

NIHR Cross-ARC Child Health & Maternity Priority Programme

1st October 2020

This is a brief note intended for circulation to all Applied Research Collaborations (ARCs) and their health and social care partners. It summarises the aims of the Child Health & Maternity (CH&M) priority programme and the processes for developing the workplan, due in April 2021. The programme will be co-ordinated by a Programme Management Group (PMG), with members drawn from four consortium ARCs¹. A further five ARCs have expressed a commitment to collaborating. As stated in our application to NIHR, this programme of work will aim to achieve **four broad goals**:

1. We will identify a small number of interventions where research evidence offers clear opportunities for impact, and facilitate their implementation;
2. We will work with partners in health and other services to shape and support absorptive capacity and achieve improvements in health and services at a national or supra-regional level;
3. We will build on our expertise in implementation science to further develop and test effective methods to achieve change;
4. The networks we create will form a platform for national child and maternal health implementation and identification of future opportunities for health improvement.

We can summarise our **programme deliverables** as follows:

1. Achieve a change in services in more than one region.
2. *Demonstrate improvement in health outcomes*².
3. Develop methods to facilitate wider implementation of selected interventions.
4. Produce widely applicable lessons about service improvement.
5. Produce evidence of effectiveness.
6. Identify further areas for work beyond the limited number of proposals adopted and support applications for further funding.

¹ PenARC, ARC-YH, ARC West and ARC NENC

² We recognise that demonstrating improvements in health outcomes, especially in this short period, will be extremely difficult and may not be achievable.

The CH&M programme will seek to identify, deliver and evaluate the delivery of 3-4 evidence-based interventions that have not yet been widely implemented and tested. These interventions have not been pre-selected; the first six months of the programme will be devoted to identifying the best candidates. Potential candidate interventions should meet the following **criteria**:

1. The “intervention” must have convincing evidence of efficacy.
2. There must be some evidence of “implementability” or “deliverability”.
3. The intervention should seek to improve outcomes for those with the largest burden.
4. Service providers must want to deliver the intervention – in more than one area.
5. Service users must want the intervention.
6. There must be funding for the service (or a serious possibility of funding).
7. The ARC funding must be able to deliver research outputs – these might be related to effectiveness or to the methods of implementation.
8. Submissions from research teams are expected to involve collaboration with practitioners and/or commissioners/policy-makers.

Our aim is that proposals adopted by collaboration will be led by the proposer but with involvement across the collaboration.

Developing the workplan:

There are 3 stages to the programme workplan development.

Stage 1: Gathering suggestions/ideas of candidate interventions

- We will hold an online briefing session for those interested (ARCs & partners) on **Friday 16th October 2020 at 12.30pm** where we will describe the process in more detail. Book onto the meeting [here](#).
- We will invite groups to submit suggestions for projects via a brief online form – link to follow.
- The deadline for submission of suggestions will be **4pm on Friday, 6th November 2020**.
- All submissions will be collated and, where relevant, researchers and providers will be connected across regions to form collaborations.
- The PMG panel will meet at the end of November to consider submissions and to group ideas into themes for the workshop sessions in January (see below).
- A document containing thematically grouped suggestions will be sent to all ARCs and partners in early December, with an invitation to join sessions in January to support the prioritisation process.

Stage 2: Prioritising the ideas by theme

- We will run facilitated workshop sessions – separately by theme³ – in the first half of January 2021 to consider the submitted ideas. Practitioners/parents/PPI representatives will chair the sessions, supported by an ARC consortium member/s.
- The workshop groups will be asked to create shortlists of not more than 3-4 prioritised ideas, assessed against the APEASE criteria (see Michie et al 2014)⁴. These include Affordability, Practicability, Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness, Acceptability, Side-effects and safety, and Equity.
- *Note: We anticipate identifying more projects than can be supported via this CH&M programme. We will aim to use some resource to provide core help over the life of the programme to support the writing of grant applications for those projects that are prioritised but not selected for the programme.

