

## **AskFuse Strategy**

### *September 2024 - March 2027*

#### **1. Introduction and Vision**

AskFuse supports Fuse to co-produce impactful world-class public health research to improve the health of people in our communities, reduce health inequalities and translate into value for money policy and practice.

AskFuse is a service, launched in 2013, which matches expert Fuse researchers across six Universities in the North East and North Cumbria (Durham, Cumbria, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside) with policy and practice partners to work collaboratively to co-produce high-quality and impactful research. AskFuse connects with Fuse to use innovative knowledge mobilisation and research dissemination techniques to share its research projects with stakeholders.

##### **1.1 Plain English Summary**

AskFuse is a service that connects health researchers from six North East universities with people who work in local councils, health services, voluntary and community based organisations, and charities to work together on research projects. AskFuse works to make sure health research is useful in the real world and helps improve people's health and reduce health inequalities in local communities.

This is AskFuse's plan for September 2024-March 2027. The main goals are to build strong partnerships between researchers and those working in policy and practice, support them to work together effectively, and share research results so they actually improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.

#### **2. AskFuse Strategic Objectives**

The strategic objectives of AskFuse are to:

- 2.1 Facilitate and build effective research capacity and sustainable partnerships between researchers and public, practice and policy partners
- 2.2 Deliver a continuously improving and enabling service to our Fuse researchers and public, practice and policy partners, empowering individuals and teams to co-produce public health research
- 2.3 Foster creativity and innovation in knowledge mobilisation through AskFuse enquiries, projects, processes and dissemination

#### **3. AskFuse Strategic Implementation**

The objectives below reflect Fuse strategy 2024 and AskFuse's strategic vision and values. These objectives will be reviewed annually.

##### **3.1 Innovating, influencing, mobilising and demonstrating impact**

- 3.1.1 Foster collaborative research partnerships involving policymakers, practitioners, public partners, researchers, academics and students throughout the whole research process.
- 3.1.2 Build research capacity and enable access by delivering timely, bespoke support tailored to partner needs.

3.1.3 Mobilise knowledge and demonstrate impact through co-produced knowledge mobilisation and dissemination strategies to ensure research findings influence policy and practice.

### **3.2 Building on and enhancing reach, trust and, uniqueness**

3.2.1 Build new and strengthening existing regional, national and international partnerships.

3.2.2 Support and develop networks and communities of practice

3.2.3 Promote Fuse's distinctive value and ensure quality delivery

### **3.3 Being current, accessible, responsive and sustainable**

3.3.1 Innovate and advance knowledge mobilisation practice by promoting and facilitating current and relevant knowledge sharing principles while driving continuous improvement

3.3.2 Build sustainable capacity and capability by creating multiple pathways and mechanisms for skill development

3.3.3 Embed early and meaningful involvement and engagement as a core component throughout Fuse's research activities

## **4. Implementation Plan**

AskFuse will meet these strategic objectives by collaborating with Fuse research clusters, Communications, Public Involvement and Engagement, and Fuse objectives, as well as continuing to work closely with policy, practice, public partners and the voluntary and community sector.

### **4.1 Innovating, influencing, mobilising and demonstrating impact**

- Provide timely and bespoke support for practice, policy and public partners and Fuse colleagues to access funding including collaboration with other research infrastructures regionally, nationally and internationally
- Generate capacity building opportunities for practice, policy and public partners/Fuse researchers and students
- Enable those involved in AskFuse enquiries/projects to co-produce innovative and creative knowledge mobilisation and dissemination throughout the research process (with the guidance of Fuse Communications and Public Involvement and Engagement managers)
- Support local authorities with no Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) to build research capacity through AskFuse enquiries, funding applications and knowledge mobilisation
- Monitor and disseminate the impact of AskFuse projects through creative and innovative knowledge mobilisation

### **4.2 Building on and enhancing reach, trust and uniqueness**

- Internationally, support joint webinars/exchanges/placements/funding applications with Fuse's International partners
- Nationally, contribute to activities around knowledge mobilisation, public involvement and engagement with networks of the NIHR School for Public Health

Research, Applied Research Collaborations, Health Determinant Research Collaborations, and Health and Risk Communications Network

- Regionally, strengthen links and areas of common interest with key partners in the local authority/VCSE/health sector and other regional research organisations through joint initiatives/knowledge mobilisation opportunities
- Within Fuse, support research clusters, researchers and practice and policy partners to reach their research aims and objectives
- Always uphold Fuse and AskFuse vision, values, behaviours
- Contribute to developing Fuse's networks and co-hosted networks (e.g. Fuse PIE network/Embedded Researchers in Councils/Physical Activity Network/Peer Researcher Community of Practice)
- Explore the feasibility for a Creative Research, Involvement and Dissemination Community of Practice
- Highlight the unique offer of Fuse due to its intersection of focus on public health research/Northeast and North Cumbria/NIHR School for Public Health membership/knowledge mobilisation (including AskFuse)
- Highlight the strength and diversity of the inter-university AskFuse offer to policy/practice/public partners and Fuse researchers
- Embed public partner involvement in AskFuse activities e.g., communications, knowledge mobilisation activities, involvement in AskFuse projects

#### **4.3 Being current, accessible, responsive and sustainable**

- Facilitate the planning and completion of Fuse events aimed at practice, policy and public partners using knowledge mobilisation principles
- Promote AskFuse at practice and policy partner events/opportunities
- Maintain an up-to-date and plain English online AskFuse presence
- Promote the added value of AskFuse/Fuse/SPHR to partner universities
- Ensure that AskFuse routine work practices are environmentally and financially responsible

#### **5. Key Audiences and Partnerships**

**Internal Audiences:** Fuse universities, members, research clusters, and public partners, academics, students, international partners

**External Audiences:** Policy makers, practice partners in local authorities, health sector professionals, voluntary and community sector (VCSE) organizations, communities and the public, decision-makers at local/regional/national level, regional and national research organisations.

#### **Key Partnerships:**

- Fuse research clusters, Communications, and Public Involvement and Engagement teams
- NIHR School for Public Health Research, NIHR Three Schools
- Health Determinants Research Collaborations (HDRC)
- Applied Research Collaborations (ARC)
- Local authority, health and VCSE partners

- Regional research organisations
- International research infrastructure partners

## 6. Evaluation and Success Metrics

### Monitoring and Review:

- Strategic objectives reviewed annually by Fuse Centre Strategy Board
- Impact monitoring and dissemination of AskFuse projects through creative and innovative knowledge mobilisation.

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### Success Indicators:

- Strengthen and support research capacity in local authorities without HDRC
- Enhanced partnership sustainability between researchers and practice/policy partners
- Demonstrated innovation in knowledge mobilisation theory and practice
- Strengthened regional, national, and international collaborative networks

## 7. Contact

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## Appendix: AskFuse Values and Behaviours

Our values and behaviours reflect a combination of our own experiences, best practice from our research and practice partnerships (e.g. Nolan 1995) and the values and behaviours across the six Fuse universities.

We aim to:

- Deliver a continuously improving and enabling service to our Fuse colleagues and practice partners.
- Empower individuals and teams to collaboratively contribute to public health research.
- Foster creativity and innovation in AskFuse enquiries, project development and in our processes
- Reflect and act on how we can improve diversity and inclusion in our AskFuse processes and projects.
- Communicate openly, honestly, sensitively and respectfully at all times.
- Ensure our AskFuse processes and procedures are transparent, inclusive, accountable and applied through a diversity and equity lens
- Learn from good practice and from our failures.
- Be accountable to Fuse members through Fuse Research Strategy Group, Centre Management Group and Centre Strategy Board.