

Making Public Services People Services



STARTING WELL, LIVING WELL, **AGEING WELL**

Insights Report October 2022



² CONTENTS











⁴ INTRODUCTION

The University of Liverpool (UoL) has seven interdisciplinary Research Themes aimed at bringing together academics across the institution and beyond to develop local and global solutions to improve health, create wealth and ensure social justice.

Starting Well, Living Well, Ageing Well (SWLWAW) is one of these key Institutional Research Themes, aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of babies and children, and the adults they will become. This interdisciplinary Research Theme aims to enable collaboration across the University, public and third sectors, and industry, using Knowledge Exchange as a vehicle to support the University in conducting impactful research.

In late December 2021, the Theme's leadership team (Profs Michael Beresford and Anne McArdle) developed plans for a series of Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) funded programmes. These included a project to develop the Theme. This development, included building the profile, increasing engagement and inclusivity, strengthening leadership, and developing collective ownership of the Theme amongst colleagues in each of the University's three Faculties. This work built on the existing expertise and strengthened the gaps to ensure a 'life- course' focus.

It was agreed that this project would be better facilitated by an external organisation, who would be able to work with SWLWAW to identify strengths and could view the Theme in the round, to better identify gaps. Capacity came on recommendation by colleagues within the Starting Well programme at Liverpool Health Partners (LHP) and the University's Civic Data Cooperative, as an organisation with considerable experience supporting strategic engagement exercises which have demonstrably helped public and third sector organisations to overcome barriers preventing positive impact. The Theme approached Capacity to embark on an engagement exercise with a wide range of stakeholders within and outside the current structure and deliver a Knowledge Exchange programme.

Discussions focused on how to create the best conditions for collaboration, leading to increased profile of the Theme and to create space for collective approaches to research and impact in areas relating to the Theme across the University. The project also gave SWLWAW the opportunity to work with community partners and ensure that all research and partnership activity within the Theme has direct and real-world impact, building the foundations for citizens to lead a healthy, happy and productive life.

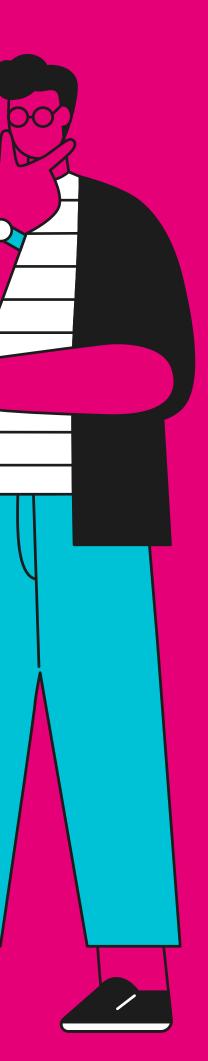
This report summarises the approach Capacity took to HEIF-related projects, drawing out the insights gathered and recommendations for what SWLWAW could do next to help drive collaboration forwards.





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02 METHOD







⁶ **2.1 OUTPUTS**

Our approach to delivering this work centred around three main outputs:



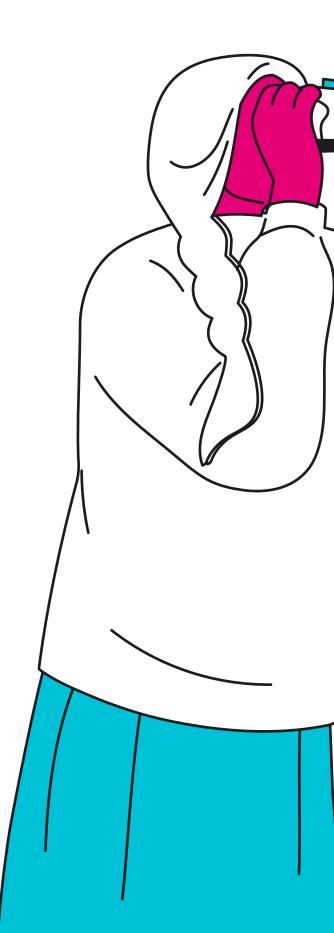
Stakeholder engagement: To undertake a consultation with key stakeholders internal and external to the University (incl. business, public and third-sector organisations, community bodies and the wider public) with key lines of enquiry to understand their activity and ambition in the SWLWAW space.

2

Sandpit Event: To deliver one large Knowledge Exchange event with key colleagues from the University and its strategic partners to explore key lines of enquiry and create a network which will collaborate on a strategically significant grant application.

3

Insights report: To capture insights from these two activities to inform the future strategic direction of the Theme.







⁷ **2.2 WHAT WE DID**

Stakeholder engagement

To support the Theme in understanding this challenge, we started by listening closely to the people who the Theme wanted to engage as a priority; people researching and delivering services in this space.

This included the Faculty APVCs at UoL and other significant academic leaders at UoL, Liverpool City Council Director of Public Health, the Heads of Research at neighbouring Universities, incl. Edge Hill University and Liverpool John Moores University, as well as various Directors and organisation leads at partner organisations in the region (for a full list of stakeholders, see appendix 1). This allowed us to build a bridge between stakeholders and the Theme to deliver a thorough and thoughtful engagement project that gathers detailed insights, with the ambition to inform the future strategic direction.









8 2.2 WHAT WE DID Questions we asked included:

Where are the University's existing areas of research and partnership strength in areas relating to 'Starting Well', 'Living Well' and 'Ageing Well'?

What are the needs of the local population and systems incl. NHS trusts, public and private sectors that have a stake in 'Starting Well', 'Living Well' and 'Ageing Well'?

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- 2.
- Who are the key external stakeholders within these areas of strength, and are we effectively engaging with them?
- Where we are not already, how can we better support these stakeholders?
- What is your organisation's or your personal ambitions?
- Within this space, what kind of things do people find frustrating or unhelpful?

- the key ingredients for success?
- What would motivate or enable you to increase your collaboration?
- What research knowledge would complement your organisation's work?

What does the 'life-course approach' mean **1U** to you?

What can we learn from other areas? What are





9 2.2 WHAT WE DID

Objectively we agreed a plan of engagement and delivery to start work on the project in a coordinated manner. This also gave us structure and purpose to deliver the Sandpit Event and gather our insights. Our key activities included:

Key Activity	Ригроѕе
Agreeing key principles and messaging with Theme leadership	To give clarity about the initial scope how we planned to move forward a with how to talk about it externally.
 Mapping key stakeholders Interviews with leaders to identify key people and teams Desk based research Boots on the ground 	To give a solid understanding of the to connect with.
Delivering the engagement project with stakeholders	To collect a rich, detailed perspective happening now and what's needed What trends and developments did aware of when designing an approx
Reflecting back what we're hearing, refining the early insights and creating the conditions for collaboration	The Sandpit Event would enable us emerging insights from the stakehol building on the quality of insights to high and create space for people to
Digesting the insights and sharing what we've heard	To give a clear and informative over heard in a written report.

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¹⁰ **2.2 WHAT WE DID**



Pump-priming projects

Running parallel to Capacity's engagement with stakeholders, the SWLWAW team promoted the opportunity for academic researchers at the University to apply for pump-priming funding to support small projects aligned to the Theme. This funding was issued by HEIF. In total 22 applications were received, spanning each of UoL's 3 Faculties. The SWLWAW team awarded funding to 8 of these projects, to a total of just over \pounds 22k.

The areas of interest that shone through in these applications were used to inform the design of the Sandpit Event, as follows.





¹¹ **2.2 WHAT WE DID**

Sandpit Event

Early insights from the consultation exercise, provided some ideas of what a Sandpit Event could look like for attendees. We discussed ideas with the steering group and designed an interactive event for colleagues. 73 individuals joined us on the day, bringing together colleagues from across UoL and beyond (including Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool City Region, LHP, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, University of Manchester) to network, share research ideas, expertise and priorities and to take an active role in helping to develop the profile and future direction of the Theme.

Throughout the day we presented back the emerging insights to attendees to update on the current position and ambition of the Theme to engage better with aligned agencies and academics present. Based on the areas of interest that surfaced through the SWLWAW HEIF pump-priming applications, several Catalyst areas of focus were revealed within the Theme, including:

- Creative methods
- Diagnostics
- Frailty

- Neuro
- Nutrition
- Post-COVID







¹² 2.2 WHAT WE DID

Sandpit Event (Continued)

Project leads who were able to attend on the day were tasked with presenting their pumppriming project in a 3-minute presentation. Attendees then selected which project was most relevant to their expertise or interests and 'huddled' around one of the research leads to form a Special Interest Group (SIG). Each group was chaired by a facilitator to help attendees to hear more about the project, contribute to design and thinking and connect with the opportunity.

