

MEDWAY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

STRATEGY



2019 - 2022

Research & Innovation Strategy 2019-2022

Authors:	Dr Swapna Thomas (R&I Strategy & Operations Manager) Prof Ranjit Akolekar (R&I Clinical Lead)
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Research & Innovation in the NHS is at the heart of improving patient care. The NHS research plan states at the outset that NHS England has a legal duty to promote research and use of research evidence in the NHS. This is to ensure that the best research and innovation is available to improve patient outcomes, transform clinical services and ensure value for money (NHS England Research plan, April 2017).
- 1.2 The Medway NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) is highly supportive of Research & Innovation (R&I) recognising its benefits to patients, staff and the general public. The Trust encourages research and innovation in all specialties and at all levels of complexity ranging from interventional to observational studies.
- 1.3 There is considerable evidence to support that clinical outcomes for patients who are taking part in research have been shown to be superior compared to those that are not. In addition, it has been proven that research active sites are more able to attract and retain highest retention and attract highly skilled and motivated staff.
- 1.4 MFT is an active member of the KSS Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) and the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Clinical Research Network (CRN). MFT is recognized as the most research active Trust in Kent, Surrey and Sussex (KSS). In the financial year 2018/2019, for the fifth consecutive year, the Trust remained highest at recruiting participants into Clinical Trials in Kent, Surrey and Sussex Clinical Research Network (KSS CRN), among 20 member organizations.
- 1.5 This document outlines the future strategy and direction of R&I Department and describes how the department will aim to deliver objectives within the next three years.

2 Current Position (where we are now)

- 2.1 The R&I department at MFT has grown and evolved considerably not just in terms of its increasing research portfolio of studies but also in its reputation as a research active Trust over the past few years. The R&I department is involved in not just supporting delivery of key research projects but is also working in collaboration with key research partners such as academic health sciences networks, universities and clinical research network across the county to constructively promote clinical research and innovation.

- 2.2 The key areas of R&I engagement can be broadly divided into the following areas:

2.2.1 Undertaking high-quality research projects

- In 2018-2019, R&I department supported the delivery of a total of 146 high-quality research studies at MFT
- Over the last five years, approximately 5,000 patients participated annually in key research studies which were approved by National Ethics Committee. Out of these, 95% research studies were portfolio studies adopted by the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR).
- Of the entire spectrum of 30 research specialities in the NIHR, a total of 18

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specialities are research active at MFT.

- Most active research specialities include Reproductive Health and Childbirth, Children, Cancer, Perioperative Care and Anaesthesia.

2.2.2 Ensuring research and financial governance

- The R&I Department at MFT received funding of approximately £1million from the NIHR to support its research activities in 2018/2019.
- Of this a total income of £350K was distributed to the chief and principal investigators to reinvest in research related activities in 2018/2019, under the supervision of the Research & Innovation Governance Group (RIGG).
- In the financial year 2018/2019, the R&I Department submitted grant applications for a total value of £1.5 million.

2.2.3 Promoting and encouraging an atmosphere of research

- In order to promote research participation not just nationally but globally, the Trust joined the innovative company called TriNetX, which is a Global Health Research Platform whose members include pharmaceutical companies, clinical research and healthcare organisations. There is availability to ever-increasing patient data from across organisations. The hardware platform is free of charge and hosted by the Trust.
- To encourage patient and public engagement, the R&I Department appointed two Patient Research Ambassadors (PRA) who currently attends our operational meetings and support patient research activities.
- R&I Department engage with the Trust and community events such as 70th NHS birthday, front foyer presentations etc. to increase the awareness of research among patients, staff and public.

2.2.4 Collaborative working with key partners

- Our collaboration with the academia, particularly the local Universities, Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), University of Kent (UoK) and Greenwich University (GU), continues to flourish and stronger links are being developed to promote collaborative research across organizations. In November 2018, MoU was signed with UoK and CCCU to enhance research and educational opportunities.
- A post of Senior R&I Officer was jointly funded with the UoK in 2018 to support collaborative studies between academics and Trust staff and to improve the number of successful grant applications.
- A PhD research Project was funded by the University of Greenwich at MFT to introduce innovations to reduce our energy consumption.
- A MoU was finalised between MFT and Kent Innovation and Enterprise (KIE) allowing Trust Clinicians access to innovation support for collaborative projects with UoK.

3 The Vision (where we want to be)

- 3.1 R&I Department will ensure that the main focus of its agenda is to provide patients attending MFT, the opportunity to participate in high-quality research projects so

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they have access to the most up to date treatment options and facilitate development of cutting-edge clinical research for the future.

