

Dancing with new partners: developing novel research methods to establish and monitor impacts of user engagement in times of austerity. (PI: Professor Irene Hardill, Northumbria University. Co-I Ann Clark, Centre for Rural Health UHI)

The project is funded by the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM). Three active practice-related networks have been brought together in order to exchange and disseminate knowledge on theoretical approaches and methods and to advance practice. These include those mobilising around the following: the Sustaining IT use by older people to promote autonomy and independence (Sus-IT) project (<http://sus-it.lboro.ac.uk/latestnews.html>), part of the Research Council-funded New Dynamics of Ageing (NDA) programme (<http://www.newdynamics.group.shef.ac.uk/>); Engaging Scottish Local Authorities (ESLA) (<http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/engage/>) an ESRC/SFC-funded programme uniting five university teams in Scotland; and the Academy of Social Sciences (AcSS) (acss.org.uk), including a number of its members with expertise in research education in user engagement and impact. The Dancing with New Partners team will also draw on a wider constituency of international collaborators, to drive forwards a network dedicated to supporting the growth of capacity in practice-facing disciplines to undertake engaged research which is of benefit to research users. The network will host the following events:

Workshop 1 January 2012. Conceptualising impact and demonstrating impact Host: University of Strathclyde; Convenors: Rehema White (St Andrew's) and Daniela Sime (University of Strathclyde). This event will focus on the necessity of developing advanced knowledge and skills in delivering and demonstrating (quantitative and qualitative) impact in times of economic austerity.

Workshop 2 March 2012. Methods in user engagement Host: Northumbria University; Convenors: Irene Hardill AcSS (Northumbria University), Ann Clark (UHI) and Heather Wilkinson (University of Edinburgh). This event will focus on user engagement methods with front line professionals and the 'hard to reach'.

Workshop 3 June 2012. Research education – approaches/methods to embodying impact Host: University of Leeds; Convenors: Helen Lawton Smith AcSS (Birkbeck), Paul Ellwood and Richard Thorpe AcSS (University of Leeds). This event will trace various approaches to the development of practical training for user engagement and impact.

September 2012 Final Conference, convened by the Academy of Social Sciences and Birkbeck College, venue Birkbeck College

The Network was launched at the British Academy, London, on 25 October 2011. Please click here for a summary of the event and more information <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/academic/sass/about/socscience/solscres/interdiscnetworks/dancingwithnewpartners/wkssum/>