Alongside this, the SWLWAW team presented an overview of UoL research and partnership assets available to academics within the institution and external partners and positioned themselves as a team that could facilitate access to resources and ensure that future grant applications would be supported through the Theme infrastructure. The Sandpit Event Agenda, Facilitator Guidance and Event Action plan can be found in appendices 4, 5 and 6.

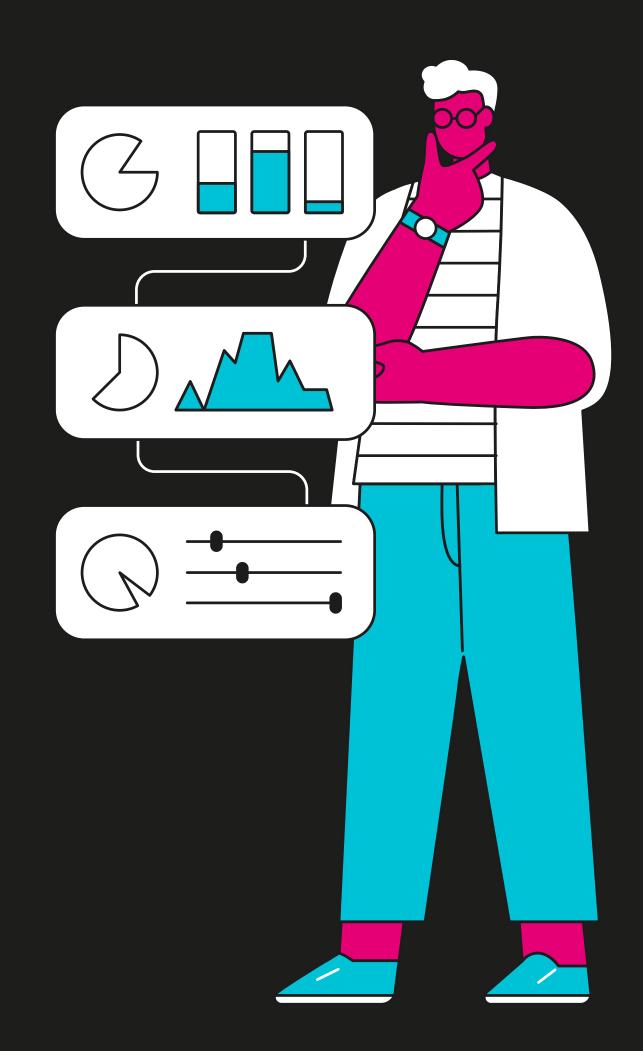




¹³ **2.2 WHAT WE DID**

Insights Report

This Report brings together the learnings from the project and suggests next steps. The following sections provide detail behind the insights and provide a series of recommendations and a practical implementation plan to ensure action.







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O3 CASE STUDIES



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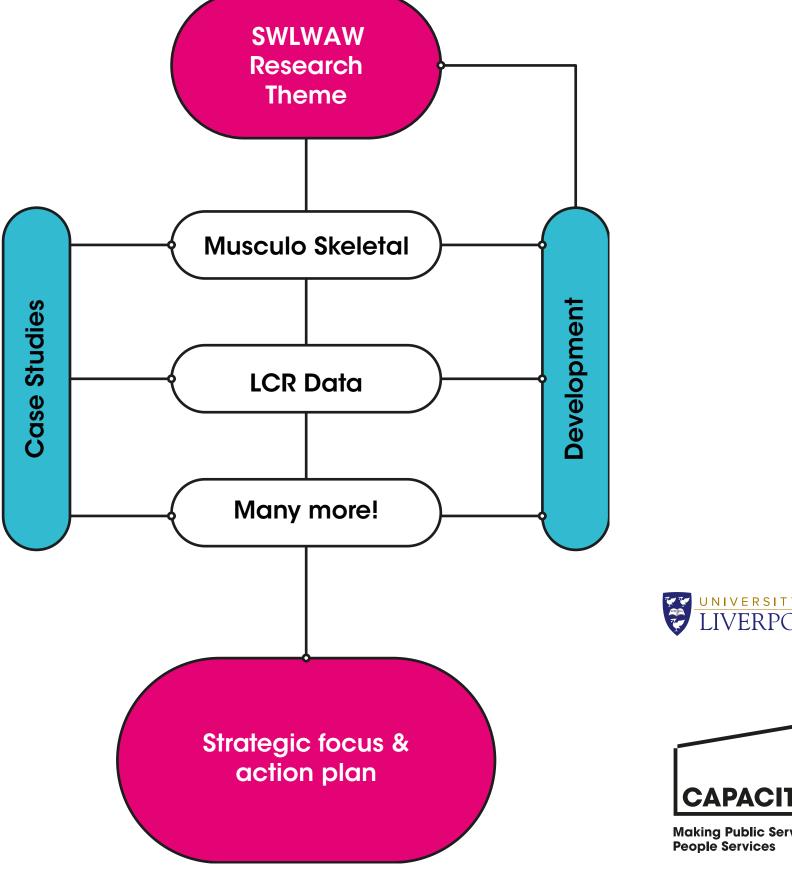
15 **CASE STUDIES**

Parallel to the work focused upon in this report, the SWLWAW Theme leads have also commissioned work to help feed into the wider Theme strategy. These included: Tackling Obesity; Chronic Conditions; Complex Lives; Child Friendly Cities, as well as some specific 'Deep Dives' included here.

It is important to recognise where these two 'Deep Dives' have taken place, these are considered as Case Studies, selected due to their critical mass across the life-course. These examples are:

- Deep Dive into Musculoskeletal 1.
- Deep Dive into LCR Data 2.

Across the breadth of the Theme there is more room to champion other areas of research and many areas of strength to build upon and feed into the longer term Theme strategy.





Deep Dive into Musculoskeletal

Prior to this work, the SWLWAW Theme had identified several existing and/or emerging flagship research areas. One of these included that of Musculoskeletal research across the life-course, which brought its own challenges in uniting successful groups, for example, in which Starting Well showed its greatest strengths in Clinical and Translational research, Ageing Well's greatest strength was in Basic Science. Here, the different aspects of the Theme saw an opportunity to learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, in parallel to this workstream, the SWLWAW Theme commissioned LHP to carry out a system-wide project to develop workshops designed around collaboration, identify funding opportunities and scope opportunities for clinicians and academics to collaborate with Musculoskeletal (MSK) disorders across the life-course, and areas of Ageing Well which the Theme recognised had budding areas to develop. A full report is available with more detail about the method, findings and recommendations, see appendix 2.

In this work a series of scoping tools, including 36 individual meetings, pump-priming applications and an MSK Workshop were conducted to support teams to develop a shared oversight for continuous improvement. Here participants unanimously welcomed this shared vision, with ideas for research emerging, including:

- Starting Well, Living Well, Ageing Well, and intergenerational nature of MSK disorders (most frequently cited)
- Frailty, pain and MSK disorders (second most frequently cited)
- Activity, nutrition, co-occurring conditions re mental health and MSK disorders, fatigue (often cited)
- · Participants also discussed shared challenges faced, these five themes were:
- Existing support available not understood/used
- Potential training/development needs
- Potential variation (warranted and unwarranted)
- Limited opportunities to connect/lack of system overview
- Perception of complexity/lack of system overview

The reflection here from LHP was to improve these development needs, the multi-disciplinary teams should be able to work collectively to assess scope of their work and articulate its stakeholders, purpose and links. Access here could be supported by application of standardisation via support services, training and development. Here too, a system overview would support greater strategic direction, where participants see their role as a proactive connector and with a need for investment.





Deep Dive into Musculoskeletal (Continued)

Other observations were made around a perceived lack of resource, the importance of building confidence in colleagues to connect with individuals and organisations across multi-disciplinary teams and the perception of detrimental changes to specialist MSK staffing.

The participants who engaged in the deep dive into MSK were also invited to apply into the HEIF funded pump priming opportunity, and some participants attended the Sandpit Event with wider SWLWAW Theme stakeholders, supporting the development of system overview in the SWLWAW Theme and MSK opportunities.

The resulting three main recommendations are not only specific to MSK development but also bleed into the wider framework within the SWLWAW Research Theme centred around three key areas:

1. Legacy for pump priming projects Quarterly meetings with Theme leads to nurture and manage lead applications across SWLWAW, selecting key pump-prime projects and giving structure around funding governance and thematic support. Future Sandpit Events should be arranged annually, and this could be within the wider context of the SWLWAW Theme.

2. Special Interest Groups

Allow space for wider ideas and sub-themes to be shared and managed via the formation of SIGs, forging new connections across the space and encouraging wider collaboration. These groups can form the basis for the catalyst areas at annual SWLWAW Sandpit Events.

3. Leadership, communication and branding

Formulate a legacy plan for pump priming projects and SIGs, emphasising maturation of culture. Alongside this the Theme should promote a discreet leadership legacy to engage leaders in the delivery of institutional Themes, with considered and consistent vocabulary. This should be collated to design branding for the SWLWAW Theme in its entirety.

