
Research & Development Strategy

2021 - 2024

Eade Karen, Head of Research



National Context

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) was established in April 2006 as part of the UK government's health research strategy 'Best Research for Best Health' with the vision of "improving the health and wealth of the nation through research" and is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. The premise is that the future of health and social care depends on today's research. This has been demonstrated by the progress made towards prevention and treatment throughout the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic.

The NIHR's mission is to provide a health research system in which the NHS supports outstanding individuals working in world-class facilities, conducting leading-edge research focused on the needs of patients and the public.

Since 2008 the NIHR has provided funding for research infrastructure, managed by research networks across England, as well as grants for research projects. There are 15 Local Clinical Research Networks and James Paget University Hospital (JPUH) is a partner organisation within the Clinical Research Network Eastern (CRNE).

The hosting arrangements for all CRNs were reviewed in 2020 and as a result of the pandemic each contract was extended by a further year to March 2024.

The NHS Constitution also makes commitments to patients with regard to research opportunities:

The NHS aspires to the highest standards of excellence and professionalism through its commitment to innovation and to the promotion, conduct and use of research to improve the current and future health and care of the population.

The NHS also commits to inform you [the patient] of research studies in which you may be eligible to participate

Against this backdrop the Trust has included Research within its strategic aims under the following headings:

Ambition 1:

Deliver outstanding care for our patients

- 1.3 Create a research positive culture across the Trust where all staff feel able to participate in research delivery as part of their role and to make relevant research easily accessible for all our patients.

Ambition 2:

Work with, and support, our people to deliver the best for our patients

- 2.3 Establish a whole organisation development programme enabling our people to reach their full potential; driven by effective compassionate leadership, empowerment, shared values/behaviours and a supportive infrastructure.

Background of Research at JPUH

JPUH, both historically and currently, is largely a research hosting organisation - acting as a recruiting site for other Sponsoring organisations, both commercial (eg Pharmaceutical or Medical Device companies) and non-commercial (other NHS organisations, Universities or Charities). Some small, non-funded, home grown projects are also sponsored by JPUH but are low in number.

Grant applications have been very low through there has been some success in the last year with the awarding of the Trusts' first NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) grant. There has also been some success with JPUH staff acting as Co-applicants on grant applications through collaborations with other organisations.

Funding

Since the inception of the Research Networks JPUH has relied heavily on the funding they provide for research infrastructure. Further funding is from a number of sources including direct from Department of Health and Social Care, commercial companies who contract with the trust to recruit participants to funded studies and also through small and larger grant awards. The aim of the department is to move back towards a position of self-sustainability following a difficult number of years.

Clinical Research Post SARS-Cov-2 Pandemic

The enforced pausing of almost all non-COVID, non-designated Urgent Public Health studies in 2020 to focus on COVID treatment and other observational COVID studies and the subsequent Restart programme led to the formation of a national working group to look at 'Recovery, Resilience and Growth' for clinical research beyond the pandemic. This culminated in the release of the 'Saving and improving lives: the future of UK clinical research delivery' (DHSC, 2021) report in March 2021. This lays out 5 key themes and these will be drawn upon to inform the Research Strategy for James Paget University Hospital for the next 3 years to coincide with the current contractual arrangements for the Clinical Research Networks.

The 5 Key Themes from the 'Saving and Improving Lives' report:

1. Clinical research embedded in the NHS

To create a research-positive culture in which all health and social care staff feel empowered to support and participate in clinical research as part of their job role.

2. Patient-centred research

To make access to and participation in research as easy as possible for everyone across the UK, including rural, diverse and under-served populations

3. Streamlined, efficient and innovative research

So that the UK is seen as the best place in the world to conduct fast, efficient and cutting-edge clinical research

4. Research enabled by data and digital tools

To ensure the UK has the most advanced and data enabled clinical research environment in the world, which capitalises on our unique data assets to improve the health and care of patients across the UK and beyond

5. A sustainable and supported research workforce

Which offers rewarding opportunities and exciting careers for all healthcare and research staff of all professional backgrounds – across the length and breadth of commercial and non-commercial research.

Actions aligned to the above themes have been drawn up to accompany this strategy document detailing the activities required to meet the departmental objectives set. The strategy will be reviewed by the Research Support and Governance Group (RSGG) and will be submitted on an agreed basis to the Patient Safety and Quality Committee (PSQ) for approval and subsequent updates against progress.