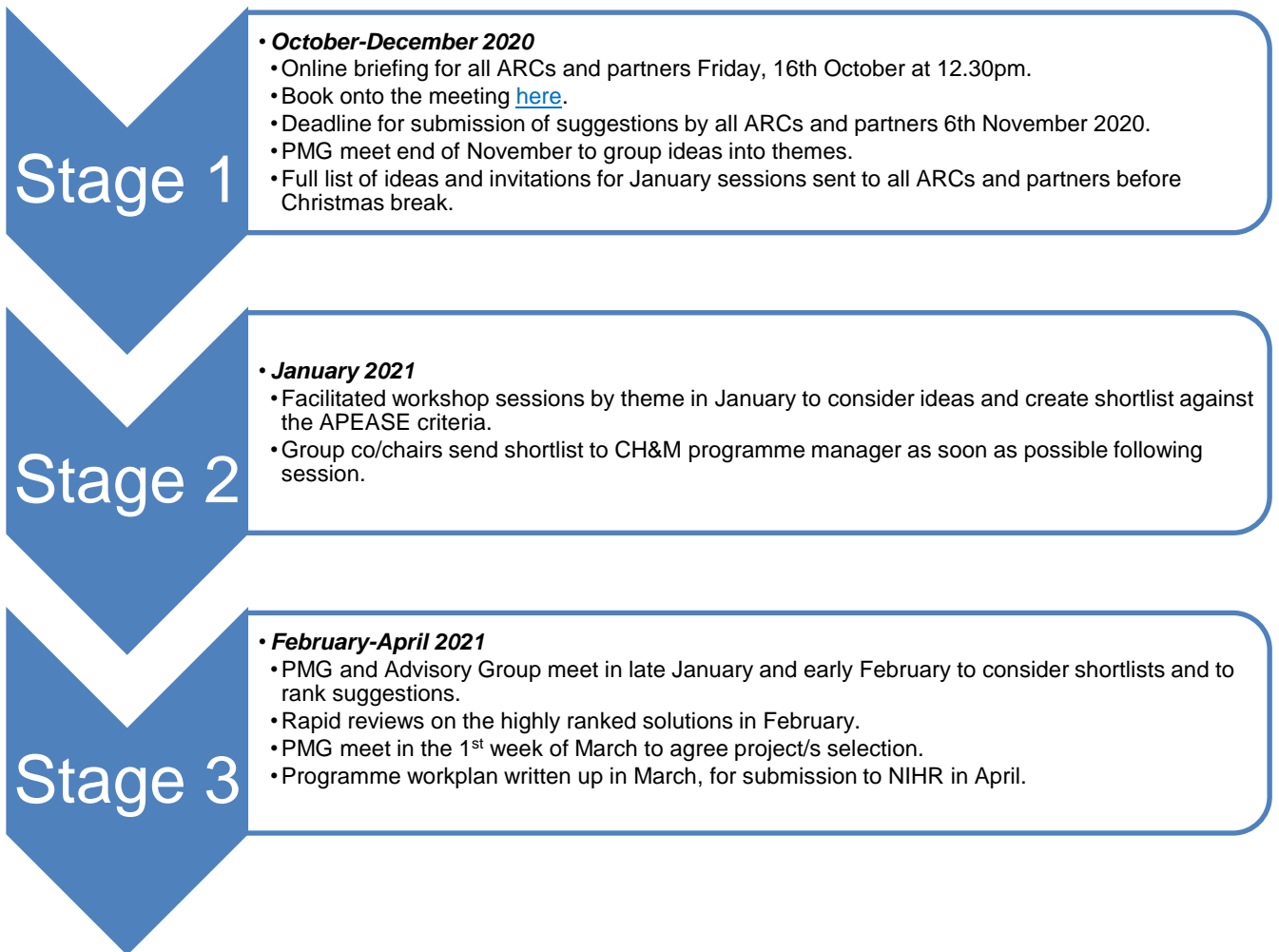
Stage 3: Selecting the projects

- The PMG and Advisory Group will meet in late January and early February 2021 to consider the prioritised shortlists from all themes. The PMG and Advisory Group will rank suggested ideas.
- PenARC and ARC-YH will undertake rapid reviews on the highly ranked priorities in February 2021.
- The PMG will meet in the 1st week of March to consider the reviews and to select the adopted projects.
- The consortium will produce the programme workplan, for submission to NIHR in April 2021.
- Project implementation is expected to begin in May/June 2021.

³ We will not pre-specify themes now but based on the first child health meeting held in 2019 we expect these to fall broadly into Maternity, Mental health (maternity/PND and children & YP), Children with complex needs (childhood disability), Acute care, Public Health, and Social Care.

⁴ Michie S, Atkins L, West R. (2014) *The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Designing Interventions*. London: Silverback Publishing.

Timeline visual:



If you have any questions about the Child Health & Maternity Programme or want to register your interest to receive information and notifications, please get in touch via email penarc@exeter.ac.uk in the first instance.