These findings should be considered in tandem with the insights gathered in this report to shape a robust framework to move forwards, creating an action plan for the Theme to prioritise and deliver progress against.





Deep Dive into Data in LCR

Similarly, SWLWAW commissioned Capacity, working with the Starting Well programme of LHP to carry out an engagement piece with LCR system partners, particularly focusing on sharing data. The Starting Well programme identified that there were a number of data related programmes and initiatives being delivered across the system and researchers and clinicians wanted to understand how these programmes were working together across the system and how they might engage. Specifically, LHP noted that there was some cross over, particularly across the Civic Data Cooperative, CIPHA and System P.

The Starting Well programme and the SWLWAW Theme recognised the importance of shaping this messaging moving forward, and the value of creating clarity across partners. The support of Starting Well and the SWLWAW Theme was critical for enabling this key piece of work and will help to facilitate the continuation of wider system working, specifically related to daya, in turn raising the profile of the wider SWLWAW projects. With 'buy in' from the 3 system partners, Capacity facilitated, challenged and checked each organisation's offer, with the ambition of achieving better clarification with wider stakeholders about the purpose and vision of each organisation.

Working together the project team agreed a shared narrative and a visual representation, which can be found below. For further detail on the method and findings, please see appendix 3.

This work should also be considered as an asset to the SWLWAW Theme, where system partners are aligned and can engage with SIGs to gather intelligence and achieve results.



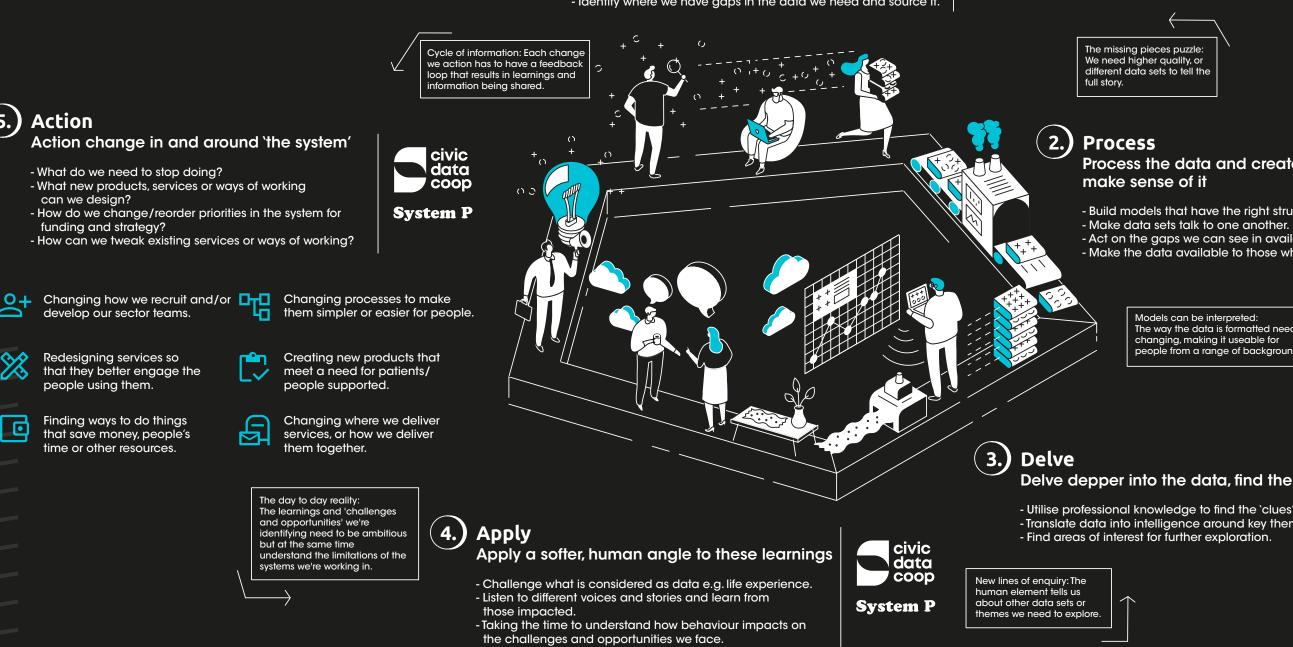


Deep Dive into Data in LCR

Collect

Collect more, better quality data

- Encourage the general public to share their data. - Support providers to collect data and find more ways to share it. - Educate professionals on how to collect data and record it well. - Identify where we have gaps in the data we need and source it.



This piece of work was commissioned by the University of Liverpool in conjunction with Liverpool Health Partners as part of the Starting Well, Living Well, Aging Well theme. This work is funded by the Higher Education Innovation Fund, UoL



Action

\$

can we design?

funding and strategy?

develop our sector teams.

Redesigning services so

Finding ways to do things

that save money, people's

time or other resources.

people using them.

that they better engage the

- What do we need to stop doing?

Process the data and create models to

- Build models that have the right structures.

civic

data coop

CIPHA

- Act on the gaps we can see in available data.

- Make the data available to those who can make use of it.

Models can be interpreted: The way the data is formatted needs changing, making it useable for people from a range of backgrounds

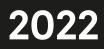


Delve depper into the data, find themes and insights

- Utilise professional knowledge to find the 'clues' data gives. - Translate data into intelligence around key themes of work.













21 Our insights can be broken down into six distinct areas:







01 FOCUSSING THE VISION OF THE THEME

The SWLWAW Theme is acknowledged as a broad. Whilst this is intentional to enable maximum input from across Faculties, colleagues felt that the enormity of scope prohibited engagement because people struggled to see where they could contribute.

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Across all stakeholders, there was agreement of the overarching vision and purpose of the Theme. However internal colleagues felt they did not have clear expectations placed upon them regarding their interaction with the Theme. People were supportive of the Theme, but practical action contributing towards the Theme felt opportunistic and not strategically managed.

Whilst there was unanimous support for the Theme, stakeholders would welcome the opportunity to mutually create the ambition and focus for the Theme to ensure it connects across all three Faculties, gives real world value beyond the University itself and increases its reach across all parts of the University itself.



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01 FOCUSSING THE VISION OF THE THEME

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The entire life-course is spanned within the Theme across Starting Well, Living Well and Ageing Well. Starting Well has the most activity, followed by Ageing Well with Living Well existing between the two with only modest Theme specific activity to date. Where a Knowledge Exchange culture exists in the Starting Well Theme with a clinical research focus, Ageing Well displays a more basic science approach, particularly in MSK research. There is an opportunity here for leads to share learning across the wider Theme.

Both Starting Well and Ageing Well have dedicated leadership capacity, whilst Living Well does not. Stakeholders recognised that without dedicated leadership, whilst Living Well would continue to be supported, it would not be delivered against in the same way. Above all, we need to be more intentional with our ambition for the Theme, aligning its vision with resources available but also needed to deliver against it.





SWLWAW is so big, so much so that it is worse than other UoL Themes in terms of a coordinated approach. We need to shift resource into a space that will give a slow ROI (Return On Investment), to put resource here we need to disinvest elsewhere and we're not doing this. Feels like operationally there is will and commitment, but budgets do not give the ability to properly do this. We have a very small resource in a very big space- are HEIs really minded to genuinely tackle this?"

- Anonymous stakeholder, UoL





²⁵ 02 ETHOS AND CULTURE OF THE THEME

Across all the insights gathered it is clear that colleagues genuinely value collaboration and the leadership within the Theme is prioritising the growth of this culture to achieve the vision. Colleagues both within and outside of the University value the Theme's intentions to create space for idea exchange, learning new skills and recognise this will enable access to funding and higher quality results alongside the personal benefits to connecting with new networks.

The loudest insight we heard was that people are desperate to talk in the post Covid-19 world. People recognise collaboration has reduced through remote working and they are hungry to connect face to face. There was also recognition that this doesn't happen without design and management, with a loud ask to the Theme to create the space and time for this, for people to think through their ideas with peers.

Working in collaboration does happen across all Faculties. However, this collaboration became most apparent when activity commenced. More often than not, collaboration begins once the research has been framed. Greater impact could be felt if research is designed in collaboration from inception, enabling complementary disciplines to form the direction together rather than one dominating.



Whilst this project has focussed on the SWLWAW Theme, throughout the insights gathering process it has become clear that the seven University Themes are generally all working independently, and so it is likely that a lot of the insights presented here are not unique to this Theme.

We need to know what the real problems are, but it's clear people can be put off by the challenge of bridging the gaps to find out what needs to be done."

> Laura Harkness-Brennan, APVC Research and Impact, Faculty of Science & Engineering, UoL



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03 REAL WORLD 26 IMPACT

It's essential to embed patients and the community in projects from the start, otherwise it's really hard to embed the work and make it worthwhile, people just disconnect."