This will be met through the following work streams:

1. Embedding clinical research within James Paget University Hospital

- Working with specialties and departments to identify research themes that are allied to their interests and working practices including identifying research links/champions
- Offer opportunities for education and support to all staff interested in being part of research
- Ensuring that results of research studies undertaken at JPUH are disseminated across the Trust
- Regular research updates in varying formats
- Providing opportunities for staff to become research participants

2. Patient Centred Research

- Ensuring that research opportunities are highlighted using social media, publicity campaigns, out-reach events and advertising
- Implementing patient research champions to advise on appropriate methods of public engagement
- Assessment of experience of participation

3. Streamlined, efficient and innovative research

- Implementation of streamlined review processes beyond the scope of Urgent Public Health studies to improve local set up times
- Review of new studies to include triage of staff requirements to reduce reliance on core staff to undertake all research processes to improve capacity and efficiency
- Continue to encourage all staff to design and manage home grown studies, submit grant applications and disseminate/ publish findings.
- Seek collaborations with other organisations including HEIs and other NHS institutions to increase grant profiles

4. Research enabled by data and digital tools

- Engage with key digital projects to ensure that they are fit for research purpose.
- Explore ways that technology can assist with data capture / recording during all phases of research activity

5. A sustainable and supported research workforce

- Increase commercial income opportunities
- Maximise CRN income via application for funding calls
- Offer opportunities for education and support to all staff interested in being part of research
- Ensure that career pathways are clear and transparent encompassing academic and other routes of progression.

6. CRN Performance Standards (2021-2022)

Deliver NIHR Portfolio Studies to recruitment target within the planned recruitment period

Demonstrate to people taking part in health and social care research that their contribution is valued

Research & Development Objectives: 2021-2024

1. Embedding clinical research within James Paget University Hospital			
Objective	Measure	Timescale	Benefits to Patients
Increase the number of participants recruited into research studies by 10% in 2021/2022 (Non-COVID studies only)	Increase in participants from 433 in 2020/2201 to 476 in 2021/2022 with a stretch target of 500	By year end, monitored monthly via reporting to PSEQ	Increased opportunities for patients to take part in research activities related to their condition
Increase in the number of recruiting specialties compared to 2021/2022	Recruitment into a minimum of 2 more specialties in 2021/2022	By year end, monitored via monthly reporting to PSEQ	Provide opportunities for new patient groups to participate in relevant research
Reintroduction of education/training sessions following halt due to the pandemic	Programme of training opportunities, in varying formats, in place	End Q2 for 2021/2022 For subsequent years' at start of Q1	An enabled workforce allows for increased patient opportunity
Introduction of quarterly research updates to include opportunities for participation, results dissemination and specialty news.	Production of research bulletin Quarterly 'Research Lunch' via Teams	First issue - End Q1 2021/2022 First session - April 2021	Provides increased opportunity for patients through an informed workforce
Identification of research links and champions within specialties to identify research interests	Links/champions in place in at least 2 new specialties per year	By year end	Provides increased opportunity for patients through a better informed workforce

2. Patient Centred Research			
Objective	Measure	Timescale	Benefits to Patients
Implementation of the Patient Research Ambassador (PRA) Programme* at JPUH	Appointment of at least 1 PRA	End Q3 2021/2022	Provide a lay point of contact for patients to ask questions about participating in research studies
Formulation of a programme of activities for the PRAs / Research Team to drive awareness	Annual Activity programme to include: Awareness days Social media campaigns Out-reach events Other appropriate activities	First event calendar in place for commencement April 2022	Targeted programme to increase patient awareness of the potential to participate in research
Participation in the CRN Patient Research Experience Survey (PRES)	Numbers of participants increased from 235 in 2020/21 Final report from CRNE	Rolling programme - Numbers to be reported to PSEQ as available	Ability for patients to provide feedback on research participation to enable service improvement

*Patient Research Ambassadors are Research Champions who are patients, carers, members of the public, people who have taken part in a research study before, as well as those who haven't, who are passionate about getting more people involved in research so that we can develop better care and treatment for everyone.

They volunteer their time to help spread the word about health and care research to patients and the public, and especially those groups who are currently less likely to take part in research. They also help research and healthcare staff understand more about the experiences of those who take part in research.

