# Lothian Clinical Academic Pathways Partnership

# Clinical Academic Research Gateway Funding

# First Steps into Research Opportunities 2023

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| Institution & Department | University of Stirling |
| Contact – name, role & email | Agi McFarland, Senior Lecturer  [agi.mcfarland@stir.ac.uk](mailto:agi.mcfarland@stir.ac.uk) |
| Research Project/Programme Title | A pilot of fast-track access to a one stop assessment clinic for patients presenting to primary care with a breast lump: evaluation of impact on primary and secondary care workload and patient experience (**Economic Evaluation)**. |
| Details of Research Project / Programme | PIs: Ms Juliette Murray, Consultant Breast Surgeon, Deputy Medical Director NHS Forth Valley and Associate Clinical Director National Centre for Sustainable Delivery.  Dr Erica Gadsby, Senior Researcher and Lecturer in Public Health, Faculty of Health Sciences and Sport, University of Stirling.  There are well established clinical pathways for primary care to refer suspected breast cancers into secondary care. People presenting with breast lumps in primary care will be referred as urgent suspected cancer (USC) into secondary care. In NHS Forth Valley this accounts for around 4,000 patients each year. Offering fast-track access to these patients would potentially reduce primary care attendances and enable faster, person-centred access to one-stop breast diagnostic services.  The aim of this project is to introduce, evaluate and assess the scalability of a change in pathway in NHS Forth Valley to allow fast-track access to assessment clinics for symptomatic patients with a breast lump to support earlier breast cancer diagnosis.  Methods: The project will run in three phases:   * Phase 1 (months 1-3), intervention design and preparation. We will establish a stakeholder group and a PPI group who will develop/refine an intervention and implementation plan. The evaluation framework, and research methodology, approach and methods will be finalised, and ethics approval sought. Through close working with the stakeholders, we will explore the contextual factors and expected facilitators and barriers to implementation. * Phase 2 (months 3-15), implementation, evaluation and adaptation. The intervention will be implemented in line with the plan, adapted as necessary based on evaluation feedback. Evaluation activities will include the gathering of data related to outcomes and process of implementation. Methods will include the use of routine health services data, surveys to patients, and interviews with staff involved. Analyses will include: statistical analyses of quantitative data (including before/after comparisons across 3 time points) and economic analyses; descriptive analyses of demographic data; thematic analyses of qualitative data. * Phase 3 (months 1-18), scalability and evaluability assessment. This work will begin at project initiation, with evidence synthesised in months 15-18. The project group will conduct a combined scalability and evaluability assessment, with the research team gathering further data as required (e.g. via qualitative interviews with healthcare professionals) to fill in any missing gaps.   The project will run from May 2023 for 18 months. |
| Opportunities for candidate | Opportunities for the candidate relate to working on the planned economic analysis for this project and may include:   * Economic data collection * Data analysis in relation to costs * Formulation of decision tree care pathway models * Quantitative data analysis |
| Any other considerations or information for potential candidates? (e.g. potential links to other projects, networking opportunities, specific skills needed) | The project is run in collaboration with NHS Forth Valley so the candidate will have the opportunity to engage with both academic staff from the University of Stirling and clinical staff to gain an insight into collaborative health research.  An interest in quantitative analysis and health economics is desirable. |
| Dates available (awards likely to be made summer 2023 for start in September 2023) | Dates are flexible and can be arranged following award. |
| Mentor(s) | Agi McFarland |