> Pete Dixon. Applied Research Collaboration, North West Coast, NIHR (ARC NWC)

For the University, the REF and KEF exercises are helpful frameworks we can use to assess the quality of our research and Knowledge Exchange but beyond this there is an appetite to have local impact driven research. Many stakeholders felt the Theme should promote civic responsibility, being careful to include local people in the design and delivery of research. Usually services support our most vulnerable, so it is essential efforts are made to ensure we are not continually disadvantaging these populations and widening the inequality gap by not including their experiences in our research.

How do we involve people who are the most underserved? It can feel like we are adding to inequality if we are talking about lifestyle interventions."

> **Chris Littlewood** Associate Dean for Research and Innovation Edge Hill University





²⁷ 03 REAL WORLD IMPACT

Care must be taken by UoL colleagues, to fully understand how research implements scientific outputs well and appropriately for patients in real world applications. External partners could play a stronger role in helping to illustrate the bigger picture of the workings of models of health and social care. Similarly, when treatments are being developed, how well do our research teams fully understand the underlying diagnosis and associated processes? Research leads must engage well with leaders in these spaces to understand the full process in detail, in order to design clear recommendations for any research into everyday practice.

Where possible there needs to be a considered approach to visibility of the big picture, where external stakeholders and catalyst leads can meet regularly to bring clarity to the and full timeline of existing services that include citizens, service providers interaction and process. Clear context in the health and social care industries could help to glue together collaboration across sub-themes, where the boundaries between the sub-themes of SWLWAW serve a purpose in organising internal resource around the Theme but can create unhelpful boundaries to a flourishing ecosystem of research and action.



There should be better connectivity between the sub-themes, they are too generic to be useful and have reinforced unhelpful boundaries between children, adults and older adults services, compounded by our local trust and service landscape."

> Louise Edwards, Executive Director of Strategy, Merseycare



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⁸ 03 REAL WORLD IMPACT

Aligned to this, most research is peer reviewed by academics which can risk promoting a culture that excludes real world impact. External agencies could play a key role here in translating findings into action, helping to interpret data and information into accessible and practical applications for a wide range of audiences, such as clinicians, commissioners and local authority leaders, to better improve real lives of citizens via the services providers they encounter.

Whilst publications are important, colleagues outside of the University recognise the role they can play in shaping models of care. Where best practice exists, models of excellence can be few and far between. Colleagues in health and social care welcome the knowledge and intelligence of the Theme in helping them design their operating models.

We are desperate for a needs-based approach with different models and applications which are evidence based. We need to be doing research with a delivery hat on. I know we have the data on future demand, we should be able to use it for practical applications, affecting our services in the real world."

> Dani Jones Director of Strategy, Partnerships & Transformation, Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust

Where data is collected across a complex map of systems and databases, we are data rich, but what intelligence are researchers pulling from this information? At place we heard that services are intelligence poor but there is real potential to use data for civic good. The Theme is well positioned here to draw out insight and turn this into applicable knowledge for services.







One of the loudest insights we heard from key stakeholders is that the SWLWAW Theme lacks a confident identity to bring teams together and to strengthen research questions. There was agreement that progress in this space would mean sharing what research is already happening in a live format both within UoL and outside the institution.

I would like more foresight of what is going on. Some individuals do this well, but we need more transparency in general. This needs to be simple and applicable - it can be really confusing!"

Dani Jones,

Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Transformation, Alder Hey

As previously touched on in this Report, the external partners working in areas related to the Theme want more clarity about the research that's already happening, the opportunities to engage and what impact research will have on public service design. Lack of clarity here is preventing sector leaders from independently commissioning research. Nuggets of greatness already exist, and where we are seeing examples of best practice research that is transferrable, the Theme can showcase to encourage more of this behaviour.

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Beyond this we heard it is really hard to identify who to collaborate with around areas of specialist interest within our HEI institutions and also in external organisations. Currently, collaboration centres around trusted relationships and it is rare that people push themselves beyond their comfort zone and create opportunities to widen the potential partner contacts, especially where there isn't a robust framework to support this. Currently this is a blocker to collaboration. This is difficult and complex to do meaningfully. There is therefore a place for the Theme to help colleagues and wider stakeholders come together to achieve this. This might require some deeper thinking on the vision of the Theme and it's aims in order to tease out what the Theme priorities are, and focus conversation in these areas. Similarly, neighbouring HEIs told us they have comparable Themes which align to collaborative research topics and there is real potential here to work closer at place.



In order to collaborate you need to know someone who knows someone. That person is likely to be someone in a different institution in a different part of the country."

> Alex Lord, Lever Chair of Town and Regional Planning, Geography & Planning, UoL

The University is brimming with assets that offer tools for collaborative working, and support both pre- and postaward stages of the research process. But we heard these assets are often not known about or shared beyond their immediate beneficiaries. There is an opportunity here for the Theme to better promote the below assets and weave them into its research.







Whilst these assets are not exhaustive, there are various assets academics could be using, including:

Research & Impact Strategy

Develops and implements institutional strategies and policies to further University research ambitions in response to the external Landscape

I Research & Partnerships Development

Supports academic colleagues and external partners to increase the success of new research initiatives.

Consultancy & Innovation

Provides dedicated support for all consultancy, facility and equipment service projects and co-ordinates the University's approach to the UK Research and Innovation Strategy.

Clinical Directorate

Aligns University research with the NHS by supporting priority research areas and streamlining functional activities.

Faculty Research & Impact Offices

Located in each of the Univiersity's three Faculities to provide support for academic research and impact activity.

Open Research Team

Supports with incorporation of Open Research principles into your work, including Open Access and effective Research Data Management.

Consultancy

Provides dedicated support for all consultancy, facility and equipment service projects.

Research Support Office

Ensures financial and regulatory compliance on research grants submitted to funders.

Intellectual Property Commercialisation

Provides practical advice on working with industry, protecting IP, filing patents and setting up spinouts

💥 Liverpool Health Partners SPARK

The Single Point of Access to Research and Knowledge (SPARK) brings together NHS and Universities support functions to deliver worldclass health research.

NHIR Applied Research Collaboration NWC

Unites academics, health/social care providers, the public, universties and local authorities to improve the quality, delivery and efficiency of health and care services.

LIV-SRFs ا__

Ensures that all members of staff have access to the equipment and expertise to pursue outstanding science.





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We need to see time and impetus put into bringing people together. [Theme leads] should take a leading role in using their assets to bring people together."

> Claire Eyers APVC Research and Impact, UoL

We also heard unanimously that stakeholders are keen to be involved and included in meaningful opportunities to improve their network and share learning. Here we were told that events can play a significant role in the positioning of the Theme, this will be explored further in the next section of this report.







33 **05 FUTURE EVENTS**

The project team designed the Knowledge Exchange Sandpit Event based on known strengths, but primarily some of the early insights gathered to inform this work. Stakeholders told us they firmly supported events that carved out an opportunity for individuals to come together and network with others in a formalised way that gives research leads the opportunity to share their current work and ask for help from others where they perceive gaps in their team, as well as identify prospective funding grants.

We had heard prior to the event that Knowledge Exchanges often are not clear on the role of participants and can miss an opportunity to give people a motivation or purpose to engage. External agencies told us events can feel like a one-way conversation, where organisations are expected to give a lot for less in return. In this space academics can overshadow non-academic roles, and participants can feel they have more to give than is extracted from them in the process. This applies not only to external agencies, but can extend to within the University framework, where staff across the other faculties told us they too want to be included in the conversation around the Theme; there is plenty of work happening beyond the Health and Life Sciences Faculty that can be woven into the Theme to work towards a more dynamic approach.



Mike Salla, Director of Health and Sport, **Everton in the Community**

as if we are providing a consultation service for groups doing similar work as ourselves. We have a lot to give in



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³⁴ **05 FUTURE EVENTS**



Stakeholders unanimously told us that language is a big barrier to engagement. If we only talk about problems in the academic or clinical space, it's difficult for other stakeholders to follow and interact. Where people are new to this format of events a level of bravery is required to engage, and this can be a turn-off early on.

In the feedback gathered from attendees of the event we heard that the format made it easy for people to make operational links there and then, but people would also benefit from being added to a circulation list to create and diversify their contacts beyond the event parameters, as well as keep momentum and energy around their catalyst teams. Catalyst leads told us they were keen to engage in further events that would link them to other projects and activities, and help to identify developing funding opportunities.

Following the event we know that these Catalyst leads are strong at presenting and holding their ideas and projects during the event, but need more support to lead and move work forwards, with the inclusion of teams across the other faculties and schools as well as greater connections into the wider community.