3. Streamlined, efficient and innovative research			
Objective	Measure	Timescale	Benefits to Patients
Designated urgent public health studies set up times are within the parameters set out by NIHR	NIHR Target - Set up within 9 days NIHR Aim - set up within 6 days	Ad Hoc as studies arise – monitored via monthly reports to PSEQ	Provide swift access to innovative treatments (EG COVID-19 studies) and gain the evidence required to put treatments into practice
Review of set up processes of non-UPH studies to reduce set up times for all studies	Reduction in non-UPH set up times by 10% on 2019/2020 timings	Processes review – End Q2 20/21 Set up times reviewed monthly and monitored via PSEQ	Provide swift access to innovative treatments and gain the evidence required to put treatments into practice
Introduction of improved study triage system to reduce reliance on core R&D staff and increase research capacity	Triage tool to identify level of core team input and availability of other support to manage studies at expression of interest and throughout study review is in place	Q3 2021/2022	Increase the number of studies available to patients and enable wider workforce participation
Increased number of collaborations with HEI / other NHS institutions related to grant applications for research funding	Number of applications vs number of awards	Number of applications /awards to be monitored by PSEQ as they arise.	Increase the number of studies available to patients and enable wider workforce participation

4. Research enabled by data and digital tools			
Objective	Measure	Timescale	Benefits to Patients
Engage with key digital projects to ensure that systems are fit for research purpose	Attendance at relevant meetings/ eg - EPR - Health & Care Data Architecture	As arise	Improved study feasibility to enable more efficient and effective searching for eligible patients
Explore ways that technology can assist with data capture / recording during all phases of research activity	Attendance at relevant meetings where appropriate Exploration of opportunities as they arise	As opportunities arise	Real time data upload to ensure up to date patient records

5. A sustainable and supported workforce			
Objective	Measure	Timescale	Benefits to patients
Maximise CRN income via applications for funding calls (eg Greenshoots programme)	Number of applications made vs successful awards	As and when opportunities arise	Increase pool of staff able to dedicate time to research participants
Increase commercial portfolio	New contracts awarded within year Target to open 6 new commercially funded studies in 2021/22	Ongoing	Provide access to patients to otherwise unavailable innovative treatments and gain the evidence to put them into practice
Advertising of, and support with, applications for research related education opportunities including fellowships and bridging programmes	Number of applications submitted vs awards granted	As and when opportunities arise	An enabled workforce increases patient opportunities
Support for projects designed to educate and create capacity for evaluation and research within specific staff groups.	Nurses, midwives, AHP project currently underway within the DoN office** Potential to roll-out to other fields upon completion and evaluation.	Updates to be reported quarterly to PSEQ separately Increase in NMAHP publications and conference presentations on work specific to the project	An enabled workforce increases patient opportunities

**The project is developing capacity, capability and confidence of NMAHP staff through service evaluation and research activities. Using contemporary research and evaluation methodologies, it aims to create positive healthcare impacts for patients, public and staff.

6. CRN High Performance Standards – Trust Level			
Objective	Measure	Timescale	Benefits to Patients
Deliver NIHR Portfolio Studies to recruitment target within the planned recruitment period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of new commercial contract studies achieving or surpassing their recruitment target during their planned recruitment period = 80% Proportion of commercial contract studies in the managed recovery process^{1,2} achieving or surpassing their recruitment target during their planned recruitment period = 80% Proportion of non-commercial contract studies in the managed recovery process achieving or surpassing their recruitment target during their planned recruitment period = 70% 	Reported quarterly to PSEQ	To Maintain CRN funding to provide a research service
Demonstrate to people taking part in health and social care research that their contribution is valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants responding to the Participant Research Experience Survey (253 responses in 2020/21) 	Reported quarterly to PSEQ	Ability to react to issues and criticisms to improve patient experience

¹ Guidance on the managed recovery of the UK clinical research portfolio <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/guidance-on-the-managed-recovery-of-the-uk-clinical-research-portfolio/27749>

² The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery: 2021 to 2022 Implementation Plan (23 June 2021)

Closing Statement

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of clinical research in terms of finding new treatments, or care pathways, assessing the safety and efficacy of vaccines, use in monitoring disease and evaluating public welfare. The evidence base gained through research has enable treatments to be swiftly adopted into everyday practice, saving lives in the process.

In order to support the increased number of interested researchers the department needs to look at innovative ways to manage capacity of the core team whilst maintaining standards, with patient safety at its heart. Research is only as good as the data collected and the ability to attract new studies and new Sponsors is borne out of a reputation for excellence, there may be ways of introducing technology to assist in this regard.

A supported and sustainable workforce is one that feels valued and rewarded, the pandemic has provided the opportunity to recognise the team for what they do and given everyone a chance to participate to improve healthcare in a post-COVID world. This needs to be maintained beyond the end of the pandemic and the strategies enclosed are designed to achieve this.