



National Institute for Health Research

NIHR OFFICE FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE (NOCRI)

Introduction

The vision of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research.

This document sets out how the NIHR Office for Clinical Research Infrastructure (NOCRI) is contributing to this vision.

Overview

The NIHR provides the NHS with the support and infrastructure it needs to conduct first class research. This has established the NHS as an internationally recognised centre of research excellence. Government or its partners in industry and the charity sector may fund this research.

The NIHR funds a broad range of research infrastructure in the NHS. A range of support is important, because different types of research are needed to bridge the gap from scientific invention to products, which the NHS can use. Further information is available in companion briefing documents.

The purpose of NOCRI is to maximise the coordinated working of the Department of Health's investment in clinical research infrastructure for:

- health research and patient benefit.
- the nation's international competitiveness as a location for applied clinical research.

Aims

- Create greater coherence and functional integration of the clinical research infrastructure which NIHR funds and hence maximise its impact.
- Facilitate more rapid, informed and productive interactions with investigators who are interested in working with the NIHR-funded infrastructure.
- Strengthen enduring relationships between the NIHR, NHS, NHS/university partnerships and biotechnology, pharmaceutical, medical device and diagnostic companies and contract research organisations.
- Ensure that the NIHR infrastructure is responsive to the needs of users.
- Promote and enhance the nation's reputation as a world-class centre for applied clinical research.

Scope

NOCRI covers all clinical research infrastructure that receives NIHR funding. This currently comprises:

- Biomedical Research Centres
- Biomedical Research Units
- Clinical Research Facilities
- NIHR-supported Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facilities (CRFs)
- CRII Clinical Research Facilities
- CR-UK/NIHR Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres (ECMCs)
- Clinical Research Network
- Pilot Healthcare Technology Cooperatives
- Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care.

In order to meet its objectives, NOCRI works closely with the Department of Health R&D Directorate, as well as the following stakeholders: Directors of NIHR-funded infrastructure and their staff; co-funders of the infrastructure and other research funders; Technology Strategy Board; and the life sciences industries. The Managing Director of NOCRI is supported by an industry reference group.

Functions of NOCRI

- To facilitate collaborations between NIHR-funded infrastructure and funders of research, including industry.
- To facilitate cross-NIHR funded facility co-operation on:
 - scientific, technical or process challenges, supporting alignment with funders' joint work in these areas;
 - activities in a given therapeutic or technology area, supporting alignment with funders' joint work in these areas;
 - areas of common interest e.g. IS systems, statistical expertise, metrics generation and reporting;
 - development of model agreements to support contracting.
- Identification of opportunities to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of the NIHR infrastructure.
- Identification of opportunities to improve the quality, speed and co-ordination of clinical research studies and supporting the spread of best practice.
- Collation of metrics and case studies and development of marketing materials, in conjunction with the Central Commissioning facility Infrastructure and Communication teams, to support effective marketing of the infrastructure.
- Oversight of operation of the UK CRF Network
- Close collaboration with the MRC and other funders of clinical research.
- Interactions with non-NIHR infrastructure supporting clinical research.

- A major focus is enhancing collaboration between NIHR-funded infrastructure and industry. This is addressed by NOCRI's specific service offering for industry partners seeking to access NIHR-funded infrastructure and investigators:
 - providing "match making" support to companies seeking to work with NIHR infrastructure, using its knowledge of capacity and capability in specific areas, e.g. therapeutic area, methodology, technology platforms;
 - providing support for companies to navigate NIHR infrastructure and facilitate and manage research collaborations, using an account management approach;
 - enhancement and maintenance of the UK Experimental Medicine Resource Finder website on behalf of UKCRC funding partners (www.ukcrcepmed.org.uk);
 - establishment and promotion of NIHR Translational Research Partnerships (see separate briefing document).
- Working effectively with industry-facing and business development staff working in NIHR-funded infrastructure, and for other research funders and UKTI, to:
 - clarify and market the NIHR infrastructure's benefits to individual companies;
 - build a library of NIHR infrastructure case studies, which show how companies have benefitted from working with the infrastructure;
 - use these tools, combined with NOCRI's product offering, to build more strategic marketing to individual companies, thereby creating enduring engagement which will maximise the chances of extending the range of EM studies placed in the UK and pull through studies from EM into later phase;
 - develop and maintain effective relations with industry trade associations.
- To assist investigators working within NIHR-funded facilities who are seeking industrial partners for collaborative research.

To coordinate the development and operation of Translational Research Partnerships.

NOCRI has a comprehensive scope, within which it prioritises its key functions and activities, in response to the aims of the Department of Health in order to ensure their delivery and maximise the potential benefit to patients and the nation's international competitiveness as a location for applied clinical research.

Further information about NOCRI

Further details about NOCRI are available at www.nihr.ac.uk/nocri or email nocri@nihr.ac.uk.

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