

Nutrition North – Regional Nutrition Research Collaborative

Tuesday 8th July 2025

1.00pm - 2.30pm

Via zoom

Chair: Prof Bernard Corfe

Meeting Notes and Actions

In Attendance:

Bernard Corfe (BC), Newcastle University

Frances Hillier-Brown (FHB), Newcastle University

Iain Brownlee (IB), Northumbria University

Jordan Beaumont (JB), Sheffield Hallam University

Jibin He (JH), Teesside University

Ben Martyn (BMA), The NHA

Georgia Payne (GP), University Hospitals Tees Group

Swarnim Gupta (SG), University of Lancashire

Nicola Lowe (NL), University of Lancashire

Christine Bosch (CB), University of Leeds

Kieran Tuohy (KT), University of Leeds

John McLaughlin (JM), University of Manchester

Lucie Nield (LN), University of Sheffield

Liz Williams (LW), University of Sheffield

Sarah Hill (SH), Project Manager, The NHA

Apologies:

Nadia Ranceva (NR), Alder Hey Children's NHS FT

Senthil Senniappan (SS), Alder Hey Children's NHS FT

Deepan Shah (DS), Centre for Process Innovation (CPI)

Claire Trippett (CT), Centre for Process Innovation (CPI)

Charmelee Ayadurai (BB), Durham University

Carolyn Summerbell (CS), Durham University

Julie Abayomi (JA), Edge Hill University

Tom Butler (TB), Edge Hill University

Nicola Calder (NC), Food Active

Heather Brown (HB), Lancaster University

Bruce Hollingsworth (BH), Lancaster University

Leo Stevenson (LS), Liverpool Hope University

Richard Webb (RW), Liverpool Hope University

Ian Davies (ID), Liverpool John Moores University
Fiona Malcolmson (FM), Newcastle University
Suzanne Spence (SS), Newcastle University
Greta Defeyter (GD), Northumbria University
Aliya Porter (AP), Porter Nutrition
Charlotte Evans (CE), Purple Nutrition
Amelia Lake (AL), Teesside University
Basma Ellahi (BE), University of Chester
Sohail Mushtaq (SM), University of Chester
Emma Boyland (EB), University of Liverpool
Charlotte Hardman (CH), University of Liverpool
Bernadette Moore (BM), University of Liverpool
Robert Akparibo (RA), University of Sheffield
Samantha Caton (SC), University of Sheffield
Maria Bryant (MB), University of York

1. Welcome and Introductions

BC opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted.

The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed:

1. *Action (All): To watch for future reports released by the NFS/FSAB and consider how Nutrition North could comment on them.*
2. *Action (BC/SH/CE): To write to all the nominees discussed and ask if one of them would be interested in leading the School Nutrition programme for Nutrition North.*
3. *Action (SH): To ask Charlotte Thompson (NHS Communications Manager) about the process of designing a successful webinar and the costs involved.*
4. *Action (YA): To contact SH and BC if she knows of any SMEs that would be interested in collaborating for OIRC funding.*

BC announced to the group that Suzanne Spence (Newcastle University) & Greta Defeyter (Northumbria University) have agreed to lead on the School Nutrition programme. Samantha Caton (Sheffield University) has also agreed to be involved. There was enthusiasm from everyone about the work and they will be joining future Nutrition North meetings.

SH reported that she had discussed webinar design and costs with Charlotte Thompson (NHS Communications Manager) and agreed plans for the NHS to host a webinar in September/October 2025 to promote the findings from the Nutrition North report.

BC informed the council that Yvonne Armitage was no longer working for CPI but had nominated new representatives from CPI to attend the Nutrition North meetings. Claire Trippett and Deepan Shah unfortunately could not make the meeting today. There was no further news on OIRC applications or interest from SMEs.

KT mentioned some collaborations that he was involved with for this funding round but the funding pot is small and requires co-funding from industry. KT and CB confirmed that the current funding round is now closed but a second cycle may open if the existing budget is not spent within one year.