06 RESOURCE TO **ACHIEVE THE VISION**

Theme leads across all of the UoL seven principle Themes have permission to shape the Theme as they see fit. This responsibility has been delegated to these leads to build on strengths and gather pace and volume behind relevant projects. With no defined KPIs to meet, other than those set by the Theme leads, the Theme is deliberately agile to be able to shift to focus on its own distinct priorities and to meet the needs of populations.

Currently it is understood that each Theme must meet the following expectations:



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- Secure external investment
- - Create opportunities for doctoral traineeships

Engage early career researchers

- Create big impact
- Develop a pipeline of activity with strategic partners

This permissive environment creates space for the Theme to develop based on the strengths within the faculties. Whilst Faculties support the Themes, they have been reluctant to commit dedicated human resource to the Theme and it slips amongst a range of priorities the Faculties are working to achieve.

Unanimously we heard people support the Starting Well, Living Well, Ageing Well Theme. Stakeholders see that it's important to align themselves to it and connect their work to it. However, the resource and 'how' to achieve beyond the broad strokes of the vision is not in place. We were told that where it is difficult to understand and navigate the academic structure, we are likely to be missing out on ways to bring collaborators together around really impactful work across the life-course with clear priorities. Where reform is happening around the formulation of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) we should be bringing strategic partners together to use the opportunity to create a set of priorities with leaders. To facilitate this conversation our leaders need to have time to engage with all parts of the system.

To date the LHP Starting Well programme has made up a large part of the resource that has supported and enabled the Theme's Knowledge Exchange within and beyond the University, specifically around the Starting Well work.



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05 RECOMMENDATIONS





37 Our recommendations can be broken down into six distinct areas:







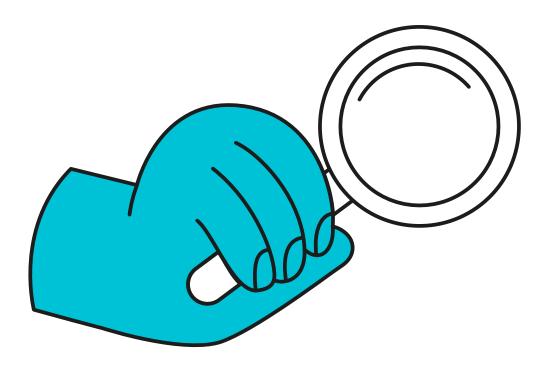
01 FOCUSSING THE VISION **OF THE THEME**

The breadth of the Theme presents both opportunities and challenges. However, we recommend consideration is given to providing some focus within the Theme to give clearer direction, enabling stakeholders to identify and engage. The focus areas could be co-produced across all three Faculties and with agencies beyond the University. Initial insights suggest the following could be considered:

- Maternal and Childhood Health. Driven by importance of the recent 'Child of the North' Report and the wealth of activity happening across the region. Perhaps we can be more intentional with discrete areas of focus.
- A healthy working population. Due North suggested that the North West is 30% less productive than the rest of the UK, this lack of productivity is largely driven by poor health. Connecting this thinking into the City Plan in Liverpool will enable stakeholders beyond the University to influence the focus, narrowing the gap between research and real-world action.

There are lots of local, regional and national policy and strategy drivers we can anchor our work around. Some examples of these include:

- Frailty and ageing. Driven by existing assets and the local and national pressures, perhaps we can shine a light on this rather than the broad scope of older people.
- Further development of the shared vision for MSK with time given to intergenerational MSK disorders, ageing, nutrition, co-occurring conditions and fatigue. These developments should be woven into the strategic milestones of the SWLWAW Theme.







We should be finding opportunities to promote and support the region's economic growth. To improve the health of our populations our residents need better economic activity let's keep this as a feature in our research."



Gary Leeming, Director, LCR Civic Data Coop



01 FOCUSSING THE VISION OF THE THEME

Building on the insights gathered and coproducing the work plan of the Theme will enable all stakeholders to help shape the shared ambition and empower the Theme leads to share objectives across all three Faculties with clear leadership and management allocated. The Theme has a very finite resource with respect to programme management and requires all three Faculties to provide support, leadership and operational resource in support of the Theme's activities, if the Theme is to achieve the shared ambition.

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Where the Starting Well programme of LHP has worked closely with System P, CDC, CIPHA to draw out the roles of these organisations in the data space, the Theme should harness this opportunity to work collaboratively here with these partners, to extract intelligence from the space, aligned to the priorities of the Integrated Care Boards and connect academics to better intelligence at place.

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02 ETHOS AND CULTURE OF THE THEME

There is a clear ask for the Theme to take a lead in creating space for open collaboration. UoL staff need effective communication with the Theme to understand how they can connect on research interests and expertise. Consideration needs to be given to how this can be achieved, utilising all methods of communications, including virtual. Recommendations for this are picked up in future sections of this report.

There are a range of excellent collaborations happening across the Theme, we need to showcase these examples loudly to demonstrate their impact and nudge peers to aim for this way of working. This promotion of successful work should act as a vessel for individuals and organisations to connect into existing collaborative groups, to diversity and strengthen the conversations happening in SIGs and catalyst themes. Alongside showcasing the ambition, we need to model and support this ethos in action. People need practical support to work with and through others. Outlining the components for successful collaboration alongside support to develop skills in these spaces could be a way to provoke this activity. For example, how to agree:

- Mutual expectations
- Project management
- Assigning responsibilities and authorship
- Communication methods and styles
- Practicalities relevant to the research e.g. Data access

Whilst this work has focussed on exploring the SWLWAW Theme, an overarching recommendation centres around how all University strategic Research Themes collectively work together. Both sharing live opportunities, but perhaps more importantly, the strategy and operations of all Themes to have real economies of scale.

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l authorship d styles esearch e.g. Data



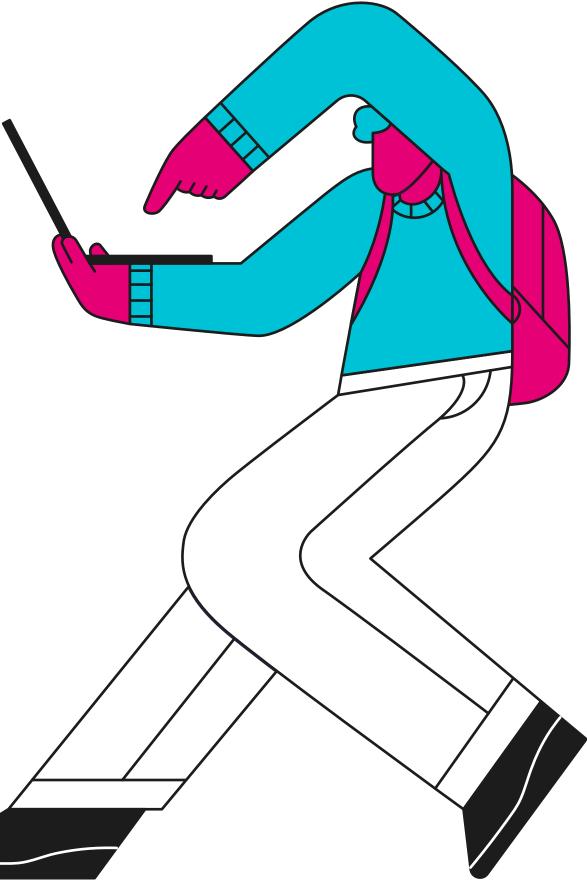


42 **03 REAL WORLD IMPACT**

There are some practical steps that the Theme could take to move towards a more action focused agenda. External agencies have an appetite to be involved in research with the University and we heard that communities want to be involved from the start. There are a number of assets in the region and amongst our communities that are keen to engage but unsure on how to work the academic space meaningfully.

The challenge for the Theme is to develop a strategy with collaboration at the heart, detailing in the implementation of the strategy the resources available for collaboration. We have clear evidence where partnership can be developed and there are a number of grants to support this, the role of the Theme is to capitalise on the appetite and support collaborative efforts.

Collaboration will present many opportunities and challenges, but these relationships must feel mutual. Without effective management of all involved parties this can feel laboured and overwhelming and be left in the 'too difficult to do' box. The Theme must help to support collaboration where there is genuine interest from all parties, and remember that 'the perfect research candidate' is unlikely to exist. Projects could consider how community systems (i.e. families, households, communities) be embedded into research, as well as individuals. This will strengthen the civic responsibility of research within the UoL.

