

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

# Research and Innovation Strategy 2024-2029

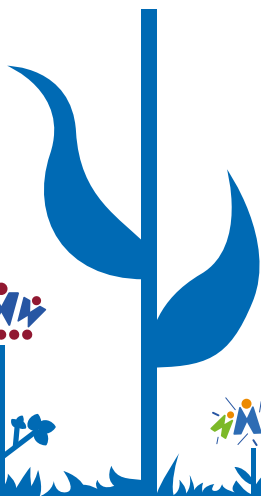


Where

Excellence

Meets

Compassion



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## Introduction

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I am pleased to introduce our five year strategy for Research and Innovation (R&I) at Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT), which builds on the great progress we and our partners across Greater Manchester, and increasingly the wider North West of England, have made over the last decade.

This year we have launched our new organisational five-year strategy for MFT, *Where Excellence Meets Compassion*. The strategy refreshes our mission of working together to improve the health and quality of life of our diverse communities, and sets out five strategic aims for the organisation. One of those aims is to 'Deliver world-class research and innovation that improves people's lives' and this R&I strategy outlines in more detail how we will do this.

The significance of R&I as a core part of the work we do as MFT is something in which we take great pride. Our researchers and innovators, as well as our vital partnerships with local universities, NHS and other public organisations, commercial companies, the voluntary sector, and others, give us the strongest base on which to build. We have the opportunity and ambition to do even more, and this strategy sets out how we will grow and develop our R&I over the next five years to make ever greater improvements to people's lives.

**Mark Cubbon**

**Group Chief Executive**



## Foreword

**MFT clearly recognises the importance and value of research and innovation to improve the lives of our diverse service users, local communities and beyond.**

Over the last five years, we have seen some astounding achievements from our teams. They played a vital role during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading on important aspects of the national pandemic response and recruiting large numbers of participants to important clinical trials that improved public health. The infrastructure we have to support research and innovation has grown substantially. We obtained funding from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) for our Biomedical Research Centre (the largest outside the South-East of England at £60.4m), the Clinical Research Facility (the largest in the country at £14.5m), the NIHR UK CRF (Clinical Research Facility) Network (£2.4m), the North West Regional Research Delivery Network (from 1st October 2024), the NIHR Greater Manchester Applied Research Collaboration (£13.8m) and a new NIHR Healthtec Research Centre in Emergency and Acute Care (£2.9m). We have also played a leading role in bringing together our hosted R&I infrastructure through the Greater Manchester NIHR R&I Oversight Board, sharing learning across the region and ensuring that we are all working to achieve the same goals.

Together, this will allow us to build stronger links with diverse and under-served communities, address health inequalities, build our partnerships with universities, other NHS partners and industry, and bridge important gaps between discovery and translation. Ultimately, this will allow us to excel in delivering scientific discoveries that will benefit the health of our communities at scale.

We should be extremely proud of all the MFT staff whose work constantly improves the lives of our service users, for our fantastic track record of research delivery (for example, MFT recruited more participants to commercial trials than any other NHS trust in 2022-23), for the achievements of our early career researchers in obtaining fellowships and prizes, and for the outstanding commitment of more than 600 hard-working and dedicated R&I staff.

Over the next five years, we plan to do even better. Having listened to and worked closely with many different people and groups to develop this strategy, we will continue to put our service users, communities and staff at the centre of everything we do. We will focus on our values and principles, proactively focusing on the foundations of equality, diversity, inclusion, environmental sustainability and the importance of earning trust, while always asking how we can be more efficient, more pragmatic and proportionate while maintaining quality. We will support all our teams across MFT to take their research and innovation to the next level, and we will support important initiatives including the Clinical Data Science Unit, Rare Conditions Centre and programmes of work to support key areas including for children and young people.

The strategy will be a living document. The needs of our service users, communities, staff and the NHS and our partners will evolve and change over time. Our strategy, and the delivery plans we develop to set out our detailed programme of work, will be constantly adapted to take account of that.

Thanks to the invaluable input of so many people who have helped to develop this strategy, we believe that we have set out an ambitious but realistic plan that will drive the positive change we wish to see. The NHS has faced many challenges in recent times. Our research and innovation should give us hope, helping us to build an exciting and brighter future that will benefit us all. Let's work together on making that a reality.



**Professor Jane Eddleston**  
**Strategic Clinical Advisor to Group Chief Executive Officer**



**Professor Rick Body**  
**Group Director of Research and Innovation**



**Professor Iain McLean**  
**Managing Director for Research and Innovation**

## Putting Our Values First

Everything we are setting out to do puts the five values of MFT at its heart:



### ◆ We are compassionate

It is important that our research and innovation is designed to meet the needs of our service users, local communities and the NHS services that MFT provides. We will develop our systems for listening to everyone who can tell us about those needs and the best ways to meet them.

When we make discoveries that can improve the care and services that MFT provides, it is vital that we continue to work with everyone involved to make sure that all our service users and communities will benefit from them as soon as possible.

