

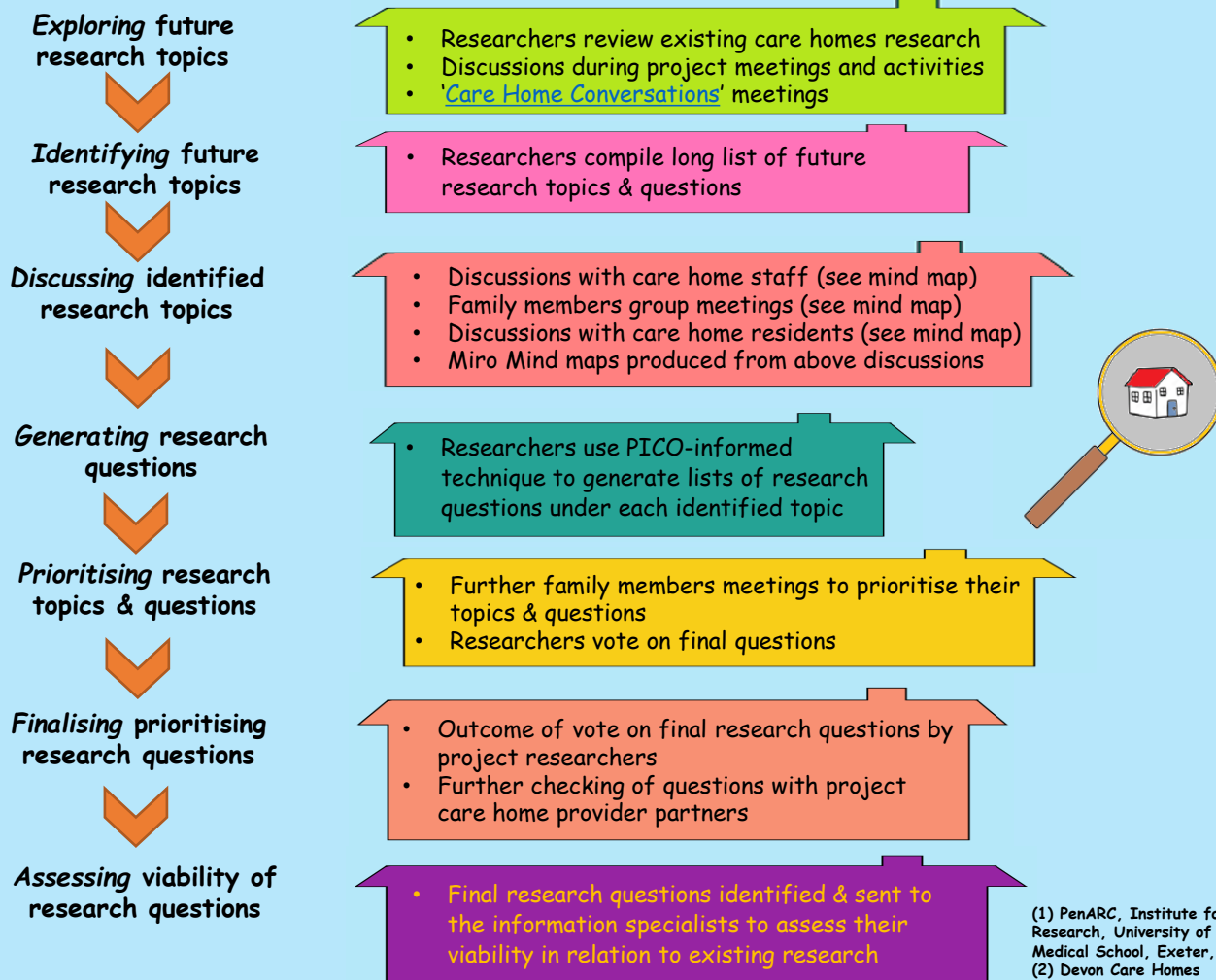
# Generating Questions for Future Care Homes Research

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## Background:

The ExCHANGE Collaboration (The University of Exeter and Care Homes Knowledge Collaboration) brings together researchers, care home providers, staff, residents and family members concerned with enhancing health and happiness in care homes. The collaboration works towards improving mutual understanding of research evidence-use in care homes and one aim is to **generate questions for future research projects that directly address care home practice-needs to enhance the health and happiness of those living and working in and visiting care homes**. ExCHANGE has also identified suitable funding bids for these questions. This report displays the organic process the ExCHANGE Collaboration went through to collectively generate and prioritise future local research ideas, topics and a final set of questions. Working together as a collaboration of diverse stakeholders it was crucial that all members participated equally in this process so that research questions generated would be firmly focused on care home practice-needs.

