

Chief Executive Officer Report to the Board March 2022

Part 1 Public session

Wider policy environment roundup

This section is provided for wider interest and awareness of the Board. It does not need to be reviewed in detail.

Secretary of state road to recovery

On the 8 March, I attended the launch of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care's reform agenda. He set out three key priorities – prevention, personalisation and performance. The full speech can be accessed here bit.ly/37bkS3z.

Of particular note are plans to significantly expand the use of personal health and social care budgets. The secretary of state remarked that this would be the largest shift of funding from the public sector to individual citizens. There may be a delay before this affects the research sector, but it may have two important implications for our future work:

- We should see more research in prevention and integrated health and social care. The latter also aligns with the direction of travel of the health and care bill.
- Individual patients and those accessing social care will be primary users of research evidence rather than just through intermediaries.

Ministerial priorities

I sit on the Recovery, Resilience and Growth oversight group. The March meeting was the first meeting chaired by Lord Kamal. Lord Kamal introduced the meeting by setting out his policy priorities. They are

- Digitalisation and data sharing. The importance for the development of novel treatments and ensuring people are comfortable in the use of their data.
- Collaborative working government on life sciences
- The soft power opportunities of health and research.
- Taking the Health and care bill through the Lords.

Health and Care Bill

The Health and Care bill is in the report stage of the House of Lords. Several amendments relevant to research are being proposed (bit.ly/3HDPZ4o). These are aimed at strengthening duties towards

research and increase diversity in research and innovation. Lord Kamal has referred to the importance of our work in regard to transparency.

“On a requirement for an ICB’s annual report to cover the progress of applications considered by the relevant research ethics committee, I reassure my noble friend that the Health Research Authority, which administers research ethics committees, already publishes performance data on its website regarding the time taken to approve such studies. The HRA’s transparency strategy also asks research sponsors to include a plain-language summary of their findings in their final report; these can be found on the HRA’s website.”

Levelling up

The Government has published the levelling up plan that will transform UK (bit.ly/3CgH9IO). This unveils 12 national missions. They are all relevant to the HRA at some level of course. But of particular relevance are:

Mission 2 - Investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth. This includes a section on DHSC’s plans

To deliver this, DHSC will:

- a. commit that the new contractual period for NIHR Biomedical Research centres see increased levels of investment outside London, Oxford, and Cambridge, with at least £30m of additional funding over five years going to NHS-university partnerships.
- b. review the NIHR Clinical Research Network funding formula to enhance levels of funding outside the Greater South East, supporting more studies and a greater percentage of patient recruitment in underserved communities across the UK; and
- c. commit that the new contractual period for NIHR Clinical Research Facilities will see at least 50% of the funding going to NHS Organisations outside London, Oxford, and Cambridge, up from 45% for the current contract period.

Mission 7 - The gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years, and

Mission 8 - well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.

May have implications for the types of research we see. Funders like NIHR may seek to fund more research in social care, public health and the integration of them. It also implies a growth research methodology other than clinical trials.

Relocation of government jobs service

The plan repeats the commitment ‘The Places for Growth programme is delivering on the UK Government’s commitment to move 22,000 Civil Service roles, and 50% of UK-based Senior Civil Service roles, out of Greater London by 2030.’ The majority of Arm’s Length Bodies are also being targeted for relocation to locations outside of London, with exceptions only for essential operational

requirements. ALBs are also encouraged to develop specialist clusters to take advantage of local expertise and encourage collaboration, where possible.

MHRA – consultation on proposals for legislative changes for clinical trials

HRA have worked with the MHRA on a set of proposals to strengthen UK clinical trials legislation. These legislative proposals aim to streamline clinical trials approvals, enable innovation, enhance clinical trials transparency, enable greater risk proportionality, and embed patient and public involvement in clinical trials. These proposals aim to deliver a proportionate and flexible regulatory regime whilst always protecting patients and trial participants. More information can be found on our website.

ABPI - consultation on industry principles for use of health data

ABPI have launched a public consultation on industry principles for use of health data. The draft principles as they stand focus on trust, transparency, and public involvement being at the heart of the use of health data and so are very aligned with our own values. A link to ABPI's webpage covering this in detail [can be found here](#), and the consultation itself [can be accessed online here](#).