### ◆ We are curious

As we look to drive positive change, it is important that we are always looking for the most promising new technologies and treatments, testing them and making sure that they will safely deliver improvements to make sure that our service users can benefit from them at the earliest opportunity. We will also find new and better ways to deliver high quality care, research and innovation while looking after the environment and protecting our world for future generations.

### ◆ We are collaborative

To be successful, we must work together. We will listen to and work with all stakeholders to understand how our services can improve and how our research and innovation can do that. Our strategy includes plans for how we will communicate well within and outside MFT, continuing and improving upon the great work that is already being done.

One of the most important ways to develop research and innovation is to host centres, facilities and programmes that are funded by other organisations. We will make sure that MFT does an excellent job in supporting everyone involved, returning even more value than the financial investment made by the funders.

### ◆ We are open and honest

It is important that everyone who our research and innovation affects should feel they can trust us. We will therefore hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards and we will make sure that our research and innovation is always delivered with the highest possible integrity and quality. Without compromising on quality, we also commit to making it easier for our researchers and staff to produce high quality research and innovation quickly and efficiently.

### ◆ We are inclusive

Research and innovation are vital parts of what we do every day at MFT. We will work hard to make sure that everyone can see that. For the people in our local communities and others who use our services, we will make it easy for them to get involved and we will let them know how our research and innovation improves the care and services we provide. We will also provide support and training opportunities to ensure that all the staff working at MFT can get involved, proactively supporting equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) within our leadership, our wider work force and those who take part in our research. Our work force should have equitable chances to build their careers around research and innovation. As we have set out in detail below, we will create an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone, celebrating our differences and making sure that everyone has a voice.

# OUR VISION

Our research and innovation will start by understanding the needs of our service users, our communities and our NHS services. We will work together, making sure that what we do is both efficient and high quality. Our work should drive the future of the NHS, improving the lives of all our service users and communities, and the quality of care that we provide. To achieve this, we must inspire and invest in our diverse, ambitious and talented R&I community. MFT should be the best place to work in R&I, and R&I should be the best place to work in MFT.

By improving on the excellent work that has already been done to ensure that we communicate well and produce the highest quality research and innovation, more people will get involved. Improving our processes will mean that we deliver projects to completion sooner without compromising on quality. This will lead to the changes we are looking for; to improve the lives and health of the people we serve, to reduce health inequalities, to be an outstanding employer, and to train and develop future generations. Ultimately, this will lead MFT, the NHS and health and care across the world to a brighter future.



Research and innovation to drive positive change in health and care for all



## Our Impact

The Research and Innovation team at MFT is recognised within GM, across the North West and at national level as being highly developed and successful.

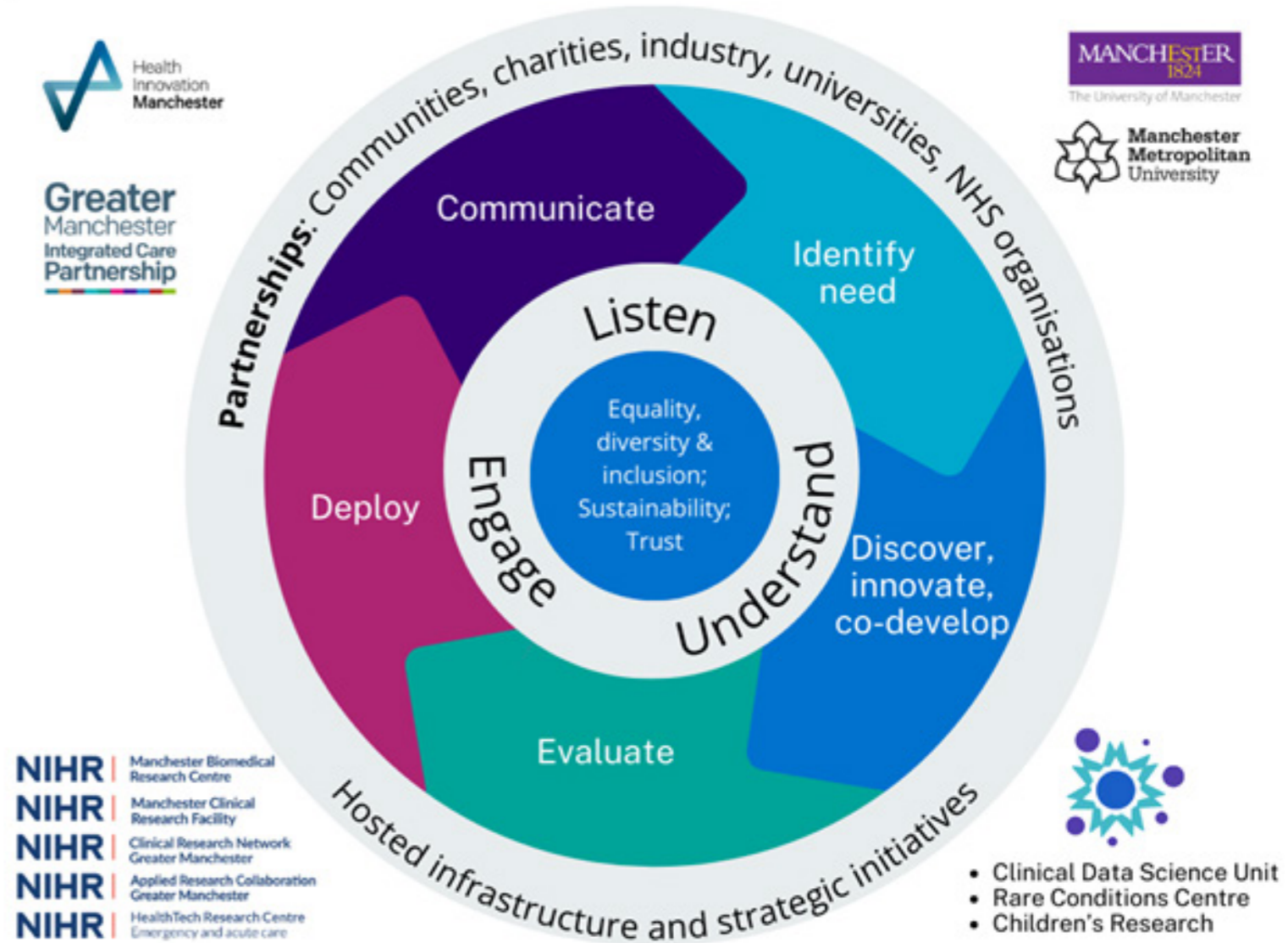
The strategy described here will further build our capabilities by coupling strategic investment to key prioritised areas. The impact of this will be:centred research. It is a roadmap that will guide our endeavours over the next five years, ensuring that MFT remains a trailblazer in research and innovation for health and care.

