

Developing a research skilled workforce



[South west strategic research workforce capacity and capability plan on a page](#)

December 2022

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Background

In 2021 a short task and finish group of multi-professionals and academics convened to create a plan on a page to develop a research skilled workforce in the south west region.

In this context and proposed strategic plan, the workforce that is being referred to includes registered health, social care, and scientific professions. This includes registered allied health professionals (AHPs), dental care, optical, pharmacy, public health professionals, chiropractors, healthcare scientists, medical associate professionals (MAPs), midwives, nurses, nurse associates, registered psychological professionals and psychology practitioners, social workers, and clinical researcher practitioners.

Why do we need this strategy?

Colleagues who participated in the 2021 task and finish group agreed that there was a need for a strategy that focuses specifically on registered health, social care, and scientific professionals.

Medics and dentists have established, embedded, and funded programmes for research development within their career pathways. However, this does not exist for wider clinical, care and scientific professionals.

Within the new Integrated Care Boards (ICB) executive boards research is paired with innovation. The executive board role profiles (October 2021 Version 1.0) state that the medical director and executive chief nurse within ICB boards “will ensure that... innovation and research support continuous improvements in health and well-being including digitally enabled clinical transformation and the clinical and care elements of a sustainable People Plan for the ICB workforce”.

The future of clinical research delivery 2022 to 2025 implementation plan policy paper published by the Department of Health and Social Care in June 2022 sets out to embed research delivery across the NHS. This implementation plan aims to create a ‘clinical research ecosystem.’ This includes five key themes, the fifth being a sustainable and supported research workforce “which offers rewarding opportunities and exciting careers for all healthcare and research staff of all professional backgrounds.”

The challenges and barriers to engaging and advancing research across this wider collective of professions and embedding research capabilities within the workforce are similar. Therefore, developing one integrated strategy to support all and to drive change at local, system and regional levels makes sense.

Defining a research skilled workforce

Research is defined by the NHS Health Research Authority as “the attempt to derive generalisable new knowledge by addressing clearly defined questions with systematic and rigorous methods.”

Within our plan we define a research skilled workforce in relation to being research aware, research active and research leaders. Research champions are individuals keen to inspire others to become more research aware, active and they lead by example. They play a key role promoting research related activities that increase the visibility of research within organisations.



Our intentions

- To take a collective multi-professional and collaborative approach to embed research as the keystone that underpins excellent care and supports innovation.
- To create sustainable research skills, capacity and capabilities within the health and care workforce across the southwest region over the next three to five years.
- To produce a strategic multi-year plan that will align individual, employer, provider and integrated care system research capacity and capabilities needs.
- To align our strategic goals with those of higher education institutes and research networks, with a shared purpose to support regional research development and delivery needs.
- To align our regional ambitions with professional bodies and national research support groups and networks to take targeted actions once and well.

Behind the plan on a page is a framework to guide implementation of six key aims that will support the right actions by the right people in the right places. Each aim has supporting objectives and activities, and a description of what success will look like.

The scope

This plan focuses on the education, training, and development of a research skilled workforce only and does not include the responsibility to shape or determine the research priorities to be delivered. There is separate work being led by NHS England working with system leaders and wider stakeholders to set the regional research priorities.

Guiding principles to implement the plan

A strategic oversight group was established in September 2022. This group will support and guide the work needed to implement the plan over the first 12 months with an annual review.



