

OVER £800 MILLION TO BOOST INNOVATION, GROWTH AND IMPROVE PATIENT SAFETY ACROSS THE COUNTRY

- £790 million to support breakthroughs in new treatments, diagnostics and medical technology to improve patients' lives and bolster the economy
- £25 million for research on patient safety to improve the safe delivery of health and care and better address health challenges, such as cancer treatment and reducing medication error
- Exceeds funding commitments to boost research across all areas of the country, levelling up innovation and addressing health inequalities

Patients up and down the country are set to benefit from innovative new treatments and improved delivery of health and care services following significant funding to support ground-breaking experimental medicine research and advance the UK's response to patient safety challenges.

Today (Friday 14 October) the government has announced that over £800 million of funding, to be allocated by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), will go to support specialist research facilities bringing together scientists to create an environment where experimental medicine and patient safety research can thrive.

This boost to the country's research infrastructure will see further investment in scientific expertise which supports access to innovative technology and novel research projects. As well as this, it will improve regional economic growth through employment opportunities, giving private sector organisations confidence to continue to invest in research across the country.

Nearly £790 million has been awarded to 20 NIHR Biomedical Research Centres (BRCs) across England – including a new centre in Exeter - over the next five years to drive innovation in the diagnosis and treatment of illness across a variety of high-priority disease areas including cancer, mental health and dementia.

In addition, £25 million over the next five years has been awarded to six NIHR Patient Safety Research Centres (PSRCs) to help improve understanding and resolution of patient safety challenges. The funding will support research to improve incident reporting and investigations, digital innovations to improve patient safety and harness learning from service adaptation during the Covid pandemic.

Funding will be distributed across the country, with over £260 million being invested outside of London, Oxford and Cambridge. This will increase the coverage of experimental medicine

across England and exceed the government's previous commitments in the Levelling Up White Paper. Not only will this enable more areas to benefit from innovation and facilitate faster uptake where research takes place, it will help to improve health and care services across the country and reduce health inequalities by better understanding and treating illness and improving the delivery of care.

Health and Social Care Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

“The pandemic has highlighted the importance of our booming research sector and the potential it has to not only strengthen health and care services, but lead to lifesaving developments.

“This additional funding will harness the UK's world leading innovation and allow research centres up and down the country to attract experts in their field and conduct research that saves lives.

“From helping develop the Covid vaccine to discovering world-first treatments, these centres have already delivered ground-breaking research and will continue to help us tackle some of the biggest health challenges we face, including cancer, to ensure the NHS continues to deliver world-class care.”

Over the past nine years, the NIHR BRCs have supported almost 60,000 experimental medicine research studies. These have resulted in direct health benefits for patients, including progressing innovative and faster diagnosis, as well as:

- The development of the Oxford AstraZeneca (AZ) vaccine – the world's first approved vaccine – and support for the RECOVERY Trial - the world's largest trial of potential treatments for Covid.
- A promising new treatment for motor neurone disease which has been shown to be safe, well tolerated and could help slow the progression of symptoms in people with a genetic form of this disease.
- Novel gene therapy which has the potential to be a ground-breaking cure for patients with haemophilia - a genetic defect that affects their body's ability to stop bleeding.
- A study that supports lower exposure to radiotherapy for women with breast cancer which reduces the damage to healthy tissue in the body and minimises subsequent side effects.

Over the last nine years, the current NIHR PSRCs have supported over 800 patient safety research studies. They have driven improvements in the safety of health and care services, for example:

- Use of artificial intelligence in detecting breast cancer from mammogram images.
- Reducing medication errors in primary care settings.
- Development of patient safety culture improvement programmes in NHS hospitals.

- Development of guidance for the involvement of patients and families in serious incident investigations.

Professor Lucy Chappell, Chief Executive of the NIHR said:

"This huge investment into early stage health and care research and patient safety innovation recognises the strength of expertise in these areas across the country, and gives our best researchers more opportunities to improve care and treatment for patients nationwide.

"These investments showcase our scientific excellence, ensuring that the UK benefits from the latest innovations and advancements in research and enables a strong and competitive research workforce to be further developed. They are crucial to ensuring that patients receive the highest quality, safest care."

Investing in the NIHR Biomedical Research Centres and Patient Safety Research Collaborations will contribute to increased economic growth and build a healthier, more resilient nation.

More broadly, these centres will strengthen the resources and facilities for research across the NHS through access to experts at the forefront of their fields. A key feature of the centres is the collaboration between academics, clinicians, patients and life sciences industry.

The Patient Safety Research Collaborations will support the NHS to improve patient safety and reduce health inequalities, while the Biomedical Research Centres will help boost advancements in medical treatments and technology and advance our ability to diagnose and treat illness.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- This funding is for two separate types of research centre.
- NIHR Biomedical Research Centres are partnerships between healthcare professionals and academics in the country's leading NHS trusts and universities. This is the fourth round of NIHR BRC funding. More information on BRCs can be found here: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/experimental-medicine.htm>
- The NIHR PSRC scheme provides funding to NHS/university partnerships following an open competition launched in November 2021. The focus of the research areas have been informed by engagement with a range of stakeholders including NHS England, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), Care

Quality Commission (CQC) and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

- The BRCs in receipt of funding are:
 - NIHR Barts BRC
 - NIHR Birmingham BRC
 - NIHR Bristol BRC
 - NIHR Cambridge BRC
 - NIHR Exeter BRC
 - NIHR GOSH BRC
 - NIHR Imperial BRC
 - NIHR Leeds BRC
 - NIHR Leicester BRC
 - NIHR Manchester BRC
 - NIHR The Royal Marsden BRC
 - NIHR Moorfields BRC
 - NIHR Newcastle BRC
 - NIHR Nottingham BRC
 - NIHR Oxford BRC
 - NIHR Oxford Health BRC
 - NIHR Sheffield BRC
 - NIHR Maudsley BRC
 - NIHR Southampton BRC
 - NIHR University College London Hospitals BRC
- The PSRCs in receipt of funding are:
 - NIHR Yorkshire and Humber PSRC
 - NIHR Newcastle PSRC
 - NIHR Greater Manchester PSRC
 - NIHR Midland PSRC
 - NIHR Central London PSRC
 - NIHR North West London PSRC