

# Report to the Meeting of the

# Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

**BOD 34/2022**

(Agenda item: 13)

# Board of Directors

**24 May 2023**

**Research and NIHR Infrastructure update**

**For information**

**NIHR Infrastructure**

**NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre (OH-BRC), Director Prof John Geddes**

**BRC (Dec 2022 – Nov 2027, £35.5m)**

The BRC contract was fully executed in November 2022 and Letters of Intent were issued to partner organisations to allow them to commit resources. Expenditure for the period December 2022 – March 2023 was in line with that agreed with the NIHR at £1.2m.

As part of the requirements of the OH-BRC contracting, three formal strategies have to be submitted to NIHR by 1 June 2023. These are for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, Patient & Public Involvement, Engagement and Participation (PPIEP) and Academic Career Development. These strategies have been developed alongside the CRF to ensure a consistent Oxford Health (OH) vision and are currently at an advanced draft stage and will be discussed at the OH-BRC Steering Committee meeting on 9 May. Any comments will be incorporated, and the final versions will be sent to NIHR for the June deadline. The NIHR will provide feedback and it is expected that finalised versions will be uploaded to the BRC website.

Over the same period OH must develop an Intellectual Property (IP) policy and Partnership Agreements, for approval by the NIHR. The IP Policy and Partnership Agreements are being worked on by the Director of Corporate Affairs, Head of R&D and OUH contracts and will outline how the contractual obligations (including IP and Data Protection) will flow down to the Partner organisations. The existing IP Framework agreement (2017) will also need updating at some point.

Drafts of the Intellectual Property (IP) policy and Partnership Agreements have been developed and will be discussed at the 9 May OH-BRC Steering Committee. The same week the Director of Corporate Affairs, Head of R&D and OUH contracts are meeting to review and finalise drafts which will be sent to the NIHR for comment.

In May the BRC will submit its first Finance and Activity report for the new funding cycle. A summary of which will be shared with the OH-BRC Steering Committee on 9 May.

**NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration**

**MH-TRC (£250k)**

As part of the new contract, the BRC is also hosting the Mental Health TRC (MH-TRC), a UK-wide network comprising 17 Centres of excellence. Professor John Geddes is the current MH-TRC Chair, a role which will pass to Professor Rachel Upthegrove (Birmingham University), who is a member of the OH-BRC during 2023.  The NIHR has provided a contribution towards the salary of Dr Julie Bieles, the MH-TRC Manager (£250k over 5 years as part of the BRC contract) who started in Oxford in March 2023. The MH-TRC is expected to raise funding to support its activities. This it done through the invoicing of a small “TRC membership levy” typically in the range £2-5k/site /annum. The MH-TRC is currently undergoing an exercise to refresh the formal strategy for approval by NIHR NOCRI.

**Mental Health Mission (MHM)**

In its ‘Life Sciences Vision’ report, the UK government shared plans to make the UK a more attractive place for healthcare innovation. Working with the NHS and the Life Sciences sector, the plan set out ambitions to build on the UK’s world class science and research capabilities, ensure the NHS uses the latest innovations and to create a ripe environment for companies to invest and grow. These plans were summed up in a set of ‘priority statements’ – also known as ‘Missions’.

The Mental Health Mission (MHM) will build on the NIHR Mental Health Translational Research Collaboration (MH-TRC), a national group of Centres focused on mental health research and services. As noted above, OH will host the MH-TRC for the next five years and two dedicated Mission Co-Chairs have been appointed by the Government to lead all work connected with the MHM.

An application for funding for a total of £42.6m was submitted 17 November 2022 and following peer review, full funding recommended. As with the OH-BRC, OH is hosting the MHM funding and has issued Letters of Intent to the key sites who will then sub-contract with further sites.

Formal announcement of the MHM funding has been delayed at governmental level, and the specific details, and names of the two Co-Chairs, are not likely to be announced until the end of May.

The MHM will provide specific funding to two demonstrator sites, Birmingham, and Liverpool, as well as MH-TRC developed national Work Streams in capacity development, early psychosis, mood disorders, children, and young people’s mental health, plus data and digital.

OH needs to develop an Intellectual Property (IP) policy and Partnership Agreement for the MHM for approval by the NIHR based on those developed for the BRC.

Another part of the Life Sciences Vision is the Dementia Mission (DM). The set up of this is slightly behind the MHM, but one arm of the DM of a UK-wide dementia orientated clinical trials network, and Dr Vanessa Raymont is deputy chair of the NIHR Dementia Translational Research Collaboration (D-TRC) which will host this.

**NIHR Oxford Clinical Research Facility (OH-CRF), Co-Directors Prof Andrea Cipriani and Prof Cathy Henshall**

**CRF (Sep 2022 – Aug 2027, £4m)**

The new CRF award started in September 2022 and the OH-CRF together with the OH-BRC will submit both a fully developed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity strategy and a Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement strategy to the NIHR. Both strategies will have a shared vision across the OH-CRF and OH-BRC, but each infrastructure award will have its own objectives and plans to achieve their visions. The strategies are nearly complete and will be submitted in June 2023.