KT also mentioned the NAPIC funding calls which are currently open and will probably be open again in Feb/March 2026. He noted that it would be useful to build a relationship with an alternative protein industry partner, ahead of the 2026 funding calls.

Action (KT): *to explore potential funding opportunities related to NAPIC and alternative protein industries.*

Action (SH): *Add NAPIC funding opportunities and alternative protein industry partnerships to the agenda for the next Nutrition North Council meeting*

2. Updates from Workstreams:

2.1. Nutrition Reports

Nutrition in the North NHTA Report progress and status

SH confirmed that the NHTA Nutrition North report “Food, Health and Nutrition in the North of England: Inequalities and Opportunities” will be published on 22nd July 2025. A press release has been prepared by Ruth Boston (NHTA Head of Communications) and will be sent out to various Universities, organisations, and media outlets in advance of the report release. The report contains forewords written by Prof Alice Wiseman (Director of Public Health for Newcastle and Gateshead) and Si King (TV presenter and Hairy Biker Chef) and includes key recommendations for future policy. The first Nutrition North webinar is being planned for September/October 2025 and will discuss the findings from the report in order to promote the report and Nutrition North even further.

BC added that the Nutrition North report complements and reinforces the findings in the Child of the North APPG report, “Hungry for Change; Tackling Obesity and Food Insecurity in the North of England” which is released today (8th July 2025) and is being launched in parliament. Nutrition North members also contributed to this report.

Action (SH): *to send the final report to the nutrition north group when it is released.*

Action (SH): *to check with Ruth Boston that the final Nutrition North report will be sent to Kim McGuinness’s office (Mayor of the North east) and other mayoral offices.*

Progress on accompanying article for Nutrition Bulletin

An academic paper to accompany the NHTA Nutrition North report is also being written as an editorial for the Nutrition Bulletin by IB and will be submitted shortly.

2.2. School Nutrition

As discussed earlier, BC reported that Suzanne Spence (Newcastle University) & Greta Defeyter (Northumbria University) have agreed to lead on the School Nutrition programme with the additional involvement of Samantha Caton (Sheffield University). Unfortunately, they were not available to join this call but will join future meetings. Apologies for absence from SS, GD and SC.

2.3. Nutrition Webinars

Apologies from SM for absence. BC confirmed that the webinar programme will start again in the Autumn with a webinar focused on the Nutrition North report.

***Action (SH):** to coordinate with Charlotte Thompson to design and host a Nutrition North webinar in September/October 2025 to publicize the Nutrition North report.*

2.4. Nutrition and Cancer

Fibre and Breast Cancer

KT spoke to the group about current projects and funding applications for breast cancer. He mentioned the involvement of young researchers in cancer studies and the need for collaboration to explore funding opportunities. KT and BC have a meeting scheduled to discuss joint grant proposals.

Obesity and Cancer in the North - Colo Rectal Cancer and Gynae Cancers

KT and BC discussed the increased incidence of colon cancer in young people and its potential connection to high protein diets. BC commented on the need for more information about early onset colon cancer.

2.5. Food Innovation North

As mentioned earlier, Yvonne Armitage has moved on from CPI. Claire Trippett and Deepan Shah will be the new CPI representatives in the Nutrition North group and are looking forward to being part of future meetings but unfortunately could not make this call. Apologies from CT and DS for absence.

3. Upcoming Funding Calls for discussion

3.1. NIHR “Three Schools” Prevention Research Programme

<https://sphr.nihr.ac.uk/research/prevention-programme/nihr-three-research-schools-prevention-programme-research-projects-call-2/>

BC commented that this funding call fits well with Nutrition North and could help with starter projects. At least 2 people from the “three schools” are needed for the application. BC asked for ideas from the group.

LN responded that she was part of two of the schools and is happy to collaborate. AL and HM are also part of two schools.

KT discussed how to join the NIHR schools. LW commented that joining the schools was a fairly easy process and those that are part of a member university should consider registering.

BC suggested improving the quality of life in cancer survivors and their capacity to return to work as a project idea.

LN and LW agreed. LN confirmed there was an interest in cancer research within her team and LW mentioned a ring-fenced funding allocation for Yorkshire cancer research that comes to Sheffield.