## Overview of Project Generation Process:



(1) PenARC, Institute for Health Research, University of Exeter Medical School, Exeter, UK  
 (2) Devon Care Homes Collaborative, Newton Abbot, UK

## Exploring, Generating & Prioritising Future Care Homes Projects:



1.) The researchers, care home providers, staff and family members that make up [the ExCHANGE Collaboration](#) attended monthly project group meetings, during which care home practice needs and ideas for future research priorities were discussed.



2.) Researchers identified existing literature listing identified care home practice priorities for research. Relevant literature found included: research by Chamberlain et al (2020) in Canada which highlighted 10 priorities for care homes research, identified through priority-setting work with citizens and stakeholders such as care home staff/providers; research by Gordon et al (2018) which identified 5 topics with 18 priorities, which was developed from a workshop involving academics, healthcare professionals, members of the public and research funders in the East Midlands; and research by Morley et al (2014), which found 15 priorities from a survey with nursing home academic experts from 8 countries.

3.) Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, during May and June 2020, teams from PenARC, NHSE South West Integrated Personal Commissioning team, the South West Academic Health Science Network and a care home manager held three '[Care Home Conversations](#)' meetings between staff, managers, owners and others from a range of care homes in the South West. During these 'conversations' practice issues related to the pandemic and how these issues needed to be addressed moving into the future were highlighted and discussed.

4.) From these discussions and literature reviewing, researchers drew up a long list of topics and questions for future care homes research. This list was further discussed by the collaboration during project group meetings and added to as an ongoing, working document throughout 2020-2022.

5.) Discussions were then held by researchers with care home staff from local homes over telephone/video-call to discuss care home practice issues and research priorities from their perspective, during January and February 2022 (see mind map). Relatives of care home residents attended family member group meetings, facilitated by researchers, to discuss their needs and priorities for care homes research, in July and September 2021, and again to follow-up and prioritise in March 2022. During April 2022, once Covid-19 restrictions had lifted in care homes a researcher visited two local care homes and held informal discussions with care home residents about what they liked about living in the care home and what they would like to see improved in the future, these conversations were aided by the use of visual prompts (see below). The outcomes of these discussions were documented using Miro mind maps.



6.) After gathering this information, researchers on the collaboration used a PICO-informed technique (see below) to generate lists of research questions under the priority topics that had been identified by care home staff, family members and residents. Further family members meetings were held, using the lists of topics and questions to prioritise these questions into final priority topics and questions (see below).

