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## The governance of design research in healthcare

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In this paper, we review our experiences dealing with research governance issues in healthcare. We indicate key ways in which creative and exploratory design research can engage with healthcare organisations to overcome barriers that limit the ability of both parties to realize the potential benefits of design research.

A key lesson has been about the complex interactions between general ethical principles as defined by a long history of ethical guidance in health (WHO, 2008) and the specific governance and oversight arrangements that apply in our particular setting (DoH, 2005), namely an on-going National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care, South Yorkshire (CLAHRC-SY).

Specific challenges in undertaking design practice and research stem from an incompatibility between the iterative nature of design research and practice and processes currently in place to approve projects. There is also the added complexity of terminology, where certain processes are followed due to classification of a project as 'research' (Brain et al 2013) as opposed to 'service improvement' or 'practice development', regardless of the activity proposed or the purpose of the project.

We will reflect on the wide range of different collaborative research, design and service improvement activities we have undertaken and how we have ensured the appropriate approval processes are obtained. These approaches include classifying design research as service improvement/review activity, as bench science and instances where design activity is provided as a service

developing an 'intervention' which is subsequently evaluated using traditional research methodologies.

Design research in healthcare is an emergent discipline trying to interact with historical systems set up for different purposes. We believe that over the last four years we have developed ways to work with these systems that ensure the balance between appropriate governance and the uniquely exploratory nature of design is realised.

### References

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