OH needs to develop an Intellectual Property (IP) policy and Partnership Agreements for the CRF for approval by the NIHR based on those developed for the BRC, which is currently underway.

The annual reporting of CRF activity to NIHR is currently underway, with the Finance and Activity Report due mid-May 2023 and the Narrative Report + progress on objectives due end of August 2023.

The OH-CRF is facilitating a high number of early phase studies in mental health, treatment resistant disorders, dementias, comorbidities, and (more recently) with a focus on psychedelic/controlled substances novel treatment developments.

**NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley (ARC), Director Prof Richard Hobbs**

**Current ARC (Oct 2019 – Mar 2026, £12.2m)**

The 2022-23 Annual Report is prepared and will be submitted in May. The ARC has been awarded a costed extension of £2.7m for 18 months to take the ARC to March 2026.  Additional business plans for the extension are being developed with partners including the Trust and ICBs, they will be submitted to NIHR in October.

The ARC has just awarded additional small funding for 12 additional projects which add to the portfolio and include ICB priorities and support additional capacity development.  NIHR will be awarding each ARC two additional Senior Fellowships focusing on Social Care, in addition to the three Dementia Fellows, one of whom will be working in the OH Brain Health Clinic with Dr Vanessa Raymont.

**NIHR MedTech and In Vitro Diagnostic Co-operatives (MIC), Director Prof Gail Hayward**

**Current MIC (January 2018 –March 2024, £1.6m)**

The MIC leadership team are leading a bid for funding for the NIHR HealthTech Research Centres (HRC) infrastructure scheme. This scheme will replace the NIHR MICs from April 2024 and will run for five years. The bid incorporates OH (the host), five University of Oxford Departments, Birmingham Women’s and Children’s NHSFT, OUH, the University of Warwick, and the University of Nottingham. The stage 2 application was submitted 10 May. Success at stage 2 will result in members of the team being called to interview in August, with the outcome announced in September.

The MIC has received annual reporting materials from the NIHR for the 22-23 financial year. Deadline for this year have been pushed back to accommodate the HRC application process, with submission deadlines of the 12th June and 7th August for the Finance and Activity and narrative reports respectively.

**Wider R&D Overview, Director Dr Vanessa Raymont**

In April 2023 Prof Philip Maguire replaced Prof Andrea Cipriani as R&D Associate Director and became part of the R&D Senior Management Team (SMT) and Cathy Hensall, who is also a member of the SMT, has recently been made Professor at Oxford Brookes University.

The current NIHR Clinical Research Network is being replaced with the Regional Research Delivery Network (RRDN). This was hoped to be as from Apr 2024, but the start date has been pushed back to Sep 2024. The implications of any changes are unknown, although OH is seen as a low participant recruiter which may impact on the funding it receives. This in part reflects a shift in both the number and complexity of commercial clinical trials coming to the UK, which makes recruitment at the scale we have done in the past challenging. We hope OH’s participation in both the MHM and DM networks, as well as the trials the new BRC will bring will help offset some of these issues.

As a result, most Oxford Health (OH) reported research is led by Oxford University (OU) employed staff, who recruit OH staff as part of their teams. There can be confusion over line management arrangements and responsibilities, which has been raised with HR. As the new BRC grows more OH staff are expected to be employed, as per NIHR expectations, and will be managed by OU employed Theme Leads so the need for clarity will become more urgent and we are working to streamline processes with HR.

NIHR recently asked for bids to host a reformatted network of its Research Design Services, which assists with the development of research study protocols. Dr Vanessa Raymont is part of a successful bid for a mental health led NIHR Research Support Service, with Oxford Health as a named partner.

Bill Wells continues to chair the local Research Infrastructure Managers meetings, which bring together the managers from all of the OH hosted research infrastructure (ARC, MIC, BRC, CRF) to ensure close working around research strategy. This also provides opportunities for highlighting how these groups can support OH research and strategy directly. In addition, the community directorate research lead and Dr Vanessa Raymont now have regular meetings with the ARC and MIC to leverage support for direct, ongoing OH projects (e.g. of point of care testing) and collaborated with the MIC on their HRC application. We are aiming for R&D to now provide project management and business case oversight for the OH translational research clinics (Oxford Brain Health Clinic, CAMHS AnDY Clinic, the proposed Treatment Resistant Depression, Cognition Symptoms in Psychosis, and Treatment Resistant Schizophrenia clinics) as part of the ‘Development’ arm of R&D, with additional staffing resource confirmed via the recent OH strategy planning process. We plan to discuss possible support for some translational projects (e.g. Virtual Reality headsets) with the Academic Health Sciences Network.

At the end of FY23 R&D reported expenditure of £182k against a budget of £805k. The resulting £623k favourable variance benefited from vaccine income of £522k. It was hoped that this income could be used to develop the OH-CRF but work wasn’t undertaken in time. It is hoped that this can take place in FY24, but this has yet to be confirmed.

**Author: Dr Vanessa Raymont**

**Lead Executive Director: Dr Karl Marlowe**