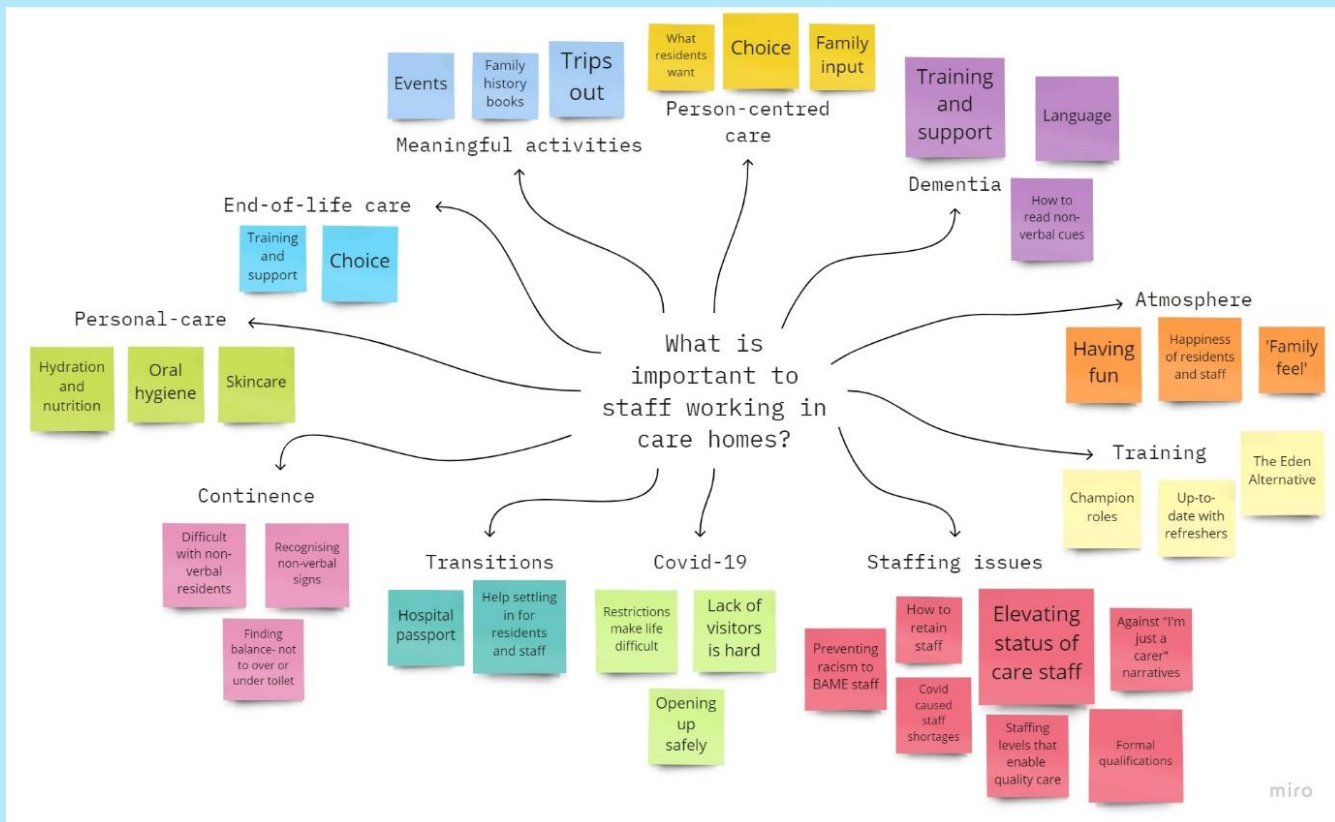
7.) The final priority questions and topics from discussions with [the ExCHANGE Collaboration](#), conversations with care home staff, family members and residents were then compiled into a shorter list, with questions listed under each group. This list was then emailed out to researchers and care home providers on the collaboration and members were instructed to vote on their priority 3 or 4 questions, taking into consideration the viability of questions for future research funding bids.

8.) The outcome of this vote was then discussed in project group meetings, alongside further checking with care home providers to ensure the questions were reflecting relevant and important care home practice-needs.

