

**Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Research Development & Innovation Strategy 2025



Introduction

Research and innovation are fundamental to improvements in patient care. Mersey and West Lancashire (MWL) Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust's vision is to deliver 5 Star Patient Care and research is integral to inform, innovate and support that. For this reason, the Organisation has made furthering research and innovation one of its strategic priorities.

MWL will build on its existing research achievements and expand where possible, aiming to deliver high-quality, high-impact innovation and development, across the large number of studies from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) portfolio, investigator initiated and commercial research. In many areas, we have excellence within our specialist teams to develop new research projects. In areas with growth potential, we will create new opportunities in collaboration with academic and commercial partners.

The implementation of this Research, Development & Innovation Strategy will establish the environment to enable and deliver world leading research, provide a framework of development and innovation, and enhance multi-disciplinary collaborative research, based on the principles described in this strategy document.

Dr Ash Bassi

Acting Chief Medical Officer

Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Vision

Our Vision at MWL is that clinical research and innovation is of critical importance, and our aim is to align with regional and national strategies to deliver high quality evidence-based medicine. It is through research and innovation that new clinical services and treatments can be evaluated, improved and effectively implemented, to improve patients' care and experience. The Trust's participation in research and innovation allows our patients to access such benefits. The Research, Development and Innovation Strategy defines our vision for the next 2 years to focus on strengthening the Trust's position across the sector by seeking new and expanding existing collaborations with external Organisations, stakeholders, including commercial and academic, in the region and further afield.

Research and innovation benefits patients not just by identifying new treatments or by creating new knowledge; it also directly impacts patient care when the application of new knowledge is implemented. Research provides a fundamental contribution to addressing the greatest health challenges of our times, with the most recent example being the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Research, Development and Innovation Strategy outlines MWL's institutional commitment to delivering world-class research supported by world-class facilities. The strategy has been developed around the needs of our patients, current and future, and our services.

Professor Ascanio Tridente

Clinical Director for Research – Whiston and St Helens Hospitals
Chair, MWL Research, Development & Innovation Group

Dr Craig Rimmer

Clinical Director for Research – Southport and Ormskirk Hospitals

Ms Jeanette Anders and Ms Jillian Simpson

Research, Development & Innovation Managers

Research and Development at MWL

Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has developed a culture which encourages research across all clinical areas in each of our hospitals. The wide range of clinical care provide across the Trust allows our organisation to utilise knowledge and expertise across a wide range of specialities and to bring multiple researchers together to work collaboratively including those from external partners.

Our well-established innovation culture supports the implementation of new technologies and development of innovative research ideas. The Trust's experience in delivering high quality NIHR supported research allows the organisation to continue to attract projects, including commercially sponsored trials and other innovative projects.

The potential for collaboration with local and global partners serves as basis to create new independent research and attract funding grants, across multiple settings, including primary, secondary, and tertiary care, in collaboration with external stakeholders.

MWL will endeavour to develop and strengthen partnerships with local academic organisations, including the University of Liverpool, University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan, John Moores, Edge Hill Universities and other Academic Organisations. These partnerships will allow us to seek out the best academic expertise to collaborate with our staff, ensuring that our patients benefit from world-class research. We will aim to align strategies with our academic partners, to create an environment for enhanced collaboration between university partners and medical and non-medical staff to develop research ideas.

1. Retaining, developing and recruiting research talent

A research department operates effectively with a team that is cohesive and dedicated to advancing research and innovation throughout the Trust. MWL will:

- Support staff in conducting research at all career stages
- Create mechanisms to foster and advance research careers throughout the multi-disciplinary team
- Simplify administrative processes and provide additional support to help research staff focus on clinical and research project delivery
- Aid recruitment and retention by increasing combined clinical and research appointments with academic partners
- Offer support for healthcare professionals and colleagues interested in research, helping develop their skills through initiatives such as the Associate Principal Investigators scheme, in which MWL participates
- Provide assistance to clinicians with grant applications and developing academic career paths
- Promote equality and diversity through various methods and schemes to ensure access to research opportunities for all patients and staff

2 Providing the optimal framework to deliver our research ambition

Conducting high quality research requires state of the art infrastructure. The Trust will support expansion of research activity by:

