



# NORTH CTU

## Newsletter

Issue no. 4 - Spring 2026

### Welcome to the fourth edition of our NORTH newsletter

It has been another busy period for NORTH staff and our trial teams, with several studies moving through analysis to dissemination and a number of exciting new trials joining our portfolio.

In this issue, we share the results of our stakeholder survey and outline how we are using this feedback to shape our strategy and refine our offer.

Our study update highlights projects that have recently published their findings, alongside a snapshot of newer studies currently in set-up.

In team news, we reflect on recent engagement activities, team development meetings, and a few lighter social moments.

As always, we welcome conversations about research ideas and proposals — whether at an early concept stage or close to submission. We are always happy to make time for a cup of tea and a chat.

**Dr Zoë Hoare, NORTH Director**



### NORTH engagement event

If you would like to register an interest in attending our next engagement event and also provide input into shaping the day please follow the link at the QR code (more information available on page 2)

NORTH engagement event



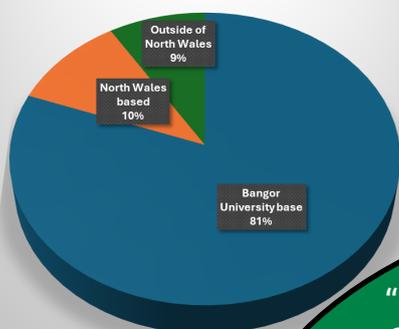
# NWORTH stakeholder survey results

In our last newsletter we put out a request for engagement in our stakeholder survey with the aim of understanding how NWORTH can best support your research and development.

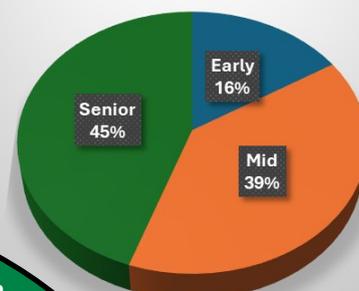
To date we have received 56 responses to this survey although we are leaving it open if you still want to engage and give us your views. 91% of respondents were based within North Wales which is great as this demonstrated we have captured the group that we really want to see developing into leading applications with us in the future. We saw a good spread of career stages from respondents.

We were also glad to receive positive feedback on collaborators experience of working with us

Respondents location



Career stage



## Positive feedback

*"Excellent service with regards to study design and statistics. I've used other CTUs before but why I keep coming back to NWORTH is because the staff are lovely and flexible - and work with the rest of the study team in ensuring the study is robust while also being able to explore other areas that of strategic importance. I also appreciate that NWORTH is quick to respond, even when deadlines are short. It's great to see that they are willing to take a (calculated) risk and sign-up to a project without much bureaucracy."*

One of the results that surprised us was that nearly half (46%) the respondents were not aware or were unsure that we could help with study design. This is one of the core functional areas of a Clinical Trials Unit. In terms of the services that respondents would consider using, these were mainly in areas that related to the study design and pre-application elements, so we clearly have some work to do here

As a CTU, we encourage you to contact us early to explore how we can support your research project. If your study is adopted onto the NWORTH portfolio through our triage process, it will be assigned to the most appropriate team member to help develop it further. Please note that our involvement is costed into the delivery of the proposed study. As our funding is secured when a study is successfully awarded, we are highly motivated to help you produce the strongest and most competitive application possible.

## What next?

In response to the survey and to engage with our strategic aims NWORTH is now looking to host an engagement event which could offer seminars, engagement activities, design clinics or workshop opportunities.

If you would like to help shape this day and register interest to attend the event then please complete this form found at [this link](#) or follow this QR code

NWORTH engagement event



# Study News

## TOGETHER study results published

TOGETHER was a randomised, multicentre, waiting list-controlled trial that assessed the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC) parenting programme intervention in socially and ethnically diverse urban areas in England. It involved 674 participants recruited, over approximately 28 months period, from a highly diverse sample with most participants being from ethnic minority backgrounds, half having a first language other than English, and most being from low-income households (i.e., household income of less than £20,000 per year). A range of measures that focused on the wellbeing of the parents, children and their relationship were collected at baseline, post-intervention and 6 months follow up assessments. The main findings of the trial showed that participants receiving the SFSC parenting programme reported statistically significant higher mental wellbeing (measured using the WEMWBS) at both post-intervention and the 6-month follow-up compared with the waiting list control group. Although the SFSC parenting programme was shown to be unlikely to be cost effective it did not result in a significant increase in cost. Findings are published in the [Lancet Public Health](#).