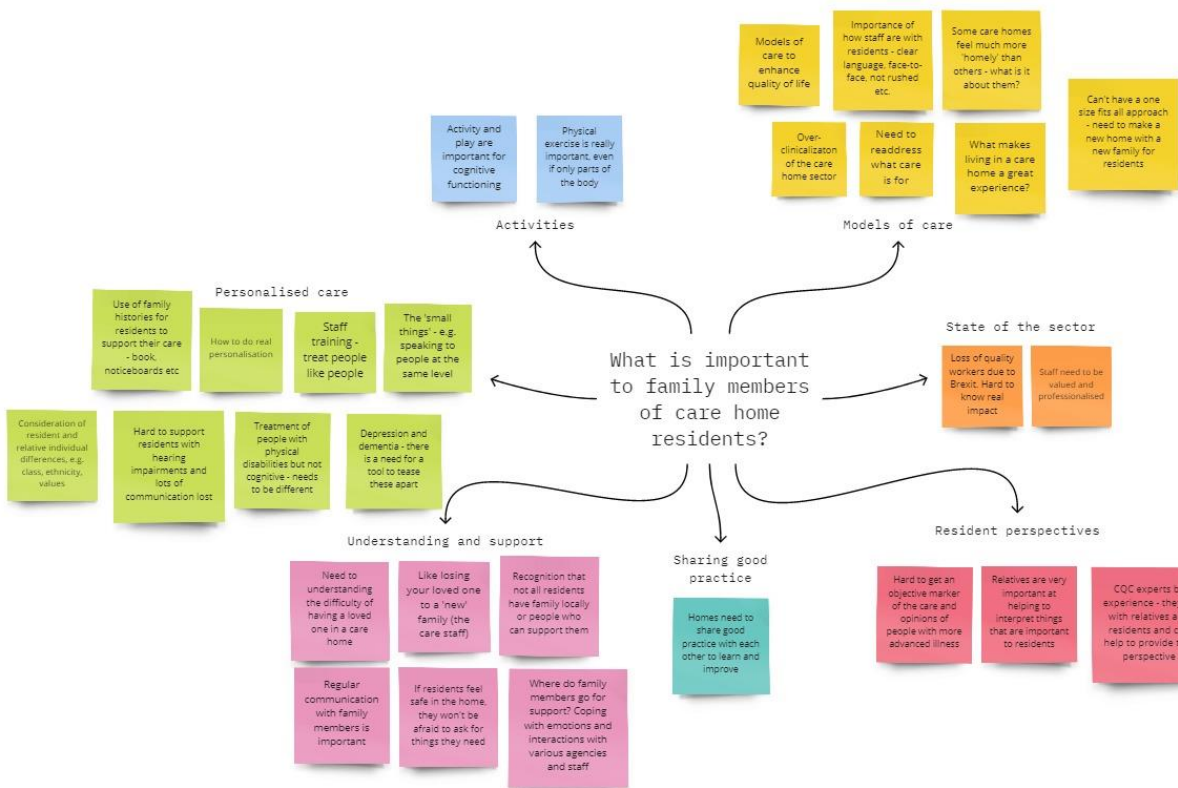
9.) The final 4 research questions that had been agreed on by the collaboration were then sent to the [PenARC information specialists team](#) at the University of Exeter to search the literature to help assess the viability of these questions for future research and the project researchers also identified suitable funding calls.

### Mind Maps of Future Research Topics:

Miro board mind map of future research topics identified by discussions with care home staff:

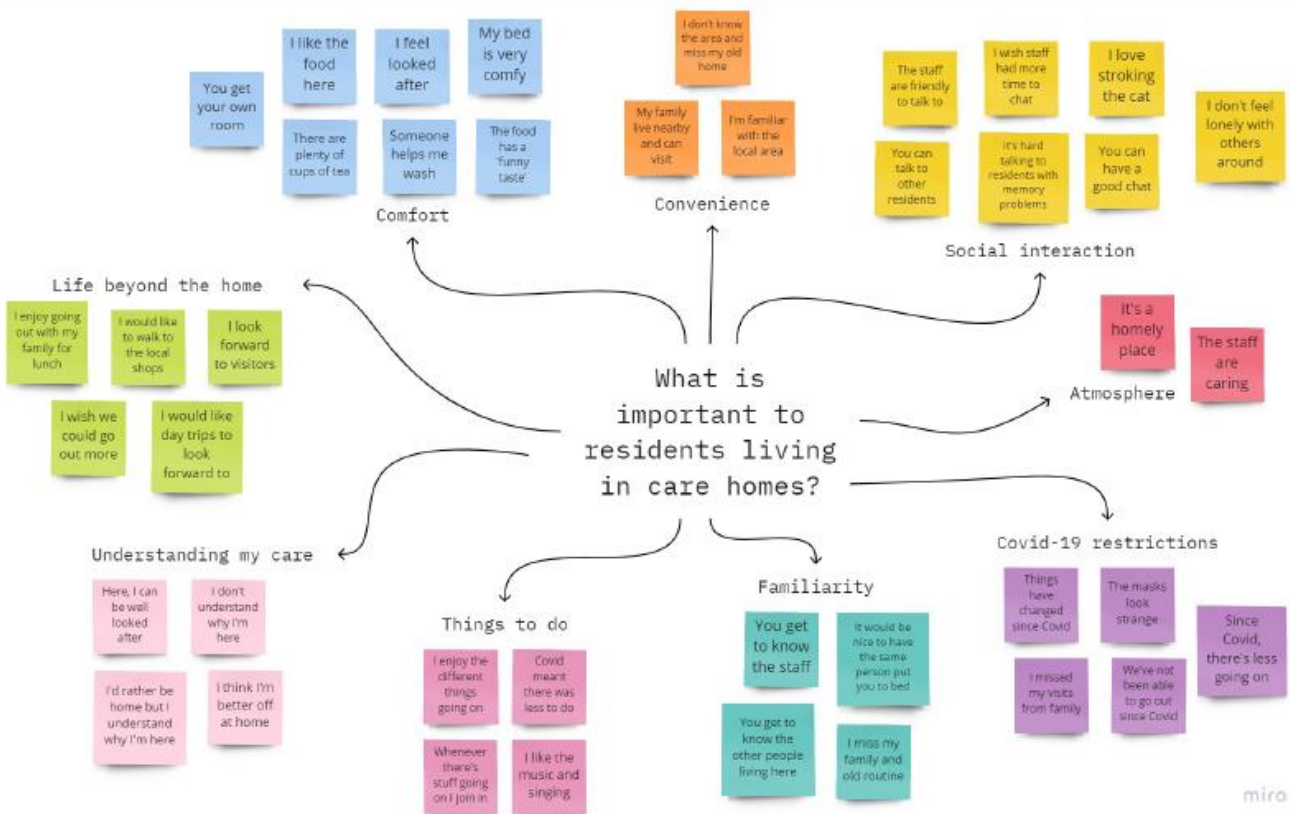


## Miro board mind map of future research topics identified through family members group meetings:



miro

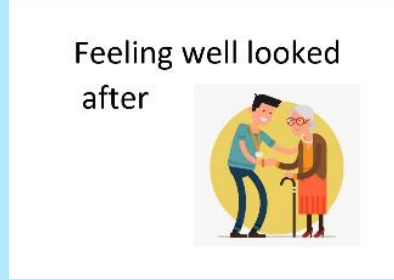
## Miro board mind map of research topics from conversations with care home residents about what they like and what they would change about care home life:



miro



Visual prompts used to aid discussions with residents about future research topics:



PICO-Informed Pro-Forma for Generating Research Questions:

**ExCHANGE research question pro-forma**

What is the problem/issue?
Who is it a problem for?
What would be needed to solve this issue?
How would this best be achieved?
What would the outcome of this research be (i.e. how would it help)?
Who would this research help (i.e. who would it be for)?

Researchers adapted an ExCHANGE pro-forma for generating questions informed by the **PICO** (Population/**P**roblem/**P**atient, **I**ntervention, **C**omparison, **O**utcome) question framework. PICO is helpful to use in health sciences research to structure the generation of feasible research questions.

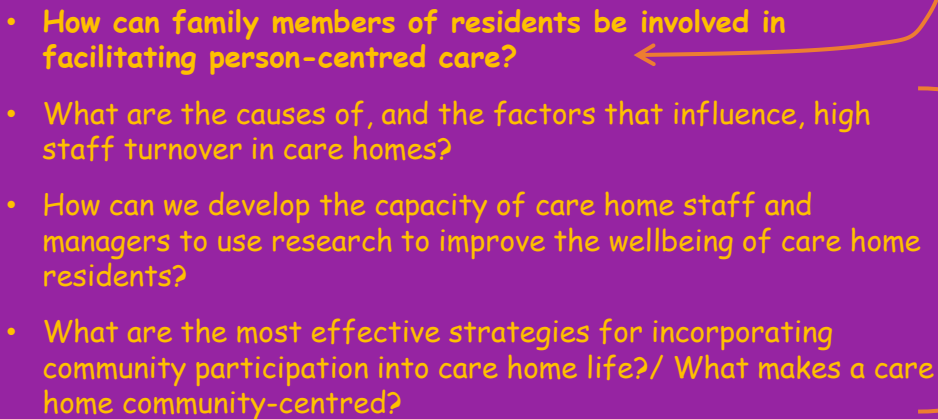
## Research Topics & Questions Generated:



