

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Public Board of Directors</b>	<b>Agenda item:</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24 April 2024</b>		

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Research Strategy</b>
<b>Status:</b>	<b>For Approval</b>
<b>Board Sponsor:</b>	<b>Joss Foster, Chief Strategic Officer</b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Kelly Spencer, Head of Research Operations</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>None</b>

<b>1. Executive Summary of the Report</b>
<p>The final draft of the Trust Research Strategy is included. This has been revised and improved following presentation at Trust Management Executive in Feb 2024 and subsequently at Private Board of Directors on 6 March 24.</p> <p>The strategy is aligned to the three people groups alongside three key themes of accessibility (for both patients and staff), impact, and collaboration.</p> <p>It is our aim that this strategy will be the springboard to enable greater spread of research and adoption of evidence across the entire system.</p> <p>A sunray chart roadmap will be developed subsequent to approval of the strategy.</p>

<b>2. Recommendations (Note, Approve, Discuss)</b>
Board of Directors is asked to provide final Approval for the strategy.

<b>3. Legal / Regulatory Implications</b>
Research active organisations support evidence oriented and continuous improvement cultures which contribute to meeting legal and regulatory obligations.

<b>4. Risk (Threats or opportunities, link to a risk on the Risk Register, Board Assurance Framework etc)</b>
The strategy supports better care, better staff experience and better collaboration – enabling mitigation of a range of risks.

<b>5. Resources Implications (Financial / staffing)</b>
All research activity that takes place at RUH is funded from external sources.

<b>6. Equality and Diversity</b>
Inclusion has been drawn through as a specific theme in the strategy

<b>7. References to previous reports/Next steps</b>
Revised and improved following discussion at Private Board of Directors on 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2024

<b>8. Freedom of Information</b>
Public

<b>9.</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>
Research as an enabler for environmental sustainability has been included as a theme	

<b>10.</b>	<b>Digital</b>
The strategy aims to “Take full advantage of opportunities to use digital and data for research” and “To build upon current research strengths in machine learning and artificial intelligence”	

# Research Strategy

2024 to 2029



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## Foreword



“ Sherlock Holmes said, “It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data” and it is these data that are a fundamental aspect of research and development. We have never had more data available to us than now – the digital explosion in healthcare delivery provides us with much data. What still remains hard work is determining insights that will allow us to improve health and social care. You will see from this research strategy that using evidence to support the Trust’s key strategic priorities is core business.

Hospitals that actively engage in research deliver better care to their patients and have better staff recruitment and retention. So, research needs to be at the heart of what the RUH does.

We are committed to offering every patient the opportunity to be involved in research and for that research to be inclusive and accessible. It is our ambition that research, and use of evidence, will expand throughout the entire organisation involving all departments and being available all staff groups. We will also ensure that the research we undertake has impact both at RUH and within our local community.

Collaboration is a key theme in our strategy: Today no major advances are produced alone. We are fortunate to have excellent relationships with our local Higher Education Institutions and Healthcare Providers, which are key to the delivery of our strategy, and we will build on these further going forward.

We are one of the most research active hospitals in the UK of our type. Whilst this is laudable, there is much more that we can do, and this is where this strategy will take us.

**Professor Richard Graham**  
Director of Research and Innovation

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# Introduction to Research at Royal United Hospitals Bath Foundation Trust

Royal United Hospitals Bath Foundation Trust is a busy medium-sized provider of secondary care and specialised services. We have a good reputation for delivering national research programmes across many of our clinical services, with a particularly strong portfolio of research that is developed and led by RUH researchers and healthcare professionals.

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## What we do

The Research and Development Team (R&D) support a wide range of research. Ranging from participating in large national clinical trials, which test medicines and devices before approval for general use, through to simple questionnaires and surveys that give us vital data to better understand a range of health conditions.

We work collaboratively with universities, other healthcare providers and the Life Sciences Industry to develop new research or be part of research taking place in multiple hospitals.

## How we do it

For our size, RUH has a highly active research portfolio, with approximately 200 active studies at any time recruiting 3000 patients into research studies annually, and a total research income of around £4 million per year.

We employ a multidisciplinary team of around 60 members of staff and will closely work with clinical colleagues and support services to deliver our broad portfolio of research.