- Developing capacity and capability of our workforce, which in turn will enhance the “One Manchester” approach we have with our academic and NHS partners to the discovery, development, delivery and innovation pipeline.
- Optimise the engagement of our communities through the ongoing PPIE work to ensure that our research and innovation addresses the health issues that are important to our communities and services, including health inequalities.
- Ensure that underserved populations are fully represented in our work programmes including targeting participation in the UK biobank and clinical trials.
- Maximise the offer to participate in relevant clinical trials to all MFT patients through active engagement, and with the support of technologies such as the MyMFT portal where patients can be linked to a trial offer using artificial intelligence (AI).
- Develop with academic and commercial partners opportunities to utilise generative AI both in diagnostics but also for operational and clinical purposes.
- Further develop our innovation team to enhance our work with commercial companies and internally developed innovations. These should again complement the “One Manchester” work programmes.
- Support more people to take their R&I from idea through to commercialisation, allowing them to make a difference to people’s lives and ‘spin out’ commercial ventures where appropriate.
- Improve our adoption internally of innovations proven to improve outcomes and services.
- Continue working with partners on the NIHR Greater Manchester Oversight Board to seek to grow and when required renew existing hosted NIHR infrastructure, thereby broadening the range of research delivered and continuing to deliver value for money.
- Help MFT be the place people enjoy working, learning and building a career by supporting more colleagues to take part in research and innovation and building a diverse and inclusive environment.
- Contribute to the delivery of a net zero carbon footprint for MFT by 2038, improving the ways that we work and researching new ways to protect our world while still delivering outstanding care.

## Research and Innovation at MFT

As one of the largest NHS trusts in the country, MFT oversees ten hospitals including two major trauma centres, and two local care organisations. It is the main provider of hospital care for a diverse population of approximately 1 million people with around 2,600 beds across our sites. MFT employs more than 28,000 staff, more than 600 of whom are directly employed within Research and Innovation (R&I). MFT hosts substantial R&I infrastructure on behalf of its regional and national partners and sits within a wider health and care ecosystem that is designed for and committed to advancing the frontiers of health and care through partnership.

This strategy document outlines our commitment to sustained excellence, innovation, inclusion and person-centred research. It is a roadmap that will guide our endeavours over the next five years, ensuring that MFT remains a trailblazer in research and innovation for health and care





## Our Approach to Developing this Strategy

### Everyone's View Matters

In developing this strategy, we wanted to ensure that we were truly 'putting people first' by incorporating a rich variety of perspectives from as many stakeholders as possible. That includes over 600 staff in Research and Innovation alongside research-active leaders, staff, and clinical investigators across the trust, and importantly members of the public who represent the diverse populations that our research and innovation aim to benefit. We strived to ensure alignment with the values of both MFT and our partners across Greater Manchester. In particular, we recognise the importance of our alignment with the values and mission of Health Innovation Manchester, the academic health science system that brings together NHS partners across the region. We also recognise the critical importance of alignment with the NIHR, considering the substantial hosting of NIHR infrastructure and awards as a cornerstone of our approach.