- Ensuring availability of space, to support the recruitment and follow-up needs of ongoing studies and allow growth of future research projects
- Optimisation of research delivery with establishment of multiple research hubs across all MWL sites
- Ensuring financial viability and sustainability of the research growth plans
- Supporting upgrades to IT infrastructure
- Ensuring correct research governance
- Expansion of research skills pool (medical, nursing, pharmacy and allied healthcare professionals)
- Ensuring team members have capacity to contribute to research through job planning and secondments

3 Broadening the research base

Our priority is to ensure that as we expand our research portfolio, we also maintain delivery of core NIHR studies. In order to expand the range of research delivery, MWL will focus on key growth areas including clinical science and technology applied to the medical field.

To fulfil MWL's ambition to deliver our growth plans, we aim to diversify the sources of funding, broadening research income streams by:

- Increasing NIHR research funding
- Seeking additional research funding through collaborative work with partners, health charities, Higher Education Institutions, Applied Research Collaborations, the NIHR Regional Research Delivery Networks and National Networks
- Pursuing grants to fund research both nationally and internationally
- Pursuing collaborative sponsorships, match-funding, doctoral and other collaborative opportunities

4 Enhancing quality

MWL will encourage and support researchers to produce the highest quality outputs for their work, in publications such as peer reviewed journals, and research presentations at conferences and learned societies, by fostering internal and external collaboration with established researchers and research methodology experts.

MWL will support partner Universities' research excellence framework (REF) and work with them to deliver high quality research output.

5 Expanding research partnerships and innovation

We will expand our collaborative working within the field of research and innovation, encouraging researchers to work with external stakeholders including Higher Education Institutions and other academic partners, such as the NIHR RRDN, commercial and non-commercial funders, and other organisations. We will work with Primary and Community care providers to ensure that all patients have an opportunity to take part in clinical trials, with the aim of reducing health inequality in research.

MWL will endeavour to develop research and innovation with the aim to change practice, enhance patient care, and where possible, develop new technologies and treatments.

MWL will further enhance current relationships with Higher Education Institutions, expanding on existing collaborations, such as co-supervision of PhD students and other research collaborative endeavours.

6 Delivering clinical care supported by research

By helping us to ensure that MWL's research ambitions are fulfilled, medical students, doctors, nurses and other allied healthcare professionals will contribute to an innovative research environment which enhances learning, research and innovation. MWL will support increased awareness of research and every opportunity to develop and enhance research, for the benefit of our patients.

MWL has a wide range of highly skilled and dedicated clinicians, whose level of research experience varies from those already developing and leading high-level clinical and basic science research, to staff at the start in their research journey. Building upon and expanding our existing clinical research strengths, over the next five years, MWL aims to:

- Increase research opportunities at the Trust
- Develop a culture of research and innovation
- Increase the number of research active clinicians
- Expand the number of clinicians involved in research, including in as Principal and Chief Investigators, collaborators and associate Principal Investigators
- Continue to expand the cohort of clinicians involved in research beyond the medical and nursing workforce, to include pharmacists and other allied healthcare professionals
- Support new research ideas and help to develop them into research projects
- Enhance working relationships with external stakeholders, such as Universities, commercial partners and the NIHR Regional Research Delivery Networks (RRDNs).

7 Supporting achievements

MWL will strive to enhance its research, development and innovation performance across multiple domains:

- We are committed to monitoring research participants' experience and wellbeing by measuring their satisfaction and responding to feedback received. Feedback from the NIHR Patient Research Experience Surveys and other sources will be integrated into the research process for participants.
- We will monitor the quality and impact of our research, including publication outputs, conference presentations and abstracts publications.
- We will enhance the number of strategic research collaborations, major relationships with industry and Higher Educational Institutions.
- We will engage and communicate with patients and service users. We will also feedback both positive and negative experiences, and enhance research visibility, within and outside the Organisation
- We will promote a culture of positively encouraging those that are performing well to continue with their successful endeavours. Where needed, MWL will seek to provide additional support to improve research awareness and performance.
- We will seek to enhance funding opportunities, research income and sustainability
- We will enhance interdisciplinary collaborations, highlighting any opportunities to work together across different fields and professional areas.

