

WIPAHS Strategic Theme Lead Invitation

Systems Approach for Health, Well-being and Physical Activity

Overview of WIPAHS

The Welsh Institute of Physical Activity, Health and Sport (WIPAHS) is a Pan-Wales network of Welsh Universities and Sport Wales. We seek to promote health and well-being using the transformative power of physical activity and sport by identifying, developing, and answering relevant research questions in non-elite settings.

The primary objective of WIPAHS is to make a difference to the people of Wales by collaborating across Welsh Universities and external stakeholders (those who are facilitating physical activity and sport, policy makers and the public). WIPAHS is a practice-driven organisation, and operates to answer the questions posed by those working in the field, as well as to widely disseminate knowledge across a diversity of audiences. Ultimately, WIPAHS' mission is to build capacity across Wales, train future scientists and increase strategic collaboration across Sport Wales, academia, business, and stakeholders.

WIPAHS comprises five key components: A Strategic Management Board, A Research Steering Group, the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) Panel, WIPAHS Researchers and a Stakeholder Panel. The Research Steering Group oversees all activities undertaken by WIPAHS and is formed of Strategic Theme Leads with direct input from the HEIs Panel, WIPAHS Researchers and external stakeholders. Strategic Theme Leads provide research project support and leadership across their area of thematic expertise. They are also expected to proactively engage with stakeholders to explore potential areas in which WIPAHS could provide support to organisations to address their research questions.

All thematic areas consider the promotion of mental and physical health and investigate how to implement and scale interventions. Projects do not have to be isolated to one strategic theme. The seven overarching strategic themes are:

- Moving for Health
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Health, Sport and Physical Activity Economics
- Population-Level Change
- Healthy Behaviours
- Behaviour Change
- Policy and Public Affairs

We are currently looking to expand our areas of thematic expertise and are inviting applications for a Systems Approach to Health, Well-being and Physical Activity Theme Lead.

Theme Lead Role

We are looking to expand our areas of thematic expertise and are inviting applications for a Systems Theme Lead.

The World Health Organisation's Global Action Plan for Physical Activity (GAPPA) offers a comprehensive global framework for addressing physical inactivity. It acknowledges that this issue is complex, influenced by numerous interconnected factors. GAPPA emphasises that change must happen at various levels, from individual behaviour to community environments and policy implementation. It recognizes that a one-size-fits-all solution isn't effective. Instead, it advocates for a multidimensional strategy involving multiple levels and stakeholders.

There is a growing body of evidence that systems approaches can help to tackle complex problems like inactivity, with growing learning and expertise in systems leadership, theory, mapping, and impact/evaluation techniques.

Theme Lead Responsibilities

In this role, you will:

- Provide expertise and leadership on systems thinking, leadership, mapping, implementation and evaluation strategies.
- Maintain and share up-to-date understanding of learning, research and approaches used for working within complex systems
- Connect and collaborate with other system leaders and academics both within and beyond Wales
- Proactively engage with stakeholders to explore potential areas in which WIPAHS could support and be involved in, and proactively and collaboratively work with the WIPAHS Research Steering Group to develop the ideas
- Summarise and share learning with WIPAHS colleagues
- Attend quarterly WIPAHS meetings to share knowledge, learning and enhance collaboration.

Also:

- Contribute to WIPAHS activities as directed by the Strategic Management Board and Research Director.
- Actively contribute to WIPAHS through the promotion of WIPAHS activities and capacity to support stakeholders. This includes proactively discussing WIPAHS with potential beneficiaries.
- Publicise WIPAHS and disseminating its outputs through appropriate channels (e.g. social media) to enhance knowledge sharing and collaboration across Wales and internationally.
- Proactively explore opportunities to leverage collaborative funding from relevant sources.
- Provide an overview of existing knowledge related to incoming research questions and support Sport Wales and its partners in accessing up to date research journals.
- Contribute to an annual report on WIPAHS activities as part of supporting ongoing WIPAHS funding.
- Adhere to pre-agreed procedures for communicating with external stakeholders on any matters related to WIPAHS.

Our ideal candidate will be:

- Passionate about the difference you know physical activity and sport can make to people's lives.
- Knowledgeable about systems, such as: ways of working; leadership; mapping; implementation and evaluation.
- Have experience of leading and working in complex systems, creating the conditions for change, and connecting the current system up to itself.

Position Benefits

All WIPAHS members kindly offer their time for free. The only paid members are the specifically employed Research Assistants/Officers.

However, the benefits of the role are found in the potential collaboration, commissions, funding and learning and leadership that can emanate from involvement in a pan-Wales group, rather than direct financial gain. For example, these opportunities include but are not limited to:

- Letters of support and other auditable sources to help with Impact Case Study development. This includes direct links to policy makers.
- Partnership with Sport Wales and its partners to secure research income and industry collaboration.
- More impactful teaching and research practices via enhanced partnership between academia and end users.
- Development of collaborative research grants.
- Application for evaluation tenders. To date, WIPAHS theme leads have been involved in the Successful tenders for a variety of projects ranging from £16,000 to £120,000.

Term, Time Commitment and Reporting

Theme Leads will be appointed for three years and are required to communicate regularly with the Research Director as their primary point of contact.

Application

Interested applicants should submit a two-page CV and one-page cover letter detailing their experiences working with systems-based thinking, for example mapping, implementation etc in physical activity and/or non-elite sport settings. Please also detail how you could contribute to the objectives and mission of WIPAHS and our current work which involves co-designing and conducting research with external stakeholders, disseminating knowledge, etc. Details of our current work can be found on the website: [The Welsh Institute of Physical Activity, Health & Sport - Swansea University](https://www.welshinstitute.ac.uk/)

We ask that applications are submitted by email to wipahs@swansea.ac.uk by 31st May 2024 at 4pm.