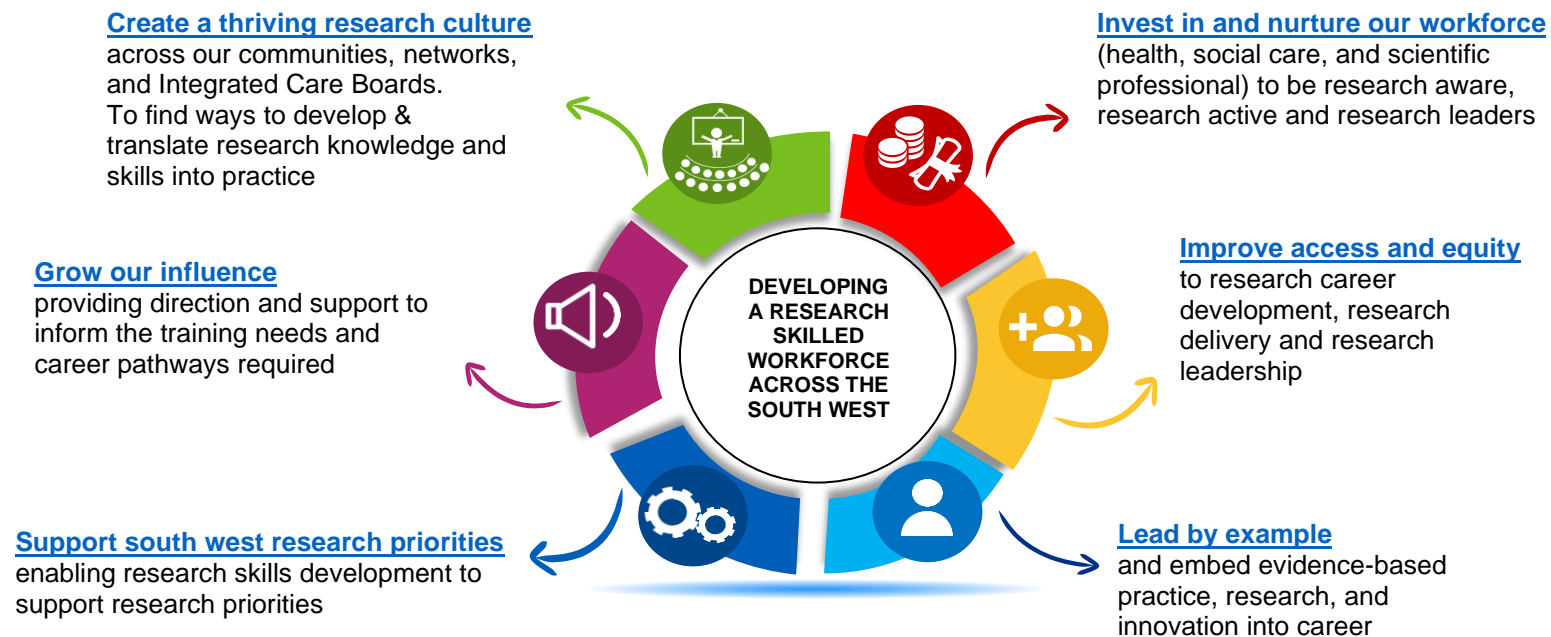
Communication, engagement, and ways to get involved

We will be hosting quarterly wider stakeholder engagement sessions to keep wider interested colleagues updated as to what is happening. For further details on this programme of work and to receive updates please email ahp.sw@hee.nhs.uk and your details will be added to our contacts list.

We will share ways to get involved in the strategy implementation sub-groups via the quarterly wider stakeholder engagement sessions and wider research forums and networks.

South west plan on a page and six key strategic aims 2023 - 2026

South West Plan on a Page



The plan provides a framework to guide the right actions in the right places with research as a keystone that underpins excellent care and supports innovation



Invest in and Nurture our Workforce

Aim:	To invest in and nurture our (healthcare, scientific and social care) workforce to be research aware, research active and research leaders
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide relevant, high quality and accredited learning opportunities that support research awareness, research delivery, clinical/practice academic careers and research leadership. • To enhance workforce retention by offering attractive career pathways. • To attract people to work in the south west based on the opportunities to develop and use research skills in health and social care settings.
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make best use of and promote the existing training, continuous professional development, and clinical/practice academic development pathways (e.g., National Institute for Health and Care Research Integrated Clinical Academic (NIHR ICA) Programme) that are available. • To make information on research/innovation training and opportunities more visible to staff working in healthcare, scientific and social care settings. • To provide effective supervision, coaching and mentoring programmes. • To seek early career opportunities to engage with our workforce to foster an interest in research. • To seek opportunities to support and promote interprofessional led research. • To develop a network of health and social care professionals with an interest in research, to increase visibility, share experience and draw in those seeking to develop research skills.
What success looks like:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will know where to go to find support and signposting to training and development offers e.g., via regional clinical research schools, organisational research councils/hubs and research networks. • Increased up take in existing research education and training to support, engage and drive change. • Increased opportunities to engage, contribute and lead on multi-professional research at a local, national, and international level.