3.2 The vision for R&I Department can be summarised in the following key areas:

3.2.1 Improving portfolio of high-quality research studies

- R&I Department will continue to expand its existing NIHR adopted portfolio studies in partnership with CRN KSS. The department aims to expand its activities to include all levels of complexity ranging from interventional to observational studies across all NIHR research specialties within the Trusts.
- R&I Department will liaise with the local Clinical Commissioning group (CCGs) to extend research activities to the community through General Practitioner services.
- R&I will have dedicated staff panel to focus on the expansion of home grown studies (projects generated by Trust staff), seek funding and to get studies adopted in the portfolio by NIHR.
- To expand the commercial research portfolio, R&I will improve the engagement of clinicians in research across the Trust with the support of Directorates thus bringing more research-active clinicians with improved research track record to attract more commercial studies at MFT.
- R&I will ensure greater activity, good quality delivery and increased research presence in MFT which will attract commercial companies to undertake trials on site resulting in increasing income

3.2.2 Improving staff engagement and participation in research

- Ensure that all staff is trained in research methodologies including the gaining of ethical approval for the studies, informed consent from participants and data capture and analysis.
- Assisting the leaders of research and innovation to work with our partners to gain peer reviewed grant monies to support their research thus increasing the number of original studies.
- Awareness and interest in research and innovation will be raised across the Trust through incorporation of Research and Innovation in the 'corporate induction' for all new staff, with the support of Trust.
- R&I Department will work with the Trust towards the inclusion of research and innovation in all annual staff reviews.
- Inclusion of R&I in the consultant job plan as part of for Trust approved internal Supporting Professional Activities (SPA) and the approval of Consultant Programmed Activities (PAs) will be implemented by Medical Directorate to improve the engagement of clinicians.
- R&I Department will put arrangements in place with the Trust to review the job plan and get it agreed by the Directorate Board for any additional planned research activities outside the standard job plan of research-active clinicians.
- Research and Innovation will be included by the Trust in the selection for Clinical Excellence Awards to recognise the Trust staff's engagement in research and innovation by the Directorates.

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- R&I Department will work closely with Service Specialty Leads and Service Managers to improve the engagement from Directorates and R&I will be included by the Directorates in the Business Plan and CQC reports to improve trust wide staff engagement.

3.2.3 Developing a skilled research workforce

- Permanent employment contracts will be created rather than the current fixed term yearly contract to attract good quality staff and achieve better staff retention in the R&I Department.
- A lead will be appointed for each area of R&I delivery operations thus improving efficiency of the team and allowing personal development and career development of staff within the department.
- We will create joint appointments with KMMS with aim to bring in key academic research staff and provide honorary contracts and/or research passport for academics.
- Self-sustaining research groups will be established within our department.

3.2.4 Improving research governance and financial stability

- R&I will strive to improve governance methodologies and reporting structure with greater involvement of the Board, Executive, Trust Governors and members.
- R&I will streamline its operations to make the trials available to the patients at the earliest possible and to maximise the recruitment of participants. This will be achieved by minimising the time required for confirming the capacity and capability to provide local approval to open a study at site
- Research and Innovation will strive to attain peer reviewed grant income (minimum of £360K) from internal research projects in order to support our accreditation, in addition to the annual funding gained through the CRN KSS/NIHR.

3.2.5 Improved working with key academic partners

- MFT, in collaboration with other research active sites in Kent & Medway, plans to create Kent and Medway Joint Research Office by 2020.
- Creating and implementing a joint research and innovation strategy with the Universities of Kent and Canterbury Christchurch.
- Supporting staff to be appointed to the faculty of the new Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) and other faculties in their research and education capacity

3.2.3 Developing an internationally recognised Centre of Excellence

- With the opening of Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) in 2020, the vision for R&I Department at MFT is to establish the Trust as an internationally recognised Centre of Research Excellence by 2021.
- The R&I Department will support the Trust in its ambition to become Medway NHS Foundation University Trust by December 2019 and thus the first to hold University Hospital Trust Partnership accreditation in Kent.

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- A 'Research and Education' Centre will be established on site by 2020 to make the presence of R&I more visible to the staff, patients and the public.
- We will raise the Trust profile as a research active Trust at the national and international level through collaboration with TriNetX. It will be fulfilled by utilizing TriNetX to foster global collaborations and maximising commercial research opportunities, by facilitating analysis of infographics on disease prevalence, and to carry out informed statistical planning of patient population for new studies.

3.2.4 Working towards integrated healthcare and Digital Health Service

- The strategic plans of the R&I Department will be aligned with the NHS long term plan for digital health service and integrated healthcare to make the Trust and the population fitter for the decades to come.
- Grand rounds and brain storming sessions will be conducted across the Trust to gain insight into the challenges and/or areas that require smarter solutions through digital innovation.
- Research and innovation projects will be developed to find cutting edge technological solutions to augment healthcare and its services with academic experts in artificial intelligence and other computing technologies at UoK.
- R&I Department will extend its boundaries from secondary to primary care, community and mental health to provide the integrated healthcare.