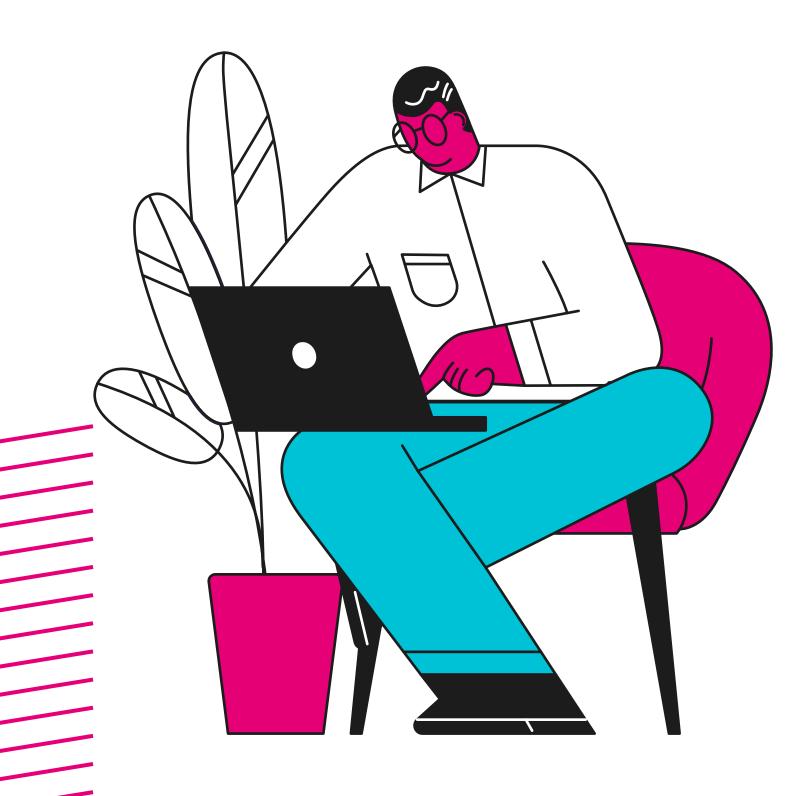








⁴³ **03 REAL WORLD IMPACT**



Stakeholders internal to UoL and external agencies want to know more about what current research is happening, which will help decisions to be made in a timely way amongst our health and social services. It is important to consider how research findings are received in real work settings, to facilitate this the SWLWAW Theme could explore how to design a way to check and challenge results beyond immediate academic peers. Working collaboratively with public services, industry and communities will facilitate the design of studies which have a key focus on application to practice to ensure the greatest impact beyond publication. Stakeholders should be engaged with throughout the research process, creating space for the system to inform the work. This can be embedded into the Peer Review College to strengthen the review process. In turn, this would reinforce the relationship with the intended beneficiaries, creating clear and digestible results including practical implementations.

Creating a local impact strategy which could sit alongside the REF and KEF frameworks would enable the Theme to have a stronger connection with intended end users. There are existing opportunities here to strengthen partnerships with organisations such as Civic Data Coop, System P and CIPHA, who are able to play a role in the connection local residents have to their data and information, and what applications we can design to wrap around our populations for better health and care outcomes.





04 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATING THE THEME

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To achieve greater transparency around the Theme we recommend research should be shared internally and externally. This would require further thought and resource to design the internal and external marketing and promotion, and should be closely linked with the UoL Communications Strategy.

Internally within UoL this live feed will help to thread connections around a topic. Collaborative pathways to achieve this should be established to facilitate these conversations across the space, where existing work is made visible to stakeholders and there are clear ways to connect with the Theme, SIGs and Catalyst leads.

The Theme could establish its own brand for SWLWAW, with the aim to draw out the Vision, Mission and Values of the Theme and help communicate to stakeholders what the expected behaviours and priorities are and what strategy exists to help the Theme achieve its priorities. Here the Theme should connect with UoL's existing Research Partnership and Innovation and Corporate Service teams to tease out these messages and co-design the communication strategy.



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⁴⁵ 04 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATING THE THEME

As part of this work the Theme should be clear about what they consider best practice standards for collaborative practice, give consistent support and design toolkits to enable stakeholders to gather meaningfully around an interest. This could include the likes of:

- Fixed agendas for meetings
- Clarity on roles and responsibilities of individuals
- Model for leadership and management around hosting and following up on meetings and discussions

It is important these best practice standards are communicated with research leads, reaching across the three UoL Faculties to standardise good practice in research and keep pace on projects, creating a toolkit for academics to enable them to develop and lead ways that engage individuals both internally and externally to the institution; a Partnership Toolkit is currently under development at achieve this aim.

Externally to the University the Theme should help to market and promote the influences considered when designing and prioritising areas of specialist interest, inviting external agencies to connect into catalyst areas with clear pathways for stakeholders to collaborate. Collaboration with other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can be carried out around common themes and work with a focus on what can be done more locally at place. Working with existing assets with influence in LCR such as the ICB, Hospital Trusts, and strategic leaders at place, regular touchpoints with these groups should help to illustrate the opportunities collaborate with SWLWAW.

Once work is done to define the vision and Theme aims and standardise the approach to best practice it is important not to be dictated by distractions. Successful strategy results will come from focusing in and sticking to our lane whilst staying agile. Alongside this, with an abundance of assets in the Theme's gift, every opportunity should be taken to showcase these assets better for all stakeholders to benefit from.





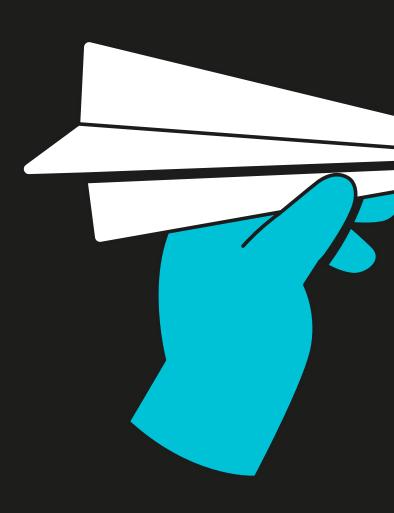


⁴⁶ **05 FUTURE EVENTS**

A core function of the Theme is to broker knowledge between academics and external stakeholders, facilitating and understanding of the real world impact of the research and supporting the research into practice. An ambition of the Theme is to continue to connect those inside the University and beyond the Health & Life Sciences Faculty, as well as externally to the institution. These connections will help to increase the opportunities to engage with public service users and colleagues, creating a richer conversation around valuable and effective research. The Theme would benefit from having enablers in place to make this happen, considering:

- Do research teams have an online presence or sense of identity?
- How can people stay up to date with information? Could mailing lists support this? This would go some way to connecting stakeholders, but more agile ways are required to create effective communication streams between SIGs and potential collaborators.
- Can the Theme create a presence around its brand and social media platforms?
- This doesn't happen without resource behind the scenes to collate, translate and coordinate information, we see successful case studies of this happening via the Heads of Research at neighbouring HEIs.

We know that as humans we are good talkers, but we aren't quite as good at listening, and this can be alienating to external stakeholders. This includes considering ways to use plain language, so conversations can happen across disciplines, sectors and demographics. When teams are formed around research questions effective collaboration will happen if participants are clear on their roles and responsibilities to manage expectations and keep pace and energy behind the work.

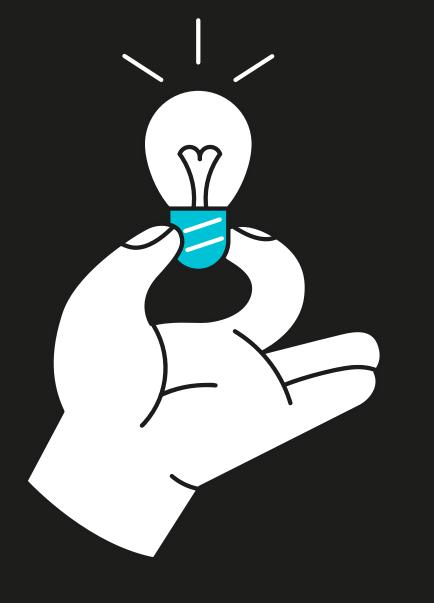






⁴⁷ **05 FUTURE EVENTS**

Events should look to encourage collaborative funding models, where external partners also benefit from funding for research and opportunities and mutually beneficial for all. Wrapped around this it is important that there is clarity and transparency around how funding money gets spent if project plans change, here project leads should be held accountable by the SWLWAW Theme to evaluate and justify the outcomes of research within a funding budget.



Following on from events we heard there can be a void in sending updates about resultant work or progress, keeping people in the loop. The Theme would benefit from a more formalised role around giving a narrative to events and projects, including those who have contributed, and creating sub-communities of its own around catalysts. This could sit with the project leads, giving them more autonomy and responsibility to stay connected to other individuals who contribute to their thinking, providing these with a better incentive to engage as a foreigner to the discipline.

Finally, we recommend that the Theme develops its own event strategy, with a formalised schedule of events over an academic year. With this structure in place the Theme can align its current and future priorities, areas of focus, catalysts and funding opportunities to target the right stakeholders at the right time. This framework should be transparent and well communicated with all stakeholders to generate interest and keep people engaged.