Improve Access and Equity

Aim:	To improve access and equity to research and academic career development, research delivery and research leadership training
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide opportunities that enable healthcare, scientific and social care professionals to develop and use research and innovation skills in practice. • Develop support for frontline managers to maximise the research development opportunities for frontline staff in health and social care.
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure appropriate access to resources and training are available to enable equitable access across the health and social care workforce. • To value diversity and take intentional positive action to compensate for disadvantaged representation and engagement. • To understand what challenges and barriers are and seek to remove them working with operational service managers. • To celebrate the success of individuals and organisations that take positive action to address fair access to training and development. • To provide access to mentors for clinical/practice workplace leaders.
What success looks like:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create and embed attractive development opportunities and roles that are inclusive of healthcare, scientific and social care professionals. • To ensure process and funding mechanisms are transparent with equitable access. • Increased capacity for research education, training, and use of skills through job plans. • Sponsorship at a system and provider level in conjunction with higher education institutes to improve access and equity.



Lead by Example

Aim:	To lead by example and embed evidence-based practice, research, and innovation into career development pathways
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and support positive research role-models for others to follow. • To ensure organisations understand the role, responsibility and support required of them to develop a research skilled workforce. • To ensure anyone interested in developing research and innovation skills has the support to reach their full potential. • To make the south west a centre for excellence for research led by health, social care, and scientific professions within the NHS and local authorities.
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide sustainably funded training and development programmes that are relevant and valued by the individual and the organisation. • To use talent management programmes to identify and support staff to develop an interest in research. • To provide access to leadership mentorship and coaching. • To measure and use data collected to show the benefits, impact and improvements in services and workforce recruitment/retention.
What success looks like:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible relatable research role models. • Successful talent management programmes to support aspiring researchers and clinical/practice academics development. • Close working relationships between local communities, integrated care systems, higher education institutes, research networks and research collaborations. • Showcasing success of research led by health, social care, and scientific professions at local, regional, and national levels.



Support South West Research Priorities

Aim:	To enable research skills development to support research priorities across the south west
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased communication and engagement between our local communities, research networks, research collaborations and Integrated Care Boards. • To scope opportunities for research skills development to directly support south west research priorities.
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To map training/development offers to regional/system research priorities. • To promote opportunities for research knowledge and skills to be used in priority programmes/settings. • To promote collaborative working across health and education organisations to foster learning environments enabling the workforce to deliver research and develop new research ideas. • Ensure training and development offerings are relevant, valued and used at local, system and regional levels. • To share research priorities to identify alignment with personal/professional/programme research ideas/interest.
What success looks like:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joined up working with our local communities, networks, and Integrated Care Boards. • Making the best use of evidence-based practice • Optimisation of learning environments that value, develop and use a multi-professional research skilled workforce to tackle health and social care priorities. • More research generated and evidenced in practice and outcomes.



Grow our Influence

Aim:	To provide direction and support to influence and inform training needs, career pathways and wider opportunities to develop a research skilled workforce
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To influence and lobby for greater strategic support and investment in developing a research skilled workforce within organisations, with research funding bodies and professional bodies. • To influence education reform. • To provide guidance, infrastructure, and support for clinical academics and those interested in clinical and practice research in early, mid, and advanced stages of their professional development/career. • To develop effective leadership awareness and support for research skill development and research roles embedded in frontline services.
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and value the work of research champions within organisations and across research networks. • Facilitate collaboration between our communities, networks, Integrated Care Boards, higher education institutions and professional bodies. • Support existing and new research and innovation communities of practice.
What success looks like:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear research development structures that are valued and invested in by organisations and are inclusive of clinical research activity, research delivery and clinical academic pathways. • Research and innovation skills included in preceptorship and talent management programmes • Increase in the appointment of health, social care, and scientific professions as principal investigators.



