

Manchester team secure funding for new research collaboration to address patient safety challenges

A team led by researchers at The University of Manchester is one of just six* located across England to be awarded a share of £25 million in funding by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to run a Patient Safety Research Collaboration (PSRC) from 2023-2028.

The Greater Manchester Patient Safety Research collaboration (GM PSRC) will be hosted by Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust, and the University of Manchester-led team will deliver a programme of research along with the University of Nottingham and the University of Leicester.

The collaborations will address strategic patient safety challenges within the health and care system, focusing on seven strategic areas set out by NHS England. These areas cover issues such as clinical risk scores, which enable professionals to identify people who may benefit from preventative interventions and improving the culture and practice in organisations to promote patient safety.

Professor Lucy Chappell, Chief Executive of the NIHR, said: **“Patient safety is about maximising the things that go right and minimising the things that go wrong for people receiving healthcare. We are aligning our funding with the strategic priorities from NHS England and ensuring that we are addressing the issues that really matter to patients.**

“This new round of funding gives the best researchers the opportunity to assess innovations and approaches that could shift this balance for the better.”

The PSRCs will help researchers to develop and test innovations, approaches and interventions that could improve patient safety and the safety of health and care services. The funding will also enable partnerships to be built between health and care organisations, universities, local authorities, and patients and the public.

The collaborations are an evolution of the Patient Safety Translational Research Centres (PSTRCs), which were first funded by the NIHR a decade ago. The Greater Manchester PSTRC was one of the original centres to receive funding from the NIHR as part of the scheme.

Professor Darren Ashcroft, Director of the Greater Manchester Patient Safety Research Collaboration, said: “We are delighted to have secured funding to continue patient safety research as one of the new Patient Safety Research Collaborations. The work we’ve delivered over the last 10 years at the Greater Manchester Patient Safety Translational Research Centre has impacted the safety of care delivered by the NHS, as our innovations have been adopted by health and social care and rolled out first regionally, then nationally. The new collaboration will allow our researchers to build on this success across four key themes of patient safety, and we’re excited to get this work underway.”

The Greater Manchester PSRC will focus on the following themes:

1. Improving Medication Safety
2. Enhancing Cultures of Safety
3. Developing Safer Health and Care Systems

4. Preventing Suicide and Self-harm

An example of the impact of the GM PSTRC's work on NHS frontline services is the [set of safety indicators developed to identify patients at risk of harm from prescribing errors](#). In addition, researchers helped to test and implement a pharmacist-led IT-based intervention based on these indicators that could reduce prescribing errors. This intervention has now been rolled out nationally.

Researchers at the Greater Manchester PSTRC also responded quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting existing studies and designing new ones. One study highlighted that [fewer people asked their GP or hospital for mental health support during a lockdown](#). Another [study](#) that looked at the diagnosis and management of type 2 diabetes during the pandemic contributed to additional funding being made available to the NHS to support national COVID recovery through the creation of a 'Diabetes Treatment and Care Recovery Innovation Fund'.

The new 'Improving Medication Safety' theme at the Greater Manchester PSRC will be led by Tony Avery, Professor of Primary Health Care at the University of Nottingham and Professor Darren Ashcroft at the University of Manchester.

Professor Sir Jonathan Van-Tam, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Nottingham, said: **"Being at the forefront of patient safety research is a priority for the University of Nottingham. The new Patient Safety Research Collaborations are a fantastic opportunity to improve patient safety. I'm excited to see what can be achieved here at the University of Nottingham where the Greater Manchester Patient Safety Collaboration's work will focus on the theme of Improving Medication Safety."**

"Professor Tony Avery aims to build on the success of his previous study at the Greater Manchester Patient Safety Translational Researcher Centre where he and his team developed a set of safety indicators to identify patients at risk of harm from prescribing errors. I'm looking forward to seeing the work that's developed and the difference it makes to patient safety across health and social care."

One of the four themes, 'Enhancing Cultures of Safety', will be led by researchers based at the University of Leicester. Professor Thompson Robinson, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Head of the College of Life Sciences and Dean of Medicine, University of Leicester, said: **"I am delighted that the University of Leicester has been invited to be part of this exciting new collaboration. Research seeking to ensure the delivery of safe, high quality healthcare is a key area of focus both here at the University and for our NHS partners."**

"The 'Enhancing Cultures of Safety' theme, to be led by Professors Natalie Armstrong and Carolyn Tarrant, will ensure that efforts to improve organisational patient safety culture and practice are informed by high quality research."

The 'Developing Safer Health and Care Systems' theme will be led by Professor Caroline Sanders and Dr Tom Blakeman. It will be based at The University of Manchester and aims to work with patients, carers and key stakeholders to improve how multiple health and care providers work together to deliver care safely.