## SPS trial results published

Long-term psychological treatments are recommended for people with personality disorder. Brief interventions are increasingly delivered but are of uncertain benefit. The Structured Psychological Support (SPS) trial, from Imperial College London, aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a brief individual psychological intervention for people with probable personality disorder over a 12-month period. Results of the SPS trial have been published in the [Lancet Psychiatry](#).



The trial showed no difference in social functioning over the course of 1 year among people offered a brief psychological intervention, and no evidence of cost-effectiveness. The results of this study contrast with those of clinical trials of longer-term psychological treatment programmes for people with borderline personality disorder, which have shown reductions in symptom severity, suicidal behaviour and depression, and improvements in psychosocial functioning. However, the findings support the only previous explanatory trial of a brief psychological intervention for people with personality disorder. These data highlight the importance of improving access to longer-term evidence-based psychological treatment programmes for people with personality disorder.

## New studies!

Funded by the NIHR the [BOOST-3 trial](#) aims to evaluate specialised support for those experiencing moderate-to-severe perinatal mental illness. Led by Dr. Kirsten Barnicot at City St George's, University of London, the study officially began its setup phase on March 1st, 2026.

The trial focuses on an intervention called VIPP-PMH, which uses video feedback to help mothers and birthing people (MABP) observe and build on positive interactions with their infants. By comparing this method against standard specialist care across ten NHS Trusts, we aim to evaluate maternal sensitivity, parenting confidence, bonding, wellbeing, child emotion regulation and behaviour.

Participants: 258 parents and their babies (aged 3–12 months) across the UK.

Recruitment: Opens December 1st, 2026.

By testing how and why this support works, the BOOST-3 team hopes to ensure more effective, evidence-based care is available for families nationwide. The findings are intended to inform future NICE guidelines for perinatal mental health services



# NEWS FROM THE TEAM

## NWORTH team meetings



Each quarter, the NWORTH team comes together for an internal development meeting. These sessions provide updates across functional areas, offer training opportunities, address challenges, and celebrate achievements. We try to make these as

engaging and interactive as possible with input from across all members of the team

Our most recent meeting included strategic and portfolio updates, scenario-based training workshops, and a quality assurance Kahoot quiz — all reflecting the team's flexible and engaging approach.

We also celebrated the IT team's success in launching our REDCap platform, marked by the introduction of a new "team member" — The REDCap Crab.



## Representation at seminars and symposiums

As part of our strategic aim to engage more with Bangor led research our Director has been out and about spreading the 'NWORTH' word.



This included presenting and being on a panel at the North Wales Medical School (NWMS) research Symposium held in November 2025.

A presentation of NWORTH— past present and future was also given as part of the NWMS research seminar series in February 2026. This interactive session introduced the concept of clinical trials and health related research, explored the current NWORTH portfolio, looked at the impact of our past studies before guiding researchers through how to successfully engage with the team develop your next research project. Recordings of all NWMS seminars are available on [BU "NWMS Seminar Series" Team](#). If you are a member of BCUHB staff and want access to the recordings please send an email to [e.hartsuiker@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:e.hartsuiker@bangor.ac.uk)

## NWORTH does social



Our team got together for a lovely festive meal just before the Christmas break at the Pen-Y-Bryn restaurant. A delicious meal was enjoyed by all, allowing the team time to take stock and enjoy each others company.

Yet another social event was held early this year but this was exclusively for the NWORTH toddlers, as Rosie turned 2!