Create a Thriving Research Culture

Aim:	To grow a research culture across our communities, networks and Integrated Care Boards finding ways to develop and translate research knowledge and skills into practice
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make research a top priority. • Increased research awareness across our health and care workforce. • Increased research knowledge and skills development. • Increased confidence and capabilities in using research knowledge and skills within job roles and digitally enabled environments. • Increased utilisation of evidence informed practice in service delivery. • Increased exposure to research in practice-based learning (PBL) to pre-registration learning environments. • To share experience of research knowledge and skills with others.
Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide opportunities across all services to adopt evidence-based practice, critical thinking, and innovation within organisations. • Use existing research related structures and networks to get the best support for our current and future workforce. • Provide opportunities for collaborative working and learning between organisations. • To develop collaborations between library and knowledge services to support the use and translation of the evidence base into practice. • To develop collaborations between research delivery teams/academic trials teams and frontline departments to better understand each other's skills and roles.
What success looks like:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A supportive integrated environment that values innovation and the development of use of research • A workplace where research is embedded into service delivery • Attractive research placements and PBL opportunities for pre-registration students. • Strengthened relationships between library and knowledge services, research delivery teams/academic trials units and frontline services working together and supporting each other.

Supporting documents and publications

This plan has been cross referenced against the following documents:

AUKUH Clinical Academic Roles Development Group (2016) Transforming healthcare through clinical academic roles in nursing, midwifery, and allied health professions. Available at: <https://www.councilofdeans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/AUKUH-Transforming-Healthcare.pdf> (Accessed: December 2, 2022).

Health Education England (2014) Research and Innovation Strategy: delivering a flexible workforce receptive to research and innovation. Available at: <https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/HEE-RI-strategy.pdf> (Accessed: December 2, 2022).

Health Education England (2019) Advancing pharmacy education and training: a review. Available at: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Advancing%20Pharmacy%20Education%20and%20Training%20Review.pdf> (Accessed: December 2, 2022).

Health Education England (2022) Allied Health Professions' Research and Innovation Strategy for England. Available at: https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/HEE%20Allied%20Health%20Professions%20Research%20and%20Innovation%20Strategy%20FINAL_0.pdf (Accessed: December 2, 2022).

NHS England and NHS Improvement (2020) Science in healthcare: Delivering the NHS Long Term Plan: The Chief Scientific Officer's strategy. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/science-in-healthcare-delivering-the-nhs-long-term-plan.pdf> (Accessed: December 2, 2022).

Furthering publications that align to this programme of work include:

Care Quality Commission (2022) A new strategy for the changing world of health and social care - CQC's strategy from 2021. Available at: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/about-us/our-strategy-plans/new-strategy-changing-world-health-social-care-cqcs-strategy-2021> (Accessed: December 2, 2022).

Department of Health and Social Care (2022) The Future of Clinical Research Delivery: 2022 to 2025 implementation plan. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-future-of-uk-clinical-research-delivery-2022-to-2025-implementation-plan/the-future-of-clinical-research-delivery-2022-to-2025-implementation-plan#a-sustainable-and-supported-research-workforce> (Accessed: December 1, 2022).

Health and Care Research Wales (2022) "Making research careers work: a review of career pathways in health and social care in Wales". Available at: https://healthandcareresearchwales.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/making_research_careers_work_eng.pdf (Accessed: December 1, 2022).

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (2021) Best Research for Best Health: The Next Chapter. Available at: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/best-research-for-best-health-the-next-chapter/27778> (Accessed: December 1, 2022).

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NHS England (2019) “The NHS Long Term Plan.” Available at:

<https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nhs-long-term-plan-version-1.2.pdf> (Accessed: December 1, 2022).

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (2019) Royal College of Occupational Therapists’ research and development strategy 2019–2024. Available at:

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/rcot-publications/royal-college-occupational-therapists-research-and-development-strategy-20192024> (Accessed: December 1, 2022).

The Academy of Medical Sciences (2022) Making medical science work for everyone: A new Academy strategy. Available at: <https://acmedsci.ac.uk/more/news/making-medical-science-work-for-everyone-a-new-academy-strategy> (Accessed: December 1, 2022).

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