

# Future of Evidence Synthesis: the NIHR Perspective (ESP change and personal view)



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(from 1 June 2022)



# NIHR Evidence Synthesis

NIHR values evidence synthesis

Estimated 2,800 ES projects completed across NIHR funding streams 2010-19

**“Way ahead of any other academic contribution to policy-making is rigorous and unbiased synthesis of current knowledge.....**

Unfortunately, despite accurate synthesis being by far the most useful academic skill for policy-making, it tends to have low prestige in the academic community, a form of snobbery which is very unhelpful if we believe our own rhetoric that **science can and should change the world.....**

**If the academic community as a whole could do one thing to improve the pathway from research to policy, it would be to improve the status, quality and availability of good synthesis.”**

Chris Whitty, BMC Med 13, 301 (2015)

# Best Research for Best Health: The Next Chapter

NIHR Evidence Synthesis Programme is changing - changes are radical

CRG funding stops from April 2023

ESP funding will continue at current level (~£17m p.a.)

Exciting opportunity to redesign for the future



Q Search...



## Evidence Synthesis

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**Reconfiguring ESP to deliver evidence syntheses that meet the needs of key UK stakeholders and evidence users across the health and care landscape in a responsive and timely manner**

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The Evidence Synthesis Programme identifies, evaluates, combines and summarises information from a range of sources to provide decision makers with the best possible information about the effects of tests, treatments and other interventions used in health and social care.



**NIHR ESP commissioning up to 9 new Evidence Synthesis Groups**

**Complement existing NIHR provision**

**NIHR Evidence Synthesis Groups will:**

**Deliver suite of ES products to meet the needs of a range of stakeholders**

**Make efficient use of available funding  
Put the needs of patients first**

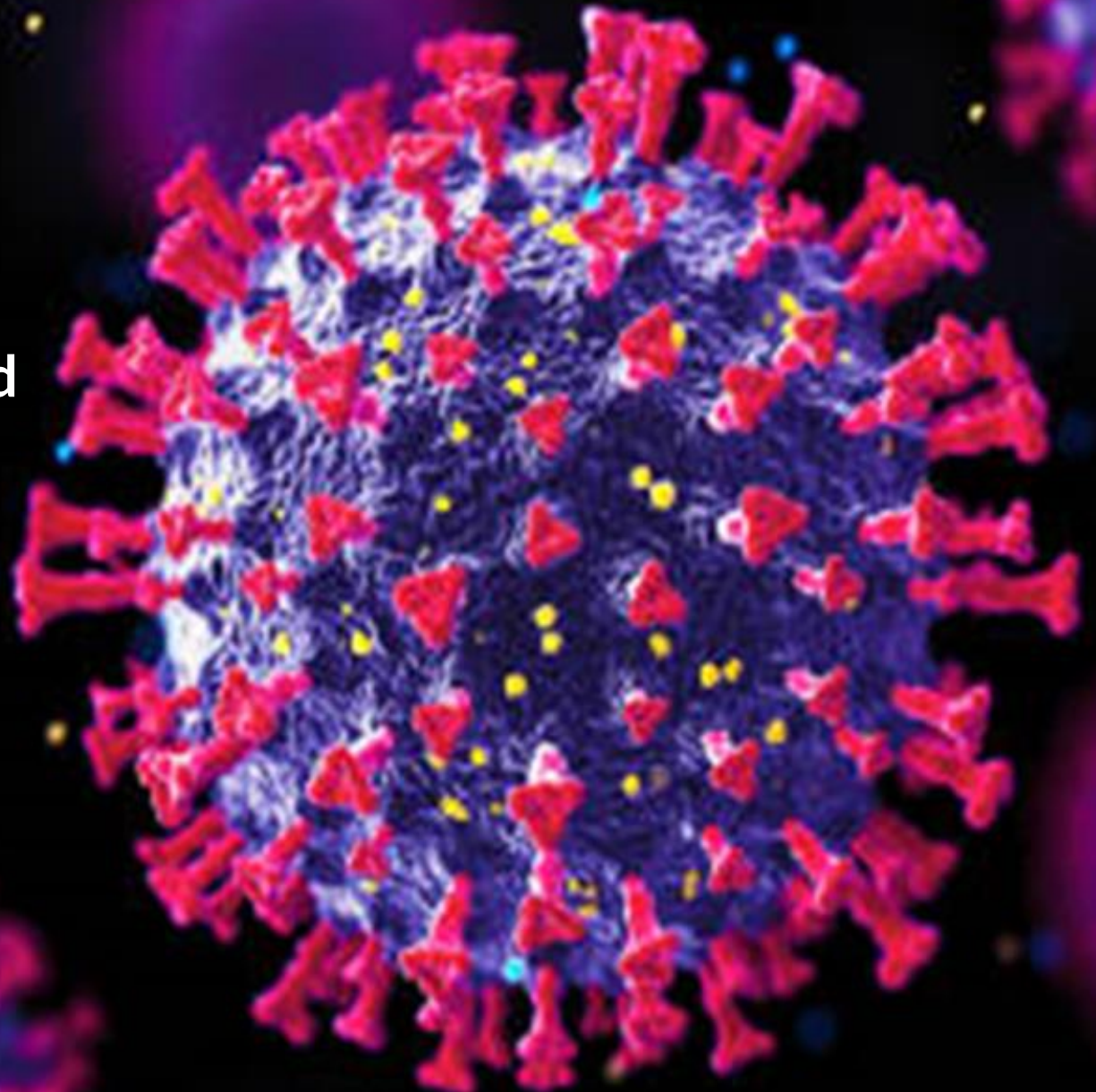
**Have expertise, skills and capacity to deliver all types of projects in the ES family across a broad range of topic areas**

**New groups operational from April 2023**

**Vast numbers of reviews being produced globally**

**Pandemic highlighted strengths and exposed weaknesses in global evidence production**

**Once in a generation focus on research evidence**



## The Evidence Commission report

A wake-up call and path forward for decision-makers, evidence intermediaries, and impact-oriented evidence producers



Global Commission on Evidence to Address Societal Challenges

**“Now is the time to systematize the aspects of using evidence that are going well and address the many shortfalls, which means creating the capacities, opportunities and motivation to use evidence to address societal challenges”**

# Opportunities





# Aspirations for NIHR ESP

- Inclusive, world-leading & internationally trusted source of evidence
- Meet specific needs of UK decision makers & contribute to global evidence
- Produce evidence syntheses that are relevant & responsive to societal challenges in health and social care
- Capability to address complex questions, consider effectiveness & cost-effectiveness, deliver full range of types of evidence products
- Embed knowledge exchange & co-creation
- Support development and refinement of methods (drives quality)
- Nimble, efficient & collaborative, avoid duplication & waste
- Balance quality with 'good enough' when a decision is needed urgently



**Start of a process to redesign ESP  
as a flagship evidence support system**

**Looking forward to continuing conversations ....**