48 06 RESOURCE TO ACHIEVE THE VISION

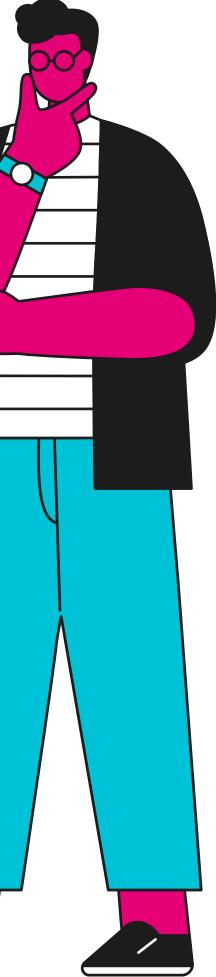
A trend throughout these insights and recommendations is that there must be a structure behind the Theme to make things happen. This could include:

Dedicated project support: this must be in the form of real do-ers, people who are willing to get stuck in to achieve results and hold others to account, we call these `completer finishers'.

• Leadership capacity: The Theme leads in Starting Well and Ageing Well are time poor, they need more support and connection to the other UoL Theme leads and well as external partners to share learning and responsibility. If time can be allocated to this, the theme can work closer to with other faculties and agencies to identify resource to support collaboration, there is a delicate balance here where there are challenges holding responsibility for the Theme against what assets exist within the staff team.

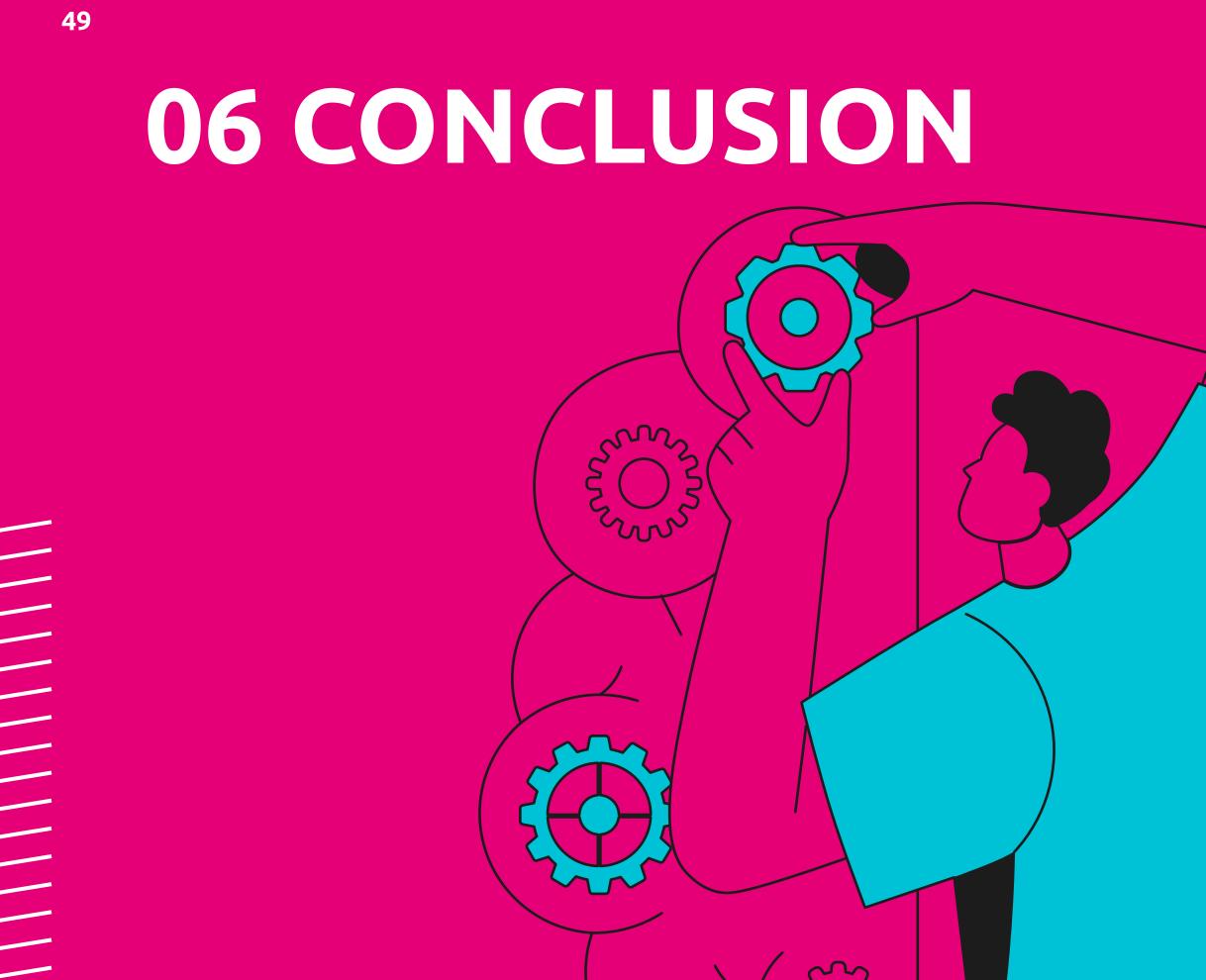
Incentivised and well managed workforce to collaborate and align work to SWLWAW: The challenges faced across the breadth of the Theme are knotty and complex. Faculties are the main units within the university, they have a key role in achieving the ambition of the Theme and need to understand and action their role. Clarity here will go a long way in establishing the boundaries and responsibilities of the team around a longer-term strategy.















The insights heard clearly demonstrate the Theme is active, the Theme wants to build on this activity and bring a more intentional approach to achieving its vision.

Amongst the insights and recommendations there are various hierarchies and structures involved that will influence how the recommendations can translate into action and progress. These can be themed into areas that can be influenced and controlled directly by the Theme and its current resources and support and those that require support across Faculties to enable more co-ordinated thinking and operations.

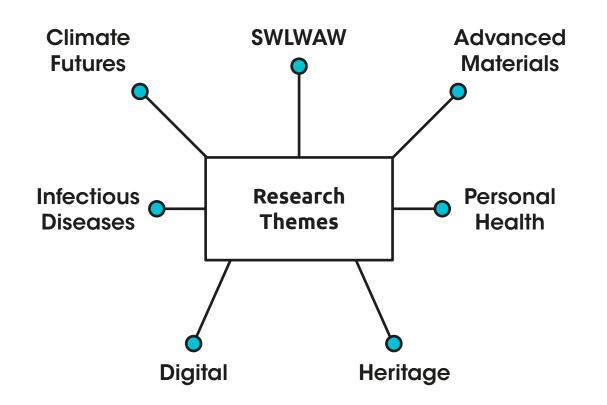
The insights have generated a wealth of potential actions, this section begins to prioritise where the focus could begin:





1. UNIVERSITY WIDE: BEYOND THE SWLWAW THEME

The University's strategic Research Themes operate within a traditional university structure straddling all three Faculties. To reach the ambition shared in this project, the Theme needs more support from Faculties, with mutually beneficial workstreams to both Faculty and Theme. To support Faculties to prioritise this, strategic leadership should consider how this is incentivised alongside other major performance metrics.



Alongside this, there is an opportunity to **increase** collaboration between Themes to share learning and share approaches. Where the University is not prioritising the Themes, economies of scale are being lost. Theme leads are keen to be exemplar in their field, but without the much-needed resource will struggle to deliver against their objectives. We heard across the University leadership that more needs to be done to focus on the strategy and leadership of the Theme, but we expect that this is a pattern with the institution, where Theme leads are time poor, with little to no resource or team around them to deliver the basic objectives and embed a more agile strategy.

Wrapped around faculties are a wealth of professional services that Themes could draw upon. Key areas to seek support could include:

- Internal communication
- Support to explore platforms to communicate skills and live opportunities
- Marketing examples of excellent practice within and beyond the university
- Theme brand and identity
- Increasing the voice of local people





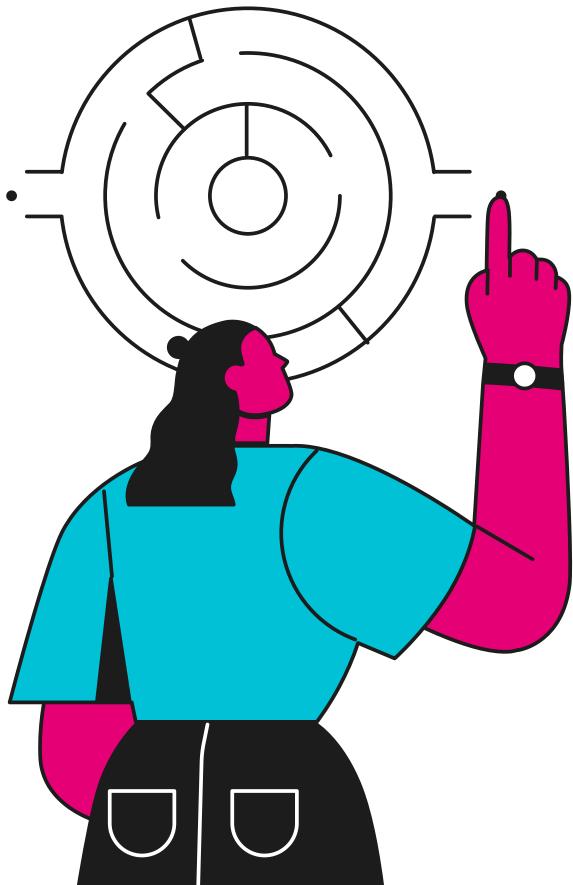
2. WHAT ARE THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES TO THE SWLWAW THEME?