We have listened to key stakeholders through an extensive series of interviews, focus groups, workshops, meetings, and surveys. This included working with diverse patient and public representatives and charities, who will continue to provide oversight for the delivery of this strategy, holding us accountable for driving the positive change we are seeking to achieve in the lives of the people we serve. We have sought to understand the challenges, opportunities, strengths (our 'oak trees'), and areas under development (our 'acorns') for research and innovation. This iterative process involved multiple rounds of engagement, ensuring that the strategy reflects collective insights and aspirations. We will continue to consult with stakeholders as we develop delivery plans for this strategy and as our strategy evolves and takes shape over the next five years.



## What Does Our Strategy Say?


Our MFT strategy 'Where Excellence Meets Compassion' emphasises the importance of ensuring that MFT continues to be world-leading in its approach to research and innovation. This strategy for Research & Innovation is designed to be in service of that overall trust strategy. Therefore, we have structured this strategy around the five strategic aims of the trust. Within those **five strategic aims**, we set out **twelve overarching objectives**. Each objective and their specific actions are detailed from page 21 onwards.



# Our Objectives



These objectives will apply across the whole trust. We will support each hospital and managed clinical service to develop its own bespoke research and innovation delivery plan, recognising the specific opportunities and challenges in each individual area. We aim to have completed this within 12 months of launching the strategy.

In the following sections, we set out the actions that we will prioritise to deliver this strategy and enhance our research and innovation over the next five years. While our work will begin immediately, we have outlined which actions will be completed over the next 5 years in the tables below. Key metrics, by which we may measure our performance, have been marked with the  symbol.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

### 1 Our work will be designed to improve people’s health and the care that we provide, and to address health inequalities 1



The people we listened to consistently told us that our research and innovation must be based upon a good understanding of the need of service users and the NHS. We will do that by listening to our service users and the wider public, and to those providing care within MFT and the wider NHS.

For our research and innovation to be most meaningful, we must ensure that we have established mechanisms to listen to those receiving and delivering care to understand the needs and priorities for future improvements. To achieve this, we will work closely with [Vocal](#) and we will focus on the following key areas.

#### Working in partnership with our service users and communities

Community engagement is integral to our approach. We will build on the excellent work already being done to actively involve local residents, patient groups, and community organisations and frameworks, listening to understand what is most important to our services users and communities, identifying areas of unmet need and embracing co-production as a default approach to our research and innovation. This ensures that the priorities and concerns of our diverse population are central to what we do.

#### Our Actions:

- We will enhance the ways that we engage with diverse local communities to identify areas of need and throughout every stage of our research and innovation by disseminating communications to all MFT researchers about the importance of diverse engagement and the support available via Vocal.
-  We will improve the ways that we listen to our diverse local communities to understand areas of unmet need and inform our future research. To achieve this, we will develop and implement a framework to ensure that people from all our local communities and stakeholder groups such as charities, representing all protected characteristics, are being systematically involved in our external funding applications.
-  We will hold ourselves accountable to our service users and local communities. To achieve this, we will develop and implement a framework to enable diverse groups of service users and community representatives to provide oversight of our research and innovation activities.
- We will work with diverse groups to co-produce new care pathways and technologies and we will communicate how this engagement has enriched our external partnerships.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

### Using our data to understand areas of need

#### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will improve the ways that we use our data to improve the care that we provide. To achieve this, we will hold a workshop with stakeholders from across MFT to explore how we might build on existing structures and processes to optimise the capture, analysis and sharing of health and care data relating to trends and patterns of service use, pressure points, patient outcomes, and socio-economic determinants of health.
- ◆ We will review the ways in which clinical and R&I teams work together inform and prioritise research questions and innovations, and implement improvements with the aim of addressing unmet needs (and their causes) that are identified, both inside and outside MFT.
  - We will strengthen links between clinical audit, service evaluation, and R&I. For example, we will encourage the routine formulation of research questions as outputs of our clinical audits and our research should inform and interface with service improvement and clinical audit.
- ◆ We will make lasting and continuous improvements to the ways we engage with our service users and local communities to inform our research and innovation. To achieve this, we will implement new guidance for MFT staff and affiliates about how they can address areas of unmet need through research and innovation.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

2

**We will drive positive change for the lives of our service users, local communities, staff, for the wider NHS and for people across the world**

2

For our research and innovation to be effective, we must drive positive change and improve people's lives. This should be our main marker of success. Our commitment to making a difference is deeply embedded in our ethos, reflecting our dedication to advancing our understanding of health and care, improving patient outcomes, providing personalised and efficient care and contributing to global advancements. The critical importance of improving health and care through excellence in research and innovation serves as a cornerstone for our strategic vision and mission.