Topic:	Research Questions:
<b>Happiness and wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can wellbeing and happiness levels be identified and maintained in care home residents?</li> <li>What are the most effective strategies to enhance wellbeing and happiness in care home residents?</li> <li>How can we develop the capacity of care home staff and managers to use research to improve the wellbeing of care home residents?</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership/management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What strategies facilitate inspirational and effective leadership/management in care homes?</li> <li>How can networking between care home leaders/managers be used to enhance care home leadership/management?</li> <li>What training and resources are most effective in improving the practice of care home leaders/managers?</li> </ul>
<b>Transitions (into a care home, in/out of hospital)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What strategies have helped support resident wellbeing during their transition into a care home? (from home, or from hospital)</li> <li>How can family members be involved in supporting their relatives to settle into care home life? (from home, or from hospital)</li> <li>How can family members of new care home residents collaborate with care home staff to enhance the personalisation and quality of residents' care?</li> </ul>
<b>Elevating the status of care home staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What supervision strategies are most effective to enhance professional development of care home staff?</li> <li>How can university/educational placements be used to enhance the professional development of care home staff?</li> <li>How can the research champion role enhance the professional development of care staff?</li> </ul>
<b>Person-centred care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the factors that help and hinder the adoption of person-centred care in care homes?</li> <li>How can family members most effectively collaborate with care staff to facilitate person-centred care in care homes?</li> <li>What are the most effective techniques for developing and maintaining the use of life history books for residents in care homes to enable person-centred care?</li> </ul>
<b>Developing a research culture in care homes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can we develop the capacity of care home staff and managers to use research to improve the wellbeing of care home residents?</li> <li>What factors influence (help and hinder) development of research culture in care homes?</li> <li>How effective is the role of the research champion in supporting research with care homes?</li> </ul>
<b>Care staff retention/turnover</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the causes of, and the factors that influence, high staff turnover in care homes?</li> <li>What are and how effective are different strategies for retaining care staff?</li> <li>What are the most effective strategies used by employers to identify and support issues in staff wellbeing in care homes?</li> </ul>
<b>Influence of physical activities on health/wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the influence of regular physical activity on the health/wellbeing of care home residents?</li> <li>What are the most effective strategies for care staff to support residents with frailty and high falls-risk to engage in physical activity?</li> <li>How can care staff support residents with dementia/cognitive issues to engage in physical activity?</li> </ul>
<b>Input from relatives on residents' care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can family members of residents be involved in facilitating person-centred care?</li> <li>How can family members of new residents be involved in handover with care staff to support the smooth transition of new residents into care homes?</li> <li>What strategies are most effective for facilitating family members to aid care staff in understanding care home residents' needs?</li> </ul>
<b>Impact of Covid-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are care home residents' lived experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing effects?</li> <li>How can care home staff negotiate between Covid-19 risk mitigation and quality of life?</li> <li>How has the Covid-19 pandemic influenced care home residents' experiences of daily life?</li> </ul>
<b>End-of-life care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What strategies are most effective for care staff to support end-of-life residents in their care?</li> <li>How does end-of-life care affect care home staff's wellbeing?</li> <li>How can care home staff communicate with family members to enable person-centred end-of-life care to residents?</li> </ul>
<b>Involving the community in care home life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do trips out of the care home influence residents' wellbeing and experience of care home life?</li> <li>What are the most effective strategies for incorporating community participation into care homes?</li> <li>What makes a care home community-centred?</li> </ul>