FHB added that an administrative team from the NIHR schools support all the applications making it easier to get costings.

BC commented that this was excellent and a superb opportunity. He asked everyone to keep the group updated of any applications so that Nutrition North activity can be logged over time.

Action (ALL): *to inform the group of any applications to the NIHR “Three Schools” Prevention Research Programme*

3.2. EPSRC Research and partnership hubs for a healthy society

(potential collaborative application to support the NHTA Institute for Preventative Health Research)

https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/research-and-partnership-hubs-for-a-healthy-society/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

BC introduced BM from the NHTA to speak about the upcoming EPSRC funding call.

BM informed the group about the pre-announcement for the EPSRC partnership hub for healthy society. The funding call opens on 15th July 2025 and is offering up to £12.5 million over 6 years.

Areas of interest for the EPSRC are prevention, public health, prevention and population health, supporting people to manage their own health, tech and devices, early prediction and diagnosis. A broad range of stakeholders is desirable including academic, industry, local government and PPIE. We are well placed in the north to put in a bid around the proposed NHTA Institute for Preventative Health Research.

BM suggested “Extending health span in the north by tackling causes of multimorbidities” as a general topic and asked for thoughts from the Nutrition North group.

LN commented that it was really interesting and would be great to get into some northern universities.

LW also noted that prevention and multimorbidity would fit really well with Sheffield work and it would be excellent to have something pan-northern.

BC and LW emphasised the importance of strategic collaboration and the involvement of local authorities. BM agreed and mentioned that the NHTA has a good relationship with the Northern mayors. He asked the group for thoughts on industry partners. Doncaster HDRC was suggested by the group as a potential digital/data partner. BM suggested possible behavioral change interventions such as integrating data from wearable devices.

LN spoke about DigiBete ([Home - DigiBete](#)), an online programme which is currently being evaluated for its effectiveness in supporting children with Type 1 Diabetes and severe obesity. She highlighted the lack of transitional services for patients after their two-year intervention period and the disparities in access to clinics.

The group also discussed issues with potentially conflicting EPSRC applications from one organisation. The lead University is required to provide a proportion of the funding so there may be a limit to the number of applications supported from each organisation. Sheffield University is holding a meeting to discuss applications on 17th July and Newcastle University is holding a similar meeting on 23rd July. BM agreed that it would be valuable to either attend or receive feedback from the meetings at Sheffield and Newcastle.

Action (BM): to contact Professor Ilaria Bellantuono from Sheffield for more information about Sheffield University EPSRC applications and the Sheffield EPSRC meeting.

Action (BM): to contact BC for more information about the Newcastle EPSRC meeting and potential Newcastle University EPSRC applications.

4. Ideas for new programmes and reports

BC proposed that the Council consider building sub-groups to work on specific areas that can be developed into further reports to follow on from the Nutrition North report. As an example, he highlighted the knowledge gap surrounding semaglutide treatment and its implications for obesity.

IB suggested a focus on school food structures and compliance with standards.

5. Any other business

With no other business, BC thanked everyone for joining the call and the meeting was closed.

List of Actions:

1. **KT:** to explore potential funding opportunities related to NAPIC and alternative protein industries.
2. **SH:** Add NAPIC funding opportunities and alternative protein industry partnerships to the agenda for the next Nutrition North Council meeting

3. **SH:** to send the send the final report to the nutrition north group when it is released
4. **SH:** to check with Ruth Boston that the final Nutrition North report will be sent to Kim McGuiness's office (Mayor of the North east) and other mayoral offices.
5. **SH:** to coordinate with Charlotte Thompson to design and host a Nutrition North webinar in September/October 2025 to publicize the Nutrition North report.
6. **ALL:** to inform the group of any applications to the NIHR "Three Schools" Prevention Research Programme
7. **BM:** to contact Professor Ilaria Bellantuono from Sheffield for more information about Sheffield University EPSRC applications and the Sheffield EPSRC meeting.
8. **BM:** to contact BC for more information about the Newcastle EPSRC meeting and potential Newcastle University EPSRC applications.