To achieve this, we must proactively work to ensure that our research and innovations are fit for purpose by promoting co-development as a default approach, by maintaining and building upon our excellent programme of communications, by ensuring strong links and communications with those commissioning and delivering clinical services, by promoting and supporting commercialisation, leveraging funding to support innovation and adoption, and by stimulating meaningful and ethical external partnerships with mutual benefit.

### Communicating our research findings

#### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will help our diverse communities to understand more about our research and innovation and the difference it makes to the care we provide through more inclusive communications. We will develop our approach with service users, local communities and stakeholder groups, enhancing the ways that we engage with people who face health inequalities in ways that they can access and understand.
  - We will help more of our MFT staff to understand our research and innovation activity, how it is making a difference to our services and people's lives and how they can get involved. To achieve this, we will further enhance our programme of internal communications, working with the Group Communications function, to ensure that R&I is systematically communicated across every team within MFT, to staff at every level.
- ◆ We will keep improving the way that we communicate with each other, with our service users and communities, with our partners and with other healthcare providers in Greater Manchester. To achieve this, we will review our communication methods, both internally and by obtaining feedback from external parties.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

- In doing so, we will evolve our programme of external communications, being innovative, inclusive and forward-thinking in our approach and aiming to engage with broad and diverse audiences through a wide range of different platforms in accordance with MFT values.
- We will report on the reach of and engagement with our communications, being able to demonstrate how we are engaging with our diverse staff, local communities, service users and research participants, the wider population, and with current and potential partners (both commercial and non-commercial).
- ◆ We will use internal MFT resources, such as MFTV and MyMFT, to increase participation in and engagement with our R&I activity, and to improve health and care across MFT.
- We will demonstrate how our external communications activity, including press releases, websites and social media, and traditional media such as newsletters, has helped to improve health and care locally, nationally and internationally.

### Promoting and supporting innovation and commercialisation

#### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will support the companies we have invested in to succeed, improving health and care and generating income that can be re-invested in our services. To achieve this, we will update our framework for supporting the MFT investment portfolio (i.e., our spinout companies and licensing agreements), providing innovators with the expert guidance, tools and training that they need to succeed, either internally or by working with external partners.
- ◆ We will develop and implement road maps to responsible innovation, which clearly outline how staff may take forward innovative ideas to improve the care that we provide and who they should contact for support.
  - We will explore ways to further invest in our MFT R&I programmes to support more spin-outs and greater commercialisation.
  - We will grow the profile and visibility of our Innovation Team across MFT, ensuring that all MFT staff have access to road maps for innovation and adoption, and that they feel encouraged and supported in developing innovations.
  - We will review our systems for invention capture and protection of intellectual property, and we will develop our system for supporting investment and identifying licensing opportunities, working in close partnership with stakeholder organisations including universities and industry.
- ◆ We will develop at least three impact case studies to demonstrate how we have supported MFT staff from idea to commercialisation, and how our support of the MFT investment portfolio has both improved the health and care of our communities and generated income.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

### Supporting adoption

To make sure that we are driving positive change to health and care, we will improve the ways that we support the sustainable adoption of new care pathways and technologies in practice.

#### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will develop and implement a framework for close working between the MFT Innovation Team and the MFT Improvement team to optimise the support of innovation adoption.
  - We will continue to work closely with stakeholders from Health Innovation Manchester and the organisations it represents to ensure consistency across the Greater Manchester region.
  - We will set out a sustainable model for the continuation of the Health Foundation Adoption Hub after completion of the current funding award, allowing us to retain and build upon the lessons we have learned about how to successfully support sustainable adoption.
- ◆ We will develop and implement a framework for the early adoption and real-world evaluation of innovations.
- ◆ We will have an established MFT-wide model to support adoption, with seamless working arrangements between the MFT Innovation Team, MFT Improvement team, MFT Informatics team and external partners.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

3

**We will work in partnership with our service users, the public, our staff and with other organisations who share our goals and values**

3

Research and innovation require excellent teamwork. We must find the best ways of working together within our R&I teams, with service users and research participants, with local communities, and with our outside partners.

### A culture of working together with civility and respect

Everyone working in R&I should be compassionate, inclusive and respectful. Our leaders and managers should demonstrate the values that we expect of all our staff. We must communicate well with colleagues across the whole of MFT and ensure that we are learning from outside organisations. We should monitor our progress to make sure that we achieve the standards we are striving for.

We will foster a culture of collaboration and high quality of care within and between teams and professional groups, facilitating dialogue, building trust and improving communication. Leaders and managers must be armed with the skills they need to successfully understand, address and measure inappropriate or negative workplace behaviours and the root causes of incivility, while having zero tolerance for bullying and harassment.

All our staff should be aware of how to raise concerns, either formally or informally. They should feel supported to do so, and the relative merits of the different approaches available should be made clear. We will promote regular meetings of teams, including those that are designed entirely for team building; and we will promote, continually develop, and support engagement with staff wellbeing initiatives.