Working closely with local academic institutions, RUH has been highly successful in attracting substantial external research grant funding of around £1.5 to £2 million per year.



# Our Research Vision and Strategy

An organisation where development and delivery of research, and use of evidence, is truly embedded in the provision of outstanding healthcare across the community in collaboration with, and for the benefit of, patients and the public.



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## To create a culture which embeds research and use of evidence



### **Demonstrate the positive impact of clinical research in improving patient care, outcomes and clinical practice**

- Establish robust systems to capture the impact of research and use of evidence on patient outcomes, experiences, and clinical practice
- Collaborate with external partners, such as academic institutions and research networks, and internal colleagues, such library services and divisional leads, to facilitate the translation of research findings into clinical practice.
- Implement mechanisms to support knowledge sharing and collaboration among staff, such as regular research forums, journal clubs, and multidisciplinary team meetings.
- Develop and signpost to training programs and resources to enhance research literacy and skills among clinical staff, enabling them to critically appraise and apply research findings in their practice

### **Create an environment that enables clinical staff to engage with research in a supportive and efficient (straightforward) way**



- Streamline administrative processes related to research, such as confirmation of capacity and capability, and funding applications, to minimize the burden on staff.
- Provide dedicated research support services, to assist staff in study design, gaining appropriate approvals, data collection and analysis.



### **Growth and sustainability of research income**

- Maximise opportunities to attract external research funding, ensuring that multiple sources are targeting to improve stability and sustainability
- Develop partnerships with other NHS Trusts, research organisations, and industry stakeholders to share resources, expertise, and best practices in research development and delivery.



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## Enhance the ability of established areas of research excellence to expand and embed

Through targeted collaborations and resource allocation, we will amplify the impact and long-term sustainability of well-established areas of research excellence (Cardiology, Radiology, Respiratory, Rheumatology, Pre- and Re-habilitation and Oncology and Haematology)



## Take full advantage of opportunities to use digital and data for research

- To maximise the potential of big data analytics in leveraging large-scale healthcare datasets for research purposes
- To build upon current research strengths in machine learning and artificial intelligence
- Embrace digital solutions for document management, communication, and data storage to minimize paper usage. Implement electronic data capture systems for research studies to reduce reliance on paper-based records

## Use of research to support key Trust strategic priorities

Align research activities and utilise research partnerships to support and contribute to key strategic priorities of the Trust



## Research as an enabler for environmental sustainability

Establish, and build upon, collaborative partnerships with external organisations, academic institutions, and industry partners to leverage expertise and resources in advancing environmental sustainability research

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## **The people we care for**

To ensure equitable access to research for all patients and integrate research participation seamlessly into patient care

## **The people we work with**

To value, develop and create opportunities for our workforce to produce and deliver high quality research

## **The people in our community**

To create productive and collaborative research partnerships with our community stakeholders



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# The **people** we care for

To ensure equitable access to research for all patients and integrate research participation seamlessly into patient care

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## Our Goals

### All patients will have the opportunity to participate in research

- ◆ Develop and implement systems to ensure that research studies are accessible to all patients, regardless of location, demographics or characteristics.
- ◆ Implementing referral systems and pathways that seamlessly connect patients to appropriate research studies.
- ◆ Collaborate with community organisations and patient advocacy groups to identify barriers to access and develop targeted interventions for those patients underserved by research.
- ◆ Integrate research into digital platforms and telemedicine solutions to enhance access to research studies for patients receiving remote care.

### Empowering patients to access research opportunities

- ◆ We will promote the rights of patients to engage in research, and for staff to understand their opportunities and responsibility to offer and support appropriate research.
- ◆ We will ensure that information about research is easily accessible and that patients are supported to engage with research

### Provision of time, resources, facilities and equipment to enable research to take place

- ◆ Allocate, according to need, dedicated resources and funding to support research activities, including dedicated research staff, infrastructure, and equipment.
- ◆ Develop robust and transparent processes for assessing activity in areas where research funding has been allocated to ensure effective use of resources.

- ◆ Utilise capability and capacity building income to invest in people and projects to build research success

## A streamlined and efficient research set-up and delivery service

- ◆ Simplifying administrative processes and reducing bureaucratic barriers to enable faster initiation of research studies.
- ◆ Ensuring that support is in place to allow research active staff to undertake research without undue administrative burden
- ◆ Utilising digital tools and platforms for streamlined communication, document sharing, and data management during the research process.

