

The objectives of the conference were:

- To bring members of the PRN together in person for the first time since 2023
- To foster discussions and strengthen connections between PRN, PHI UK & NIHR
- To bring together researchers and stakeholders from the wider prevention research community, including from the PRN, PHI UK & NIHR projects, under one roof
- To foster discussions and strengthen connections between prevention researchers and research users such as policy makers, local & national governments and advocacy groups



- To promote the Prevention Research Network, encouraging everyone in the prevention research space to join and become part of the Interest Groups in areas of shared interest/challenge

Conference format

The two-day conference comprised of keynote speeches from two well renowned experts, Professor Sharon Friel and Monika Kosinska, and a round table on reimagining healthier and more equitable futures moderated by Professor Petra Meier. Professor Adam Briggs & Professor Nick Wareham also provided the closing remarks which also discussed joining up the funding landscape for public health research in the UK. There were also fourteen symposia, seven workshops, eighty-four oral presentations, fifty-six spotlight presentation and twenty posters. The conference was structured to foster networking between prevention researchers and those operating in third sector, policy, practice or NGOs. This was achieved by the programme showcasing research conducted across the 3 host organisations and the wider prevention research community. Time for networking was purposefully built into the programme to strengthen connections between prevention researchers and research users.

Conference Themes

Themes emerged from the submitted abstracts and invited speakers, and were:

- **Commercial Determinants of Health:** This was the most prominent theme at this years conference, with both Professor Sharon Friel and Monika Kosinska having this as a main element to their speeches. There was also five sessions on this theme: two oral presentation session, a spotlight session on ‘Commercial Determinants of Health, Systems & Evidence’ as well as a workshosp lead by the PRN Interest group on Management of Commercial Interactions in Research.
- **Systems:** This was a key focus of the conference in 2023, as the UKPRP set out to build and support research consortia to drive the broad systems-level changes required to prevent NCDs. It is therefore unsurprising to have this as a prominent theme again this year. Three workshops focused on systems, all from UKPRP funded projects, including the PRN’ Interest Group on Systems thinking and complex systems whos workshop was on using systems approaches to connect communities and tackle complexity in prevention and Kailo’s session on their toolkit co-designing systems change.
- **Mental Health:** There were four sessions either dedicated to or involving mental health at this years conference. This included specific subjects such as the environmental influences on adolescent mental health and implications for prevention and Inequities in accessing mental health services among secondary school-aged young people in the UK. Colleagues from the the UKPRP funded Consrotia VISION also held a symposium on policy insights from a population understanding of mental health inequalities.
- **Innovative methods:** The UKPRP states that it aims to ‘support methodological innovation’ and this was evident not only from PRN/UKPRP funded groups but from PHI UK and NIHR’s as well. There was a session specifically highlighting particularly innovative or cuttingedge methods that included synthetic populations, a longitudinal, Bayesian quasi-experimental analysis and a symposia that disscussed the use of AI for Prevention and the opportunities and challenges that the community is faced with.



Attendees

417 individuals registered for the conference, with the vast majority registering for both days. To encourage third sector, policy, practice and those from NGOs to attend, complementary attendance was awarded to these individuals. A reduced rate for students and early-career researchers was also offered. Attendees consisted of delegates from all four UK nations and researchers from:

- All seven UKPRP consortia: [ActEarly](#), [GroundsWell](#), [Kailo](#), [SIPHER](#), [SPECTRUM](#), [TRUUD & VISION](#)
- All four PHI UK consortia: [Healthy Urban Places](#), [Local Health and Global Profits](#), [Policy Modelling For Health & Population Mental Health](#)
- Projects funded through NIHR programmes such as: [Public Health Research \(PHR\)](#), [Policy Research \(PRP\)](#), [Programme Grants for Applied Research \(PGfAR\)](#), and [the School of Public Health Research \(SPHR\)](#).

As with 2023, there was a considerable number of representatives from public and third sector organisations, see table 1.

Table 1: Organisations with at least one representative that attended the Prevention Research 2026 conference.

Action on Smoking & Health	Active Luton
Asthma + Lung UK	Beacon Services Resources
Birmingham City Council	Blackburn with Darwen Council
Born in Bradford	Bradford Council
Bradford Institute for Health Research	Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
British Heart Foundation	Cardiff & Vale University Health Board
City of Doncaster Council	Connect: North Korea
Coventry city council	Darlington Association on Disability
Dartington Service Design Lab	Department of Health and Social Care
Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust	Economic and Social Research Council, UK Research and Innovation
Gateshead Council	Glaucoma UK
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	Health and Care Research Wales (Welsh Government)
Healthy Caribbean Coalition Youth	High Trees Community Development Trust
Health and Safety Executive	Impact Investing Institute
Islington council	Lambeth Council
Leicestershire County Council	Lincolnshire Voluntary Engagement Team
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	Manchester City Council
Manchester Global Foundation	Medical Research Council
Mental Health Foundation	Middlesbrough Council
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)
NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre	NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaborations: Aberdeen, Lambeth & Medway
Nesta	Neuro Key
Newcastle City Council	NHS England
NHS Wales	North-East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Northern Ireland Assembly	Nottinghamshire County Council
Ochil Youths Community Improvement	One Wirral
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust	Oxfordshire County Council
Portsmouth City Council	Public Health Scotland



Public Health Wales	Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust
Sahara Wellbeing	Sandwell Council
Scottish Centre for Social Research	Sefton CVS
South Gloucestershire Council	Stockport Council
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	Sufra Foodbank
Surrey County Council	The Association of Directors of Public Health
The Health Foundation	Thrive LDN
UK Islamic Mission	University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust
West Midlands Combined Authority	Westmorland And Furness Council
World Health Organisation	Wigan Council
Your Local Pantry	

Feedback

The PR26 organising committee distributed a feedback form to all attendees after the conference. This received 61 responses, which are summarised below.

Reasons for attending:

- To present own research/study
- To find out what else is going on in the prevention research space

What worked well?

- The sessions were a good mix of topics and the variety of formats (workshops, symposia, longer and short presentations) worked well.
- The higher number of local authority and public sector attendees

What could be improved?

- Less parallel sessions
- Dedicated poster session
- Targeted networking activity / session
- More sessions on specific subjects such mental health
- Keynote from someone in local authority or public sector

What would be good to see next time?

- More interactive sessions / workshops – maybe repeating workshops so attendees can go to more than one
- Local authority input, what they want from research and the levers they have to use research to make a difference.