

The Clinical Research Network in context

The Clinical Research Network is a key part of the National Institute for Health Research.

The National Institute for Health research was established by the Department of Health to create a world-class health research system within the NHS, as part of the government health research strategy.

Health research in England covers a diverse range of activities. To reflect this, the National Institute for Health Research encompasses a number of different strands.

These include:

- Commissioning and funding health research that focuses on improving NHS health and social care services
- Helping to train and develop researchers throughout their career
- Funding activities to promote the involvement of patients and the public in developing research proposals
- Strengthening and streamlining systems for research management and governance
- Providing the NHS with the support and facilities it needs to carry out research
- Making the NHS an attractive option for commercial pharmaceutical, biotech and med-tech companies seeking to carry out industry-sponsored research.

The work of the Clinical Research Network centres on the last three of these areas.

The Clinical Research Network comprises of 15 Local Clinical Research Networks that cover the length and breadth of England. Each local Clinical Research Network delivers research across 30 clinical specialties.

The 30 clinical specialties are:

- Ageing
- Anaesthesia, perioperative medicine and pain management
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease
- Children
- Critical care
- Dementias and neurodegeneration (DeNDRoN)
- Dermatology
- Diabetes
- Ear, nose and throat
- Gastroenterology
- Genetics
- Haematology
- Health services and delivery research
- Hepatology
- Infectious diseases and microbiology
- Injuries and emergencies
- Mental health
- Metabolic and endocrine disorders
- Musculoskeletal disorders
- Neurological disorders
- Ophthalmology
- Oral and dental health
- Primary care
- Public health
- Renal disorders
- Reproductive health and childbirth
- Respiratory disorders
- Stroke
- Surgery



**Delivering research to make
patients, and the NHS, better**

What we do

The role of the Clinical Research Network is to provide an infrastructure to make the research funded by the overall National Institute for Health Research, and its partners, “work” in the NHS context.

In practice, this means:

- Providing researchers with advice on the feasibility of studies, to ensure they can be practically delivered through the NHS
- Running systems to streamline the bureaucracy associated with gaining permission to run a clinical trial in the NHS, and reducing the set-up time for trials
- Funding and supporting an infrastructure of trained research support staff in the NHS, so that researchers have access to experienced people to provide the NHS service support required for their research
- Maintaining a knowledge base of NHS sites and their research strengths and capabilities, for researchers to access as a resource
- Monitoring the numbers of patients participating in individual trials, and offering a trouble-shooting service to help studies that are falling behind their recruitment targets.

Supporting industry

Researchers are concerned with getting their study set up quickly and easily, meeting patient recruitment targets on time, and having access to the necessary expertise to carry out the trial.

For commercial businesses, these issues are especially pressing, and the challenge they represent can mean the difference between choosing to conduct a trial in England, or elsewhere.

The NHS can only be seen as a viable location for clinical research if it can compete against other nations across the globe for carrying out studies to time and target. In recognition of this, the Clinical Research Network has a dedicated Industry Team to help commercial pharmaceutical, med-tech and biotech companies to make use of the Network’s services, and carry out their studies effectively in the NHS.

This central team is backed by Industry Managers in each of the 15 Local Clinical Research Networks, ensuring that support for Industry researchers is maintained throughout the Clinical Research Network structure.

Further information

For further information about the Clinical Research Network, please visit our website:

www.crn.nihr.ac.uk



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