## Measures of Success

- ✓ The profile of staff, patients and public involved in research will reflect our local community
- ✓ Patient satisfaction with accessibility of research opportunities
- ✓ Research infrastructure mapped to activity
- ✓ Reduced timelines for set-up of new research studies





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# The **people** we work with

To value, develop and create opportunities for our workforce to produce and deliver high quality research

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## Our Goals

### To attract, develop and support a highly skilled and valued research workforce

- ◆ Promote the Trust's reputation as a research-active organisation to attract staff and researchers who value opportunities for research involvement.
- ◆ Provide ongoing training and mentorship programs to support the continuous development of research skills and knowledge among the workforce.
- ◆ Work with clinical and leadership teams to focus and embed research within clinical pathways and staff job plans, ensuring results are disseminated through departments and divisions in a timely manner.
- ◆ Ensure the time our staff invest in our research is recognised and appreciated, helping to raise awareness of the value and contribution research makes in clinical practice.
- ◆ To support access to a broad range of learning and development opportunities for research delivery and management staff
- ◆ Develop and signpost to career pathways, secondment schemes and shared posts that support all staff to engage in research activities.
- ◆ Collaborate with academic institutions to establish joint appointments and research fellowships, providing staff with dedicated time for research alongside their clinical responsibilities

### Skilled support to develop grant applications, and to navigate regulatory and approval processes for delivery of research (R&D team)

- ◆ Strengthen the research and development (R&D) team by facilitating access to specific training and continuous improvement in research management, grant writing, ethics, and regulatory processes.

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- ◆ Establish a streamlined support system that offers guidance and assistance to researchers in developing grant applications, obtaining necessary approvals, and ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements.

## To provide opportunities for research and build capacity through research education for all staff groups

- ◆ Develop a comprehensive program that offers research opportunities to a wide range of healthcare professionals and those training to become healthcare professionals
- ◆ Provide, and signpost to, research training opportunities for healthcare professionals to enhance their ability to integrate research findings into clinical decision-making and patient care.
- ◆ Collaborate with academic institutions, and apply for national funding, to establish placement programs, internships, and fellowships that enable healthcare professionals to engage in research activities.

## Measures of Success

- ✓ Increased proportion of RUH staff involved in research and with research training
- ✓ Improved research awareness amongst staff
- ✓ Positive feedback from researchers on all R&D processes





# The **people** in our community

To create productive and collaborative research partnerships with our community stakeholders

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## Our Goals

**Create partnerships that will deliver high quality peer-reviewed research to answer questions that serve the needs of our community**

- ◆ Strengthen and increase collaborations with academic partners, research organisations and patient groups
- ◆ Develop a framework for engaging patients, carers, and the public in the research process, ensuring that their voices are heard and that research addresses their concerns.
- ◆ Facilitate multidisciplinary research teams, encouraging healthcare professionals, researchers, and clinicians to work together to address healthcare challenges

## Be a key partner in the wider research community

- ◆ Strengthen collaborations with the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), Research Delivery Network (RDN), industry partners, charities, Health Innovation Network and other relevant stakeholders
- ◆ To strengthen collaborations with key partners, such as local HEI institutions (such University of Bath and University of West of England) and partners across our local system. Engage with and encourage partnerships across the BSW Acute Hospitals Alliance.
- ◆ Engage with research sponsors and industry partners to facilitate the delivery of robust, peer-reviewed research studies

## Enhance Trust reputation as a centre for excellence in research

- ◆ Create a robust communications plan to promote research outputs and achievements, highlighting the impact on patient care and outcomes.
- ◆ Share research findings, best practice, and knowledge with the wider research community to contribute to evidence-based healthcare improvements

## Maximise collaborations based on use of data for research

- ◆ Create research partnerships based on use of research and clinical data
- ◆ To be a key partner in the establishment of the South West Secure Data Environment (SDE) as a contributor and recipient of patient data for research

## Measures of Success

- ✓ Increased research collaborations
- ✓ Grant application success rate
- ✓ Improved public awareness of research at RUH

