

Barts Health – High level R&D Strategy

March 2012

The new research strategy must ensure that Barts Health continues to achieve the international recognition for research, education and innovation achieved by parts of the organisation previously. It must build on that legacy and deepen and extend that engagement, with the participation of the local population, in research-related activities across the new organisation.

This will be achieved by building on the existing research strategies of the three partner trusts, strengthening existing partnerships, developing success and learning from local experiences.

The new Trust will be responsible for the health needs of a large ethnically diverse area with challenging local needs. Working with a range of partners and stakeholders, including local patients, the combined strategy should lead to clinical and academic excellence with financial benefits. The research strategy will be aligned to and influence the changes to clinical services delivered by the merged trust.

The merged organisation will novate into membership of UCL Partner's Academic Health Science Systems, providing an opportunity to operate at scale and to diffuse best practice.

Background

Barts and The London

Barts and The London has had a well defined joint research strategy adopted initially in 2004 aimed at strengthening R&D planning and increasing collaborative work between Barts and The London NHS Trust (BLT) and Barts and The London's School of Medicine and Dentistry. This was further developed into a 5 year strategic plan in 2010 after widespread consultation with partners. This was aimed at building on success, strengthening research profiles, identifying areas of growth by working with funders and developing workforce to deliver more multidisciplinary work within local communities. The importance of translational research was recognised and plans to work with Clinical Academic Units to ensure translation of research into effective clinical practice was defined.

The importance of using existing research networks and research support units hosted by BLT, was recognised and would be used to develop two

streams of research activity- a Discovery & Exploratory arm led by SMD and a Application & delivery arm led by BLT

Newham University Hospital Trust

Newham University Hospital Trust (NUHT) has a local research strategy developed in 2005 aimed at developing research that specifically addresses the health needs of the local population. More than 60% of the local population is from BME groups. This and the young age of local residents (it is the youngest borough in the UK) leads to specific challenges related to access to health care and its successful delivery. The research strategy recognises this and aims to work with a range of partners including academia, patients, local commissioners and the council to identify projects and funders who would support this work.

Working with a range of stakeholders, the local research workforce has been strengthened by creating strong links with local academic partners and groups with access to the local community like lay educators. This has led to the development of a joint Chair and Department of Family and community Health with UeL, and increased collaboration with the local research networks

The focus on translational research has been strong with research being used to influence service transformation and improvement.

In addition, the research strategy has been instrumental in strengthening local governance process, increasing contribution to the NIHR portfolio, working with local research networks and increasing financial benefits

Whipps Cross University Hospital Trust

Whipps Cross University Hospital Trust has focussed on strengthening recruitment to commercial and non-commercial trials, through active participation in NIHR portfolio research. Links with external researchers have been strengthened to improve trial activity locally, using the local Clinical Research Unit. Local research and financial governance processes have been strengthened and increased support has been provided for local researchers. Focus has been placed on a clear marketing strategy particularly for commercial trials.

High level strategic aims for R&D at Barts Health

- Develop a high quality research portfolio by:
 - Working with the NIHR, funders and research networks and focussing on research strength of the large and complex population to develop local research;
 - Improving performance by increasing recruitment to multicentre trials; and

- Strengthening existing partnerships within the merged organisation and exploring new links in and around North East London.
- Increase patient participation in research, particularly NIHR portfolio trials through:
 - Working with local research teams to encourage active recruitment of patients across all three trusts into clinical trials;
 - Raising research awareness in primary care; and
 - Working with community groups to address concerns among local population around research participation.
- Using the Joint R&D Office to strengthen research governance procedures across the merged organisation and improve efficiency by:
 - Standardising research process and using best practice;
 - Building capacity and ensuring best use of the combined workforce; and
 - Making better use of existing research infrastructure including research support units.
- Ensuring research output actively influences service redesign and contributes to improved patient pathways, clinical outcomes and patient experience.
- Working with Academic partners to create a strong research skilled workforce.
- Achieve financial gains through improved research funding, improved service redesign based on evidence and standardisation of research governance.
- Focusing on the importance of translational research.
- Maintaining focus on two research streams: 'Discover and Exploratory' and 'Application and Delivery' research.
- Targeting financial initiatives: One-off capital opportunities, strategic investment and pump-priming opportunities.
- Publishing and working to agreed and measurable objectives.
- Work to improve the health of the local population in partnership with public health authorities, local authorities, commissioning groups and other relevant bodies.