4 Sustainability (the do nothing gap)

- 4.1 R&I currently brings an income of about £1.5 million/year to the Trust vs £115K of Trust investment and we have ambition to attract income from research grants (minimum £360K) and commercial companies, predominantly pharmaceutical industry.
- 4.2 The Trust's proximity to London, increasing partnerships with universities and the Medical School, our steadily growing research activity, the reduced cost of being outside London and our large population makes MFT attractive as a research site.
- 4.3 Without R&I, the patients and the local population will cease to have access to the newest and best treatments which are unavailable through standard treatment.
- 4.4 In the absence of a successful R&I, the Trust will be unable to meet the criteria of attaining the University Hospital Trust status. R&I is an integral component for the Trust to raise its profile as a teaching hospital.

5 Improving Quality and Outcomes (improvements)

- 5.1 The R&I Strategy is developed through extensive consultation with staff, patient and public through a number of surveys and workshops to make the Trust and local population fitter and smarter through research and innovation.
- 5.2 The patients and the local population will have access to the newest and best treatments and medical technologies to improve their clinical outcome, which are otherwise unavailable through standard treatment.

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- 5.3 The R&I strategy supports Trust's Clinical Strategy enhancing clinical quality providing specific support to the Trust's patient outcome priorities of safer and effective care.
- 5.4 R&I will enable the Trust in improving the quality and outcomes of both patients and staff. Being a research active Trust, staff will be kept abreast of the new advances in healthcare and services and home-grown high-quality research improve staff retention rate and attract a better quality of staff.

6 Governance Overview (measuring & monitoring)

- 6.1 Clinical Trials require the approval of the Health Research Authority (HRA) before it can be delivered at any site. HRA is committed to ensuring that the new treatments, care and other services developed are through ethical and scientifically sound research for the benefit of patients, service users and the public through UK policy framework for health and social care research. All research carried out at the Trust is in accordance with the principles set in UK policy framework for health and social care research and the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004 and Amendment Regulations 2006.
- 6.2 R&I Governance at MFT is strictly monitored and measured through Internal Audit and Monitoring within R&I Department, monitoring visits by the sponsors and Trust Audit by the external agencies.
- 6.3 R&I Staff are required to adhere to the Standard Operating Procedures that are in place for maintaining the quality and consistency of the delivery of research trials at MFT.
- 6.4 Any incidence or Governance breach occurred is reported via the DATIX system of the Trust and immediate actions will be taken to minimise its impact on the patient, trial and services.
- 6.5 Any breaches reported will be reviewed at the Research and Innovation Governance Group (RIGG) to ensure that the necessary actions are taken at the earliest and to avoid its recurrence.
- 6.6 The report from Research Operational Group (ROG) is fed regularly through RIGG which in turn will report to the Trust Executive Group. The Medical Director represents Research and Innovation Department in Trust Board.

7 Values and Principles (values that underpin the system)

- 7.1 We strive to continue to be the best research-active Trusts of the Kent Surrey and Sussex Clinical Research Network.
- 7.2 We will develop a research-active culture across all clinical and non-clinical divisions of the Trust inspiring and keeping the staff and patients abreast on new advances in healthcare.
- 7.3 R&I will extend its research and innovation activities to the local health bodies such as primary care, community and mental healthcare to improve the current and future health of the population through integrated healthcare.

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8 Financial Implications (cost)

- 8.1 The cost of R&I staff is covered mainly by the funding we receive annually from CRN-KSS/ NIHR.
- 8.2 The funding by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is proportional to the research activity and is based on value for money (VFM) calculations on per patient cost.
- 8.3 We aim to minimise the VFM and thus to receive increased funding from NIHR by reducing staff costs and bringing in more interventional studies and high recruiting studies.
- 8.4 To reduce staff costs and to develop future R&I workforce, R&I is currently working with UoK and NIHR to develop an apprenticeship program.
- 8.5 Increased research activity, good quality research delivery and heightened presence on Trust site will attract commercial companies to undertake trials on site, thus increasing R&I commercial income.
- 8.6 To increase the number of grant awards received, we are collaborating with local universities and clinicians at site to increase the number of successful grant applications.
- 8.7 We collaborate with UoK in terms of IP rights or any patents that may arise through any research and innovation.

9 References

Document	Ref No: STRCGR011	
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NHS England Research plan, April 2017 https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/nhse-research-plan.pdf		
Trust Associated Documents:		
MFT Clinical Strategy		2018

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