#### Our Actions:

- We will ensure that leaders and managers across R&I are equipped with the tools they need to be outstanding role models and to inspire and maintain the optimum working culture. For example, leaders and managers should be able to evidence that they have engaged with training and are familiar and compliant with NHS initiatives around civility, respect and compassionate leadership. We should consistently demonstrate compassionate leadership, and we will demonstrate that we are constantly working to sustain this.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

- We will evolve our systems to improve the ways that we can transparently demonstrate how we have responded to concerns raised, how we have actively listened, how we have intervened and how we have measured our response.
- We will ensure that reflection upon our compassionate approach is incorporated into R&I appraisals, and we will consider implementing 5-yearly 360-degree appraisals for R&I staff, consulting with colleagues across the wider Trust.

### Patient and public involvement, engagement and participation (PPIEP) and inclusive research

Above, we set out our commitment to building links with service users and local communities to identify areas of unmet need and to guide us to the areas that we should focus our research and innovation on. Involving patients and the public at every subsequent stage of our research and innovation and ensuring that we are constantly improving our proactive approach to inclusivity, is also essential for success. We must build strong links with our diverse service users and local communities, founded in trust, to ensure that their voices are represented throughout all our research and innovation activities. The support and expertise of Vocal will be vital to achieve this.

Throughout the next five years, therefore, we will maintain our support for Vocal and the dedicated resource and expertise that Vocal provides to coordinate and continually develop our patient and public involvement, engagement and participation (PPIEP) activity.

#### Our Actions:

- We will ensure that at least 50% of submitted MFT-led NIHR project/programme grant applications have at least one patient / public co-applicant.
- We will develop a system to ensure close communication between all the people who are currently involved in PPIEP and community engagement activities. This includes Vocal, our hosted NIHR infrastructure, Health Innovation Manchester and other across MFT who are working with service users and local communities. This also notably includes our two Local Care Organisations (LCOs). Each year, we will report on how these groups have been working together to share learning and improve the way that we work with our diverse service users and communities.
- We will promote co-production with patient and public representatives. We will work with external partners and local communities to provide resources for researchers on the principles and methods of co-production.
- We will establish a process for public oversight of the delivery of this strategy, ensuring that we engage with diverse groups and act on their feedback.
- We will ensure that all our sponsored studies and all MFT-led external grant applications have patient / public involvement in their dissemination plans.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

- ◆ We will monitor the number of groups that we have engaged with for PPIEP activities across R&I. Within 3 years, we will be able to show how we are actively engaging with community groups, charities and service users that represent each of the nine protected characteristics as well as other important drivers of health inequality (such as socio-economic deprivation).
  - We will work with our hosted NIHR infrastructure and industry organisations to develop a systematic approach to involving patients and the public in our interactions with industry partners. Within 3 years we will publish a report to share our learning.
  - We will ensure that all our sponsored studies have a plan for communication of research findings with participants. At the end of each study, we will ask the chief investigator to report on how this was achieved. We will collate this data and it report it at the Group Research Governance Committee every year.
- ◆ We will update and expand the training in patient and public involvement and engagement that is available to all R&I active MFT staff.
  - We will support the development of new methods for patient and public involvement, aiming to optimise engagement with our diverse communities.

### Inclusive research

There is clear evidence of inadequate representation of women, ethnic minority groups, gender minorities and socio-economically deprived communities in health and care research (2–4). This can increase health disparities and may cause harm or a reduction in effectiveness when new tests, treatments and technologies are used in practice for diverse groups that were not adequately represented in the relevant research. Sometimes, it is impossible to know if groups have been poorly represented in research because adequate data were not collected.

We commit to continually improving our approach to fully inclusive research, starting at the point of idea generation and protocol design and continuing through the delivery, analysis, dissemination and implementation of the innovations that we work with. Working with our hosted infrastructure and building on the outstanding strategies and systems that have been put in place to optimise our approach to inclusive research, we will continually strive to do better, to be more fully inclusive, to implement systems that will ensure adequate representation of all diverse groups within the communities we serve.

Throughout the next five years, we will support and learn from our hosted R&I infrastructure, patient & public groups (notably including the BRAG group), charities (including the LGBT Foundation and Sparkle) and the MFT ED&I team to continually improve our approach to inclusive research, understanding and proactively removing barriers to participation. In doing so, we will protect the rights and interests of all our diverse service users and communities including all protected characteristics and those who are marginalised or under-served.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will measure and monitor how inclusive our research is. To do so, we will support our NIHR BRC (Biomedical Research Centre) and NIHR CRF in taking forward the implementation of a core dataset for all our sponsored studies, which will enable us to see how well we are engaging with marginalised or under-served communities, including people from areas with high index of multiple deprivation, and those with protected characteristics.
  - We will work to promote and increase participation in the UK Biobank from among our diverse communities, increasing representation from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- ◆ Working with the NIHR Manchester BRC, we will develop a toolkit for inclusive research at MFT more generally, focusing on communities that may be marginalised or under-served in a broader sense.
  - We will work with the MFT ED&I team and our hosted NIHR infrastructure to understand the diversity of our R&I workforce, leadership and governance structures. We will take proactive measures to ensure adequate representation at all levels.
  - We will demonstrate how we systematically and reliably promote inclusive research when working with external research sponsors and external organisations including industry partners.
- ◆ We will develop and implement a toolkit for researchers to remove literacy, digital literacy and language barriers to engagement with our research. This should be funded within grant applications and will optimise the use of digital resources such as Hive and MyMFT to promote broader inclusion within our research studies.
  - We will demonstrate how we are using the new inclusive research/inequalities toolkit to guide the design and conduct of all our sponsored studies.