## Final Research Questions Identified:

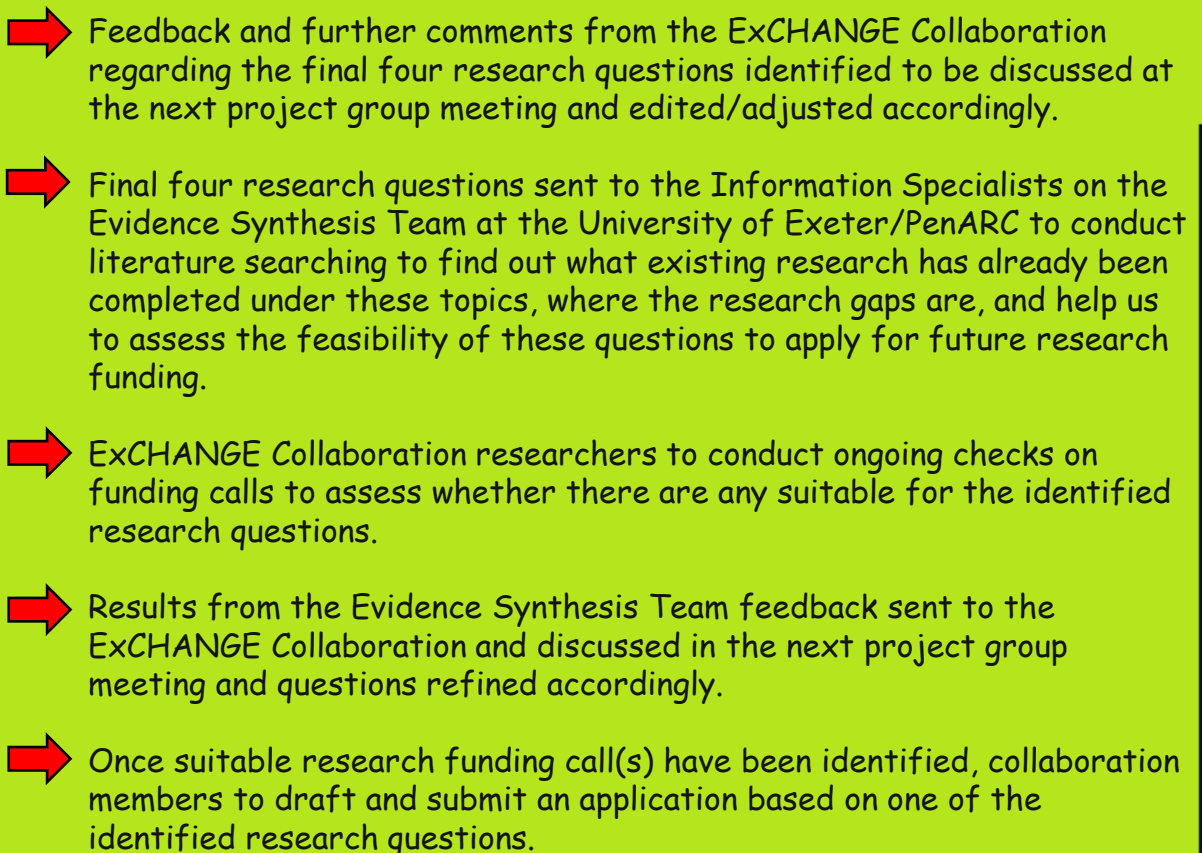
*This question had the highest share of the final vote, with 3/6 of researchers choosing it*

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- How can family members of residents be involved in facilitating person-centred care?
  - What are the causes of, and the factors that influence, high staff turnover in care homes?
  - How can we develop the capacity of care home staff and managers to use research to improve the wellbeing of care home residents?
  - What are the most effective strategies for incorporating community participation into care home life?/ What makes a care home community-centred?

*These questions were each selected by 2/6 of the researchers*

## Next Steps:



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- ➔ Feedback and further comments from the ExCHANGE Collaboration regarding the final four research questions identified to be discussed at the next project group meeting and edited/adjusted accordingly.
  - ➔ Final four research questions sent to the Information Specialists on the Evidence Synthesis Team at the University of Exeter/PenARC to conduct literature searching to find out what existing research has already been completed under these topics, where the research gaps are, and help us to assess the feasibility of these questions to apply for future research funding.
  - ➔ ExCHANGE Collaboration researchers to conduct ongoing checks on funding calls to assess whether there are any suitable for the identified research questions.
  - ➔ Results from the Evidence Synthesis Team feedback sent to the ExCHANGE Collaboration and discussed in the next project group meeting and questions refined accordingly.
  - ➔ Once suitable research funding call(s) have been identified, collaboration members to draft and submit an application based on one of the identified research questions.

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