Alongside these there are various approaches SWLWAW can start to implement now to keep momentum behind the Theme, building on its strengths and appetite of others to connect.

A. Strategy

Developing a Theme strategy will help the Theme leads to focus over a 3-year strategy and start to refine work and delivery around these categories. The Theme should work with interested stakeholders to frame the priorities for the Theme ensuring they are connected to local need and policy drivers.

Building on this, energy should be given to connecting existing University assets to the priorities with the Theme, brokering relationships across Faculties and beyond the University.



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2. WHAT ARE THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES TO THE SWLWAW THEME?

B. Practical support

Resource is essential to turn findings into action. The Theme should harness the time allocated to the immediate Theme team and beyond these parameters, take stock and begin to delegate responsibilities to progress.

Key areas to focus should include:

Maximising dedicated project support by

understanding where Faculties can support thinking, develop new collaboration or expand know areas of strength. Utilising existing mechanisms would be costnegative, more thought and consideration should be given to this to keep pace on projects and support the vision.

Identifying grants and research opportunities,

promoting the opportunities and curating key relationships to shape and lead research applications. The Theme should play a role ensuring that the opportunity to collaborate is mutually beneficial, involving external partners along the research pipeline. The role of the Theme will be to lead the launch of opportunities by defining roles and responsibilities in teams.

Beyond this, consideration could be given to:

Practical support for catalyst leads - identify catalyst leads needs, facilitate effective communication across stakeholders communicating clearly with partners, at the right time, with the right language and with maximum impact.

Keeping up to date with external strategic partners.

Building priority relationships with community organisations, trusts and public services to connect citizens into research.

Develop 'Real World Impact Strategy' - Via the Peer Reviews College model, a process that helps external agencies influence and inform research from the start, and play a role in the design, conduct and practical application of research into practice.

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2. WHAT ARE THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES TO THE SWLWAW THEME?

C. Communication

This recommendation focuses on internal communication - bringing people together around the Theme to align to its vision and work towards its goals and external communication and marketing - how the Theme engages with stakeholders, markets its brand and showcases its successful work

Priority should be given to:

Showcasing examples of collaboration and the impact it has had in the real world or amongst peers.

Attracting a diverse group of experts around the SIGs, through the promotion of successful work and areas of interest.

Communicating focus areas of the theme, these might be subthemes or annual priorities.

Sharing toolkits to support collaborative working.

Take learning from the Sandpit Event to refine the *next.* Focus the event on bringing the outside world into the University and creating opportunities for people to collaborate.

Beyond this, the Theme might want to consider:

Branding around the Theme - clearly communicating the vision, mission and purpose. These help stakeholders to gather around a set of behaviours to work better as teams.

Communicating platforms where work can be shared

and publicised e.g. website, social media channels.



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3. WHAT RESOURCE AND TIME DO WE NEED TO ACHIEVE RESULTS?

We recognise that many of the points discussed in this section may require a change of culture and behaviour, these are the toughest nuts to crack but with a clear implementation plan, actions can be highlighted to provide a starting place to create change. To support the Theme to convert this report into action the key next steps are captured below:

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Next Step	How?	Who?	When?
University wide - beyond the theme			
Identify mutually beneficial workstreams to both Faculties and Theme	Bring together Faculty leaders to discuss and share where there are opportunities to connect and learn	APVCs for Research and Impact, Theme leads	YI
Increase collaboration between Themes	Meet with all UoL Theme leads regularly to share learning and good practice	Theme leads	Y1-Y3
Engage corporate services to support Theme development	Map UoL corporate service provisions to help build and delivery strategies such as marketing and branding, whilst sharing exemplar work to promote the themes	Corporate service leads, Theme leads	Y1
SWLWAW Theme			
Strategy			
Frame the priorities for the Theme	Focus on what is achievable in the short term, where strengths exist and where Theme could have greatest impact based, for example, on local civic need. Find research funding opportunities that align to these in line with priorities and encourage/facilitate teams around these options, but remain agile to new opportu- nities	SWLWAW Theme leads, external partners	Y1, revised each academic year
Connecting existing university assets into Theme	This includes institutes, support programmes and con- sultancy, etc	Asset Leads and Project Managers	YI







3. WHAT RESOURCE AND TIME DO WE NEED TO ACHIEVE RESULTS?

Next Step	How?	Who?	When?		
Practical support					
Maximise dedicated project support	Be clear on the allocated time amongst the Theme team and what their role and priorities each quarter. Support catalyst leads to upskill where necessary and prioritise work on the Real World Impact Strategy, involving the Peer Review College	APVCs for Research and Impact, Theme leads, other University teams	YI		
Identifying grants and research opportunities	Horizon scan for strategic grants regularly, to update sub-theme groups and encourage conversation around	SWLWAW Theme and support teams	Y1, revised each academic year or quarter		
Collaboration					
Showcasing examples of collaboration	Use communication streams/Theme sub-teams to dis- tribute positive case studies, leading by example	SWLWAW Theme, UoL marketing support	Y1-Y3		
Communicating focus areas of the Theme	With the vision for the Theme agreed, this should be communicated with stakeholders with mutual devel- opment to ensure engagement to promote the Theme priorities and encourage further conversation/ en- gagement	SWLWAW Theme, UoL marketing support	Y1-Y3		
Sharing toolkits	Develop communication, project management, respon- sibility and engagement standards to apply to research projects aligned with the Theme	SWLWAW Theme, UoL marketing support	Y2		
Take learning from the Sandpit Event to refine the next	Engage external partners and academics to create space, time and incentives for people to meet and connect, bringing the real world to the academics to influence the direction of travel for the Theme in line with the vision	SWLWAW Theme Leads	Y1-Y3		







07 APPENDIX

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APPENDIX 1: STAKEHOLDER MAP

Title	Organisation	
Associate Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Impact) - Humanities & Social Sciences, Professor of Environmental History	University of Liverpool	
Associate Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Impact) - Health & Life Sciences, Director of the Centre for Proteome Research	University of Liverpool	
Associate Pro Vice Chancellor (Research & Impact) - Science & Engineering, Pro- fessor of Physics	University of Liverpool	
Executive Dean - Institute of Population Health	University of Liverpool	
Research Theme Manager	North West Coast Applied research Collaboration (NIHR)	
Professor in Social Anthropology, Public Health	University of Liverpool	
Chair and Dean of the School of Electrical Engineering, Electronics and Computer	University of Liverpool	
Director of Public Health, Living Well Lead	Liverpool City Council, Liverpool Health Partners - Living Well	
Director of Strategy, Partnerships & Transformation	Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust	
Director of Health and Sport	Everton in the Community	
Consultant Neurologist, Professor of Neurology, Director of Research Programmes, Theme Lead	The Walton Centre, UoL, Liverpool Health Partners, North West Coast Applied resear	
Research Theme Manager	North West Coast Applied research Collaboration (NIHR)	
Clinical Psychologist and Growing Together Clinical Lead	PSS	
Director (including CIPHA perception)	LCR Civic Data Coop	
GP, LMC officer, Deputy Chair of British Medical Council	Greenbank Road Surgery, Liverpool Local Medical Committee	
Director of Strategy	Merseycare	
Chief Operating Officer	Plus Dane Housing Association	
Lever Chair of Town and Regional Planning - Geography & Planning, Board Mem- ber at Cobalt Housing Association	University of Liverpool	
Head of the Institute for Health Research, Reader in Psychopharmacology	Liverpool John Moores University	
Associate Dean for Research & Innovation	Edge Hill University	
Project Director	LCR E-Health Cluster	

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rch Collaboration (NIHR)	





APPENDIX 2: LHP MSK REPORT

APPENDIX 5: FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

APPENDIX 3: DATA IN LCR

APPENDIX 6: EVENT ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX 4: SANDPIT EVENT AGENDA





AND THAT'S IT!

If you'd like to be kept up to date on our progress or to discuss similar opportunities for research Emma Lord, our Director of Health is happy to have chat. Just get in touch at **emma.lord@thisiscapacity.co.uk**



