

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed pressure on health systems at an unprecedented scale and highlighted the reality of health inequalities. It has shown that it is not enough to deal with the health of individuals in isolation from the wider social influences that determine people's experiences of health.

At Durham University, we build on the conventional medicine approach and look into how behaviour,

environment, culture, economic status and many other factors influence health. We integrate the following **principles** in our daily work as they provide an **alternative perspective for future healthcare design**:

- Address local and individual contexts
- Prioritise lived experience
- Adopt an integrated approach to research, development and delivery of care and support

- Challenge entrenched inequalities in resources, access, and outcomes, and the systems that perpetuate them



Principles in action

New approaches to treat breathlessness. Dance reconnects people with chronic breathlessness with their bodies in a more positive way. [Read more](#)

Skills not pills: community-based pain self-management. There is a great potential for families and the community to offer support to people living with pain when thinking in a different way about health and care.

[Read more](#)

Enlighten healthcare spaces: the natural way. This project aims to improve the experience of the ICU community by introducing 'natural' lighting, sound and other sensory changes.

[Read more](#)

Parental mental health and baby sleep: gaps in policy and practice. Our 'Sleep, Baby and You' approach offers a training solution for practitioners and a support programme for parents. [Read more](#)

Understanding voices. Our website is now a key resource for NHS staff and provides voice-hearers and their families with access to coping strategies and support.

[Read more](#)

Evaluating e-therapies in the community. We have developed DREX (Durham Reading and EXploratory) training, an online rehabilitation programme to support people with visual impairment after brain injury. [Read more](#)

Recommendations

- Develop a more holistic approach to healthcare
- Include humanities subjects in health research to build a fairer healthcare system
- Reform the health system with principles of fairness and local context, especially when designing policies



Contact us

Wolfson Institute for Health and Wellbeing Research:

wolfson@durham.ac.uk

Institute for Medical Humanities: imh.mail@durham.ac.uk

Biophysical Sciences Institute: admin.bsi@durham.ac.uk