### External partnerships

Over the next five years, we will build on our outstanding track record for partnership with industry, using the expertise and resources leveraged through those partnerships to enhance the care that we provide and the lives of our service users and communities. We will proactively work to attract partnerships with external stakeholders that will add value to our research and innovation. The partnerships we seek and maintain will help MFT to address areas of unmet need, bolster the quality and/or efficiency of our research and innovation, support the development of our staff and other stakeholders, enhance our hosted R&I infrastructure, and develop a culture of innovation and partnership.

We will work with partners to maximise opportunities for close working and/or co-location with commercial partners, working to identify every opportunity for co-development and optimising / accelerating the path from discovery to adoption. Notably, this will include a commitment to working with Bruntwood SciTech to take every opportunity to use the CityLabs campus to achieve our objectives.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

To maximise the potential of these initiatives, we will proactively seek industry partners with common priorities and values. We will nurture those partnerships to co-produce technologies and care pathways that will improve the services and care that we provide.

In addition, it is vital that we should maintain and enhance our strong links with university partners, notably the University of Manchester but also including other Higher Education Institutions across Greater Manchester and beyond, which will help to enhance our research and innovation, build capacity, and benefit our service users and communities. We will also build stronger links with other NHS organisations, particularly across Greater Manchester, and notably including our colleagues in primary and social care.

### Our Actions:

- ◆ MFT should continue to be one of the top five NHS trusts nationally for recruitment to industry-sponsored NIHR portfolio studies.
- ◆ Linking with the NIHR HRC (HealthTech Research Centre), NIHR BRC and NIHR CRF, we will evaluate and report on how we can develop new services to support research set up with external partners. Services within remit will include protocol development, regulatory approvals and patient and public involvement and engagement. We will establish the appropriate role for MFT R&I in this process, and how that will best interface with the role of commercial Clinical Research Organisations.
- We will build on our partnerships with non-commercial organisations, especially our partners across Greater Manchester. We will be proactive in our efforts to develop research and innovation across the region, and to advance health and care through close partnership with our colleagues in primary care, social care, and other NHS Trusts.
- We will work with Bruntwood SciTech and colleagues across R&I to ensure full occupancy within our CityLabs campus, attracting organisations that share our values and objectives to work in partnership with us.
- ◆ We will develop robust, ethical and regulation-compliant systems by which industry partners may work with us to procure consultancy services, access to samples and access to data.



## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

4

### We will communicate well with each other across MFT, with our service users, the public and our partner organisations

4

Communication is key to the success of research and innovation. MFT already has robust and effective mechanisms for communication with a dedicated R&I communications team and a regular, thriving programme of communications. Over the next 5 years we will continue to invest in and support that team, and we will find new ways to enhance the way we communicate within and outside our growing and increasingly complex organisation.

### Communicating with each other

Over the next five years, we will continue to support a programme of regular communications. This will highlight our outputs, focus on the outstanding R&I of teams across MFT and our hosted R&I infrastructure, demonstrate visible leadership, communicate our values, and highlight opportunities. Importantly, we will make R&I processes more transparent, visible and accessible to all investigators and those who wish to get involved with R&I activity, and to all R&I staff. Further, we will ensure that the achievements and successes of our staff are recognised and celebrated, building upon our existing schemes for staff recognition.

### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will complete an exercise to evaluate and improve our internal communications, both within R&I and with the wider NHS trust. This will include ways to ring fence staff time for team building and wellbeing initiatives, to ensure that our staff have regular interactions including time spent face to face, and an evaluation of how our use of asynchronous communications (e.g., email) may be improved.
- We will improve the way that we communicate the outputs of management meetings to all our staff, for example the R&I Management Board.
- ◆ We will introduce a specific focus on the communication of opportunities around innovation at MFT, making roadmaps to innovation and adoption accessible for all MFT staff and promoting greater understanding of innovation and the opportunities it affords to our staff and service users.
- We will review how we manage communication between different R&I active teams across sites and across the trust, sharing learning and examples of best practice and supporting the growth of R&I across the trust.
- We will build on the successful Innovator Training Scheme, driven by the NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre. We will create a network of innovators and produce a framework for innovation training, to be applied across R&I and the wider Trust.
- ◆ We will develop and maintain organograms for each R&I team across the trust and make them accessible. These should demonstrate key contacts within and outside the team, their roles and responsibilities. This should be easily accessible for all staff and should be updated annually.