The second theme to be based at The University of Manchester is 'Preventing Suicide and Self-harm'. Professors Nav Kapur and Roger Webb will lead this work, which will identify, refine and subsequently evaluate service innovations that have enhanced patient safety in specialist mental health services, self-harm services across general hospitals and primary care.

Professor Graham Lord, Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Biology, Medicine, and Health at the University of Manchester, said: **“The University of Manchester has led a patient safety research centre since they were first introduced by the National Institute for Health and Care Research a decade ago. I’m immensely proud of the improvements to patient safety that have come about due to this work and anticipate new innovations that continue to strive to put the safety of patients first.”**

The Greater Manchester PSRC will be hosted by Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust, Professor Phil Kalra Director of Research & Innovation, said: **“Research that focuses on patient safety across health and social care is vital. We have been impressed with the achievements of the Greater Manchester Patient Safety Translational Research Centre and are pleased to be hosting the new Patient Safety Research Collaboration from 2023. All four of the collaboration’s new themes are relevant to the NCA and we are looking forward to working together to improve patient safety.”**

In addition to funding six PSRCs, the NIHR is also providing new, additional funding to establish a network between these collaborations. The network will provide a platform for strategic coordination and a focal point for collaboration between the PSRCs.

For example, in times of national crises, such as the COVID-19 outbreak, the network could work with partners and respond as a single entity. The role of leading the network will be awarded through a competitive process, with further details provided soon.

ENDS

Notes to editors

***The funded PSRCs 2023-2028**

Name	Host institution
NIHR Greater Manchester Patient Safety Research Collaboration	Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust
NIHR Midlands Patient Safety Research Collaboration	University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust
NIHR North West London Patient Safety Research Collaboration	Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
NIHR Central London Patient Safety Research Collaboration	University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
NIHR Newcastle Patient Safety Research Collaboration	The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
NIHR Yorkshire and Humber Patient Safety Research Collaboration	Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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About the NIHR Greater Manchester Patient Safety Translational Research Centre: The NIHR Greater Manchester Patient Safety Translational Research Centre is a partnership between The University of Manchester and The Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust in collaboration with the University of Nottingham which aims to make healthcare safer in primary care and transitions of care. It's funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) from 2017 until 2023 and is one of three PSTRC in England. The GM PSTRC is responsible for research across four themes: Safety Informatics, Medication Safety, Safer Care Systems and Transitions, and Safety in Marginalised Groups.

For more information visit – <http://www.patientsafety.manchester.ac.uk/>

ABOUT THE NIHR: The mission of the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) is to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. We do this by:

- Funding high quality, timely research that benefits the NHS, public health and social care;
- Investing in world-class expertise, facilities and a skilled delivery workforce to translate discoveries into improved treatments and services;
- Partnering with patients, service users, carers and communities, improving the relevance, quality and impact of our research;
- Attracting, training and supporting the best researchers to tackle complex health and social care challenges;
- Collaborating with other public funders, charities and industry to help shape a cohesive and globally competitive research system;
- Funding applied global health research and training to meet the needs of the poorest people in low and middle income countries.

NIHR is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. Its work in low and middle income countries is principally funded through UK Aid from the UK government.

About The University of Manchester: The University of Manchester is a member of the prestigious Russell Group and one of the UK's largest single-site universities. We have over 40,000 students, 12,000 staff and, with almost 480,000 former students from more than 190 countries, are home to the largest alumni community of any campus-based university in the UK. We are ranked in the top ten of the [Times Higher Education \(THE\) Impact Rankings](#) globally; are the [top UK University for graduate employability](#) according to [The Graduate Market in 2022](#) and no fewer than 25 Nobel laureates have either worked or studied here. Visit www.manchester.ac.uk for further information or <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/vision/> for our latest strategic vision.

About the University of Nottingham: University of Nottingham: The University of Nottingham is a research-intensive university with a proud heritage. Studying at the University of Nottingham is a life-changing experience, and we pride ourselves on unlocking the potential of our students. We have a pioneering spirit, expressed in the vision of our

founder Sir Jesse Boot, which has seen us lead the way in establishing campuses in China and Malaysia - part of a globally connected network of education, research and industrial engagement.

Ranked 18th in the UK by the [QS World University Rankings 2023](#), the University's state-of-the-art [facilities](#) and inclusive and [disability sport](#) provision is reflected in its crowning as The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide Sports University of the Year twice in three years, most recently in 2021. We are ranked seventh for research power in the UK according to [REF 2021](#).

We have [six beacons of research excellence](#) helping to transform lives and change the world; we are also a major employer and industry partner - locally and globally. Alongside Nottingham Trent University, we lead the [Universities for Nottingham](#) initiative, a pioneering collaboration which brings together the combined strength and civic missions of Nottingham's two world-class universities and [is working with local communities and partners to aid recovery and renewal following the COVID-19 pandemic](#).