DHSC-BEIS announcement of £260 million to boost healthcare research and manufacturing

On 2nd March DHSC and BEIS announced a £200 million commitment to support NHS-led health research into diagnostics and treatment through new privacy-preserving platforms and clinical research services. DHSC and BEIS also announced £60 million of new funding to help expand life sciences manufacturing in the UK. This funding will support the Life Sciences Vision and the government's levelling up agenda. The full announcement from DHSC [can be found here](#).

Improving, coordinating, and standardising research practice across the UK

WHO publishes report on WHO-HRA joint workshop on COVID-19 human challenged trials?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has published a report of a joint Health Research Authority/WHO workshop on the ethics review of COVID-19 human challenge studies. We also published a parallel piece on lessons learned.

[COVID-19 human challenge studies – learning lessons from the UK experience - Health Research Authority \(hra.nhs.uk\)](#)

Model agreements

We are helping to reduce the time, cost and resources needed to set up health and social care research in the UK by launching new templates for commercially sponsored studies.

The HRA has published two new model agreement

- Model Confidentiality Disclosure Agreement template is designed for use by companies with potential NHS sites when they wish to agree the handling of study-specific confidential information during early feasibility discussions for commercial contract research.
- Model Non-Interventional Study Agreement and Clinical Research Organisation are the first UK templates designed for use with non-interventional commercial research with NHS research participants.

For more information see [Reducing the time to set up commercially sponsored studies in the UK - Health Research Authority \(hra.nhs.uk\)](#) or contact Alastair Nicholson, Head of Coordination and Standardisation

Academy of Medical Sciences and HRA Workshop; 17 February 2022

A full report is in preparation, however the immediate feedback has been very positive. The meeting was both a celebration of what we have achieved and an important opportunity to discuss challenges ahead.

[Celebrating the HRA Community, by Becky Purvis, Matt Westmore – Health Research Authority](#)

Contact Becky Purvis, Deputy Director of Policy and Partnerships for more information.

Senior leadership stakeholder engagement presentations

The Executive Committee and senior leadership engages widely in order to support the delivery of HRA’s social mission. This includes a wide range of informal and formal meetings. Listed here are some of the invited talks and stakeholder engagement events we have delivered.

Speaker	Event	Title	HRA Objective
Janet Messer, Director of Approvals	Clinical and Contract Research Association Annual Seminar, 26 January 2022	Combined Review	To update on combined review, to update on the implementation of combined review and benefits reported to date and provide an opportunity to demonstrate how we have listened to feedback.
Janet Messer, Director of Approvals	Clinical and Contract Research Association Annual Seminar, 26 January 2022	Closing Keynote on Progress on the UK Vision for Clinical Research	To show HRA’s key leadership role in delivering improvements.
Juliet Tizzard, Director of Policy and Partnerships	HSR UK Research Ethics Report launch – February 2022	HRA reflections on the report	To hear views from health services research about the experience of ethics and governance review and share HRA plans for making review more proportionate
Matt Westmore, CEO	Westminster Health Forum – Priorities for NICE in health and social care – March 2022	Being human in a digital world	To promote the importance of patient and public engagement and involvement in the use and development of data-driven approaches.

Matt Westmore, CEO	Cochrane-REWARD global prize for reducing avoidable waste in research - 1 March 2022	Matt presented the award.	To promote good research culture and HRA's leadership in ethics, transparency, and public involvement.
Matt Westmore, CEO	HRA Guest Talk to DHSC – 25 January 2022	The Health Research Authority	To increase understanding of the HRA across HRA, to share our contribution to the pandemic response, and how we have embedded change.
Matt Westmore, CEO Alastair Nicholson, Head of Coordination and Standardisation	Peninsula Applied Research Collaborative – 9 February 2022	Myth busting the Health Research Authority	To gain feedback from users and promote HRAs proportionate approach to regulating health services research.
Janet Messer, Director of Approvals Becky Purvis, Deputy Director of Policy and Partnerships	ABPI Member Webinar – 23 February 2022	UK-wide clinical research vision: one year on	To promote HRA role as regulator, enabler, and advocate of patient and public involvement in research.