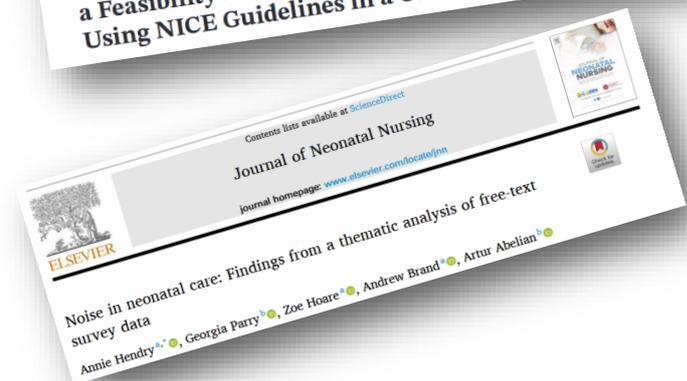
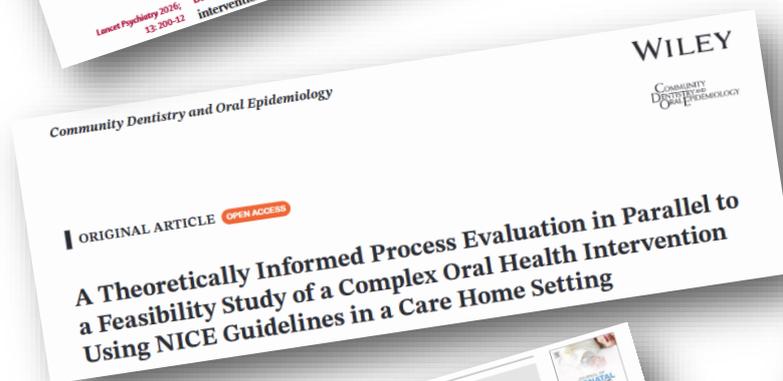
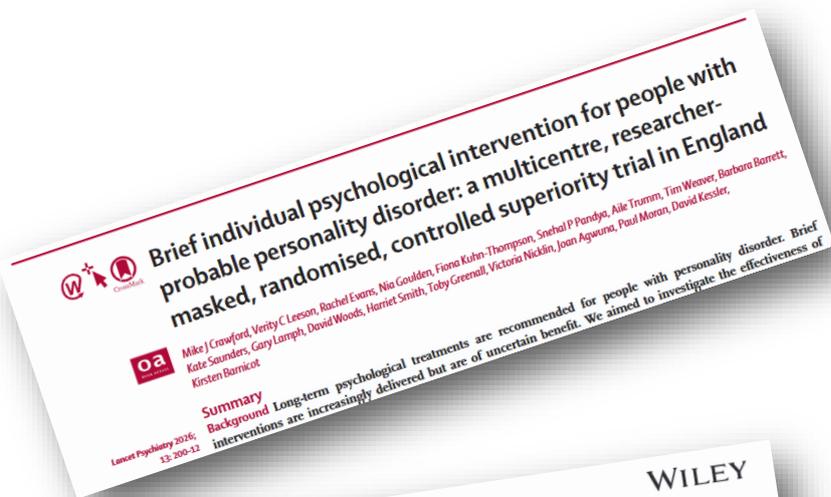
## Farewells

Since Christmas, we have said goodbye to Casey Nolan (IT) and Steffan Hughes (Statistics), both of whom have moved on to new opportunities. Their quiet dedication and integral support were greatly valued. We are grateful for their contributions, will miss their input, and wish them every success in the future. Keep an eye out for Casey driving a train near us soon!



# Recent Publications

1. A Theoretically Informed Process Evaluation in Parallel to a Feasibility Study of a Complex Oral Health Intervention Using NICE Guidelines in a Care Home Setting. [Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology](#)
2. Neighbourhood belonging, social cohesion, and mental wellbeing of children and parents in an ethnically diverse community sample in England. [BMC Public Health](#)
3. Promoting activity, independence and stability in early dementia and mild cognitive impairment: the PrAISED research programme including an RCT [NIHR Journals Programme Grants Applied Research](#)
4. Noise in neonatal care: Findings from a thematic analysis of free-text survey data. [Journal of Neonatal Nursing](#)
5. Brief individual psychological intervention for people with probable personality disorder: a multicentre, researcher-masked, randomised, controlled superiority trial in England. [Lancet Psychiatry](#)
6. Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a parenting programme to improve family well-being and reduce health inequalities: the TOGETHER randomised controlled trial. [Lancet Public Health](#)





**KEEP IN CONTACT WITH  
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North Wales Organisation for  
Randomised Trials in Health & Social Care  
Sefydliad Hap-Dreialon Iechyd  
a Gofal Cymdeithasol Gogledd Cymru

**ABOUT US**

NORTH is a UKCRC registered clinical trials unit, which specialises in the design, conduct, analysis and reporting of multicentre trials of complex interventions. We are based in the North Wales Medical School at Bangor University.

If you'd like to collaborate on a study, please [get in touch](#).

