

Canada-UK Study Tour
8th - 12th March 2010
London and Edinburgh

The Rough Guide to Funding Ageing Research

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Who funds ageing research in the UK?

- Research Councils
 - big players
- Charitable Bodies and Foundations
 - Some very big, mostly small
- Government Departments
 - Especially Health, but often not big players
- European Union etc
 - Can be significant

The research councils and ageing research

- MRC - Medical
- ESRC - Economic and Social Sciences
- EPSRC - Engineering and Physical Sciences
- BBSRC - Biotechnology and Biological Sciences
- AHRC - Arts and Humanities



Planned investment – research councils

- Science Budget
 - for cross-research council activities 2008/9 – 2011/12
 - Energy - £319m
 - Living with environmental change - £363m
 - Global threats to security - £113m
 - Ageing - £485m
 - Emphasis on **multidisciplinary** working to address key **public policy** challenges
- Other programmes
 - will also provide homes for ageing research



Research Council programmes

- Responsive Mode
- Cross-Research Council Programmes
 - NDA - New Dynamics of Ageing
 - Led by ESRC 2005 – 2012 - £20m
 - Life Long Health and Wellbeing
 - Led by MRC 2008 – 2013 - £30m
- Single Research Council Programmes
 - EQUAL – Extending Quality Life
 - EPSRC 1997 - 2012? - £14.5m
 - (Towards Next Generation) Healthcare & Engine for Health Care Innovation
 - EPSRC 2009 - ?? - £lots



Important themes

- Multidisciplinary
- Collaborative
- User Involvement
- Extremely successful
- Now, generally accepted approach
- But, still some resistance
- Some variations in approach between programmes
 - EQUAL – managed at individual project level and through various networks
 - NDA - Older People's Reference Group
 - LLHW - Public Perspective Group



Various funding mechanisms

for EQUAL, NDA and LLHW

- Smaller research awards
 - small, often single institution
- Larger awards, centres, consortia
 - large, often multi-institution (EQUAL v. large & long term)
- Special features
 - Preparatory/development networks
 - Established approach for EPSRC, new for other RCs & new for ageing
 - Sand Pits & Ideas Factories
 - Novel approach led by EPSRC
 - eg Bilateral links for existing programmes with Canada (NDA, EQUAL)

EQUAL 1997-

- Multidisciplinary
- Multi-professional
- Intermediate Organisations
- Older People as experts
 - Built Environment
 - Design for All
 - Rehabilitation
- 34 projects, 5 consortia (3 still running)



Making a difference since 1998

Informing public policy

- Improving:
 - Building Regulations
 - British Standards
 - Professional Guidance Documents
 - Expectations
- Supporting those who commission:
 - Buildings and infrastructure
 - Transport systems
 - Consumer products
- Assisting the professions:
 - Design
 - Health
 - Social services
- Aiding policy development:
 - Housing
 - Transport
 - Care....



New Dynamics of Ageing - NDA

- First cross-council programme
- Probably largest programme in Europe
- Led by ESRC
- 2005 – 2012 - £20m
 - 11 Large Awards
 - 24 Smaller Awards
 - 12 Networks

Life Long Health and Wellbeing - LLHWB

- Second cross-council programme
- Emphasises the life course
- Led by MRC
- 2008 – 2013 - £30m
 - 3 Research Centres
 - 10 Networks
 - 3 Consortia
 - More to come
- Builds on experience of NDA
- Has yet to find a comfortable niche

Charities etc

- Many players
 - most are small, a few very large
- Different missions and priorities
 - independence is valued
- Coordination is via a market place
 - different funding streams and research proposals
 - mediated by peer review and equivalent mechanisms to ensure quality, novelty and relevance and the influence of the missions
- Market mechanisms are difficult to understand
- Better to consider outputs and progress



UKARF – 30 members

- Charities and groups which represent older people
- Research funding charities concerned with:
 - solely ageing
 - not just ageing
 - diseases and disabilities
 - not exclusively associated with ageing
- Research councils
- Government departments (UK and devolved)
- Scientific societies; Federations of charities
- Special initiatives to promote ageing research
- Charities and groups which represent older people



Creating a new culture through engagement

An example

SPARC - a community-led Initiative

- Focused on:
 - Encouraging newcomers into ageing research
- 2005 – 2008
- EPSRC & BBSRC - £1.75m
 - Design and engineering research
 - Biological research
 - All areas in between
- Three themes
 - Workshops for all comers
 - Advocacy
 - Pump-priming



Capacity building awards Developing the evidence base

- Small awards scheme for newcomers to ageing research
- 185 proposals total value £5.7m were considered in Summer 2005 & Spring 2006
- **34 were funded at total value £1.25m**
 - for superior scientific excellence and capacity building
 - for more information see posters and www.sparc.ac.uk

The 34 award holders



Value of new funding = £10m! Secured by award holders

- Academic Funding = £6.2m
 - Research Councils and funders with strong academic orientation – For example EPSRC, BBSRC, RIA
- Other Stakeholder Funding = £3.7m
 - Funders with a focus on older people, or diseases of old age, or a more pragmatic orientation - For example, JRF, BHF, NICE, government
- Figures at December 2008.
- Another several £m secured since then!

Personal Achievements

Activity	On Own Account (%)	With SPARC Support (%)
Promotion	~10	~15
Funding - Research Councils	~45	~5
Funding - other stakeholder bodies	~45	~5
Academic papers	~85	~15
Reports for other stakeholders	~10	~60
Academic presentations	~45	~55
Presentations to other stakeholders	~35	~65
International platform	~45	~55
Major media engagement	~10	~15

Before SPARC
Even experienced scientists had little experience of writing for non-specialists, speaking to such audiences and involvement with the general media. Afterwards they had, so too the early career scientists!

Workshops – 48 Showcasing research

- **Maintaining Independence in Later Life**, Brunel Univ.
- **The business case for ageing research**, Unilever plc
- **Living with stroke**, Sheffield Hallam University
- **Old and Active: Maintaining the older person's health, activity and employment**, LARCI
- **Ageing Research and Occupational Therapy**, College of Occupational Therapists
- **A Walk a Day Keeps a Fall at Bay**, Camden Council
- **Health, Workplace Design and the Older Worker**, TAEN
- **Older People Going Places**, BA Festival

Advocacy Informing public policy


- Making the case that ageing research can and is making a difference
- Lobbying
- Developing a good track record
 - MPs do listen!
 - Two questions in Parliament on Ageing Research and Older Workers
 - Ministers do listen
 - Royal Patronage

2009!




- December 2008 – SPARC ended
- January 2009 – KT-EQUAL began
 - Knowledge Transfer for Extending Quality Life
 - Workshops
 - Advocacy
 - Developing younger researchers
 - Dissemination, application, utilisation
 - Even closer to policy makers and practitioners

But SPARC-like initiatives – devolving responsibility down the line to the research community are not that unusual

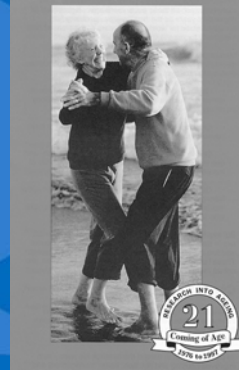


- Ask Nick Tyler!

Canada-UK

- High levels of compatibility between research areas, communities and need for development
- Being wily, taking a risk, never giving up
- We two can Tango

The ultimate aim



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