## Work with partners to help people live happier, healthier lives

### Communicating with people and organisations outside MFT

Communication with those outside MFT is of pivotal importance to enhance the impact of our work and build fruitful partnerships with communities and organisations. Over the next five years, we will continually explore new and innovative ways to communicate about R&I with service users and the public, breaking down cultural and language barriers to maximise the effectiveness of our engagement with our diverse population.

The MFT R&I Communications team currently leads the Greater Manchester R&I Communications Strategy Group. We will maintain our support for them to continue in this role. This will continue to bring together communications leads from across the regional R&I ecosystem, including all NIHR hosted infrastructure.

#### Our Actions:

- We will revise and update our systems to communicate with partner organisations, ensuring that we have effective mechanisms for liaison between the leadership and all staff to share learning and maximise opportunities for collaboration.
- We will ensure that communication and dissemination of research findings is considered and resourced when applying for external grants.
- Working with the R&I Communications Strategy Group, we will complete an evaluation of how the collective R&I ecosystem is tackling and finding the answers to the local challenges faced by Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership and Greater Manchester combined Authority.
  - We will make sure that our R&I is visible to service users across the trust who are accessing our services, signposting to opportunities to get involved and communicating how our R&I have benefited the care and services that MFT provides.
- We will design and implement a system to seek feedback from service users, the public and representatives of our external partner organisations to help us to improve the way we communicate. We will report the themes that have emerged and how we have responded.



## Provide high quality, safe care with excellent outcomes and experience

5

We will develop, test and quickly adopt innovations, making the best possible use of data to benefit our service users and improve care

5

To make a positive difference for our future NHS, we must embrace innovations, service models, care pathways, treatments, tests and technologies that will push the frontiers of health and care. We understand the importance of investing in people, supporting innovators and inventors, and providing a conducive environment for the development of ideas. It is important that we support our innovators and partners in mapping efficient routes to adoption that will ensure the innovations we adopt have a robust evidence base, fulfil all regulatory requirements, and offer excellent value for the NHS. This includes capitalising on intellectual property, facilitating commercialisation, and ensuring innovations are supported comprehensively to maximise benefit for our diverse service users and communities.

We must also establish systems to horizon scan for emerging areas and technologies with the potential to improve the care that MFT provides. We will set out a transparent and reproducible framework to establish working groups, develop objectives and delivery plans, identify potential sources of internal and external funding, seek partnerships that will add value to our work, and ensure that MFT capitalises upon every opportunity to be at the forefront.

### A proactive approach to innovations

To achieve our objective, the MFT Innovation team must be well supported to grow and to thrive, delivering on key strategic initiatives that are important to develop our capacity and to drive positive change.

#### Our Actions:

- We will support our strategic initiatives including the Rare Conditions Centre, Clinical Data Science Unit, children's research initiatives and the Manchester Eye Research Centre to develop and flourish, increasing our capacity in strategically important areas.
- Working with other stakeholders across MFT, we will review our process for horizon scanning to identify innovations and external partners that may help us to improve the care and services that MFT provides.
- Each of our strategic initiatives will achieve full cost recovery.
- We will capitalise on the potential afforded by key innovative technologies that are identified as being of strategic importance to MFT including artificial intelligence, robotics, cell and gene therapies, wearable and implantable technology, and robotic process automation. To achieve this, we will develop working groups and/or infrastructure to proactively support horizon scanning, evaluation and adoption and to develop roadmaps to implementation.
- Each of our strategic initiatives will have leveraged sufficient external funding to ensure sustainability and growth.



## Provide high quality, safe care with excellent outcomes and experience

### Using the power of data, Hive and digital technology to benefit our patients and services

#### Our Actions:

- We will ensure that we maintain the highest standards of data security including achieving and maintaining ISO 27001 accreditation for the MFT Secure Data Environment and establishing robust practices for the processing and storage of data within it.
  - We will support colleagues in Pharmacy to implement full electronic prescribing for trial medications within Hive. We will implement a single 'business as usual' model for trials of medications.
  - We will develop standards of good practice to apply Hive for research purposes across MFT and the system.
  - We will work with Hive specialists to develop the use of available tools to improve participant identification and safety, and study data quality. We will ensure that R&I staff are kept up to date with advancements to ensure equity of access and good practice across MFT.
  - We will work with partners including Health Innovation Manchester to maximise the value of secure data environments for MFT, the region and the wider NHS.
  - We will enhance the knowledge and practical use of the Hive system across R&I staff and researchers to share good practice, have high quality directed training with relevant guidance and documentation.
  - We will maintain an R&I Hive Champions forum to share good practice and address issues.
  - We will continue to train and support R&I Hive builders and ensure that the build undertaken by them is to the highest quality.
  - We will develop and implement a framework to facilitate and govern access to MFT data for research and innovation purposes, encompassing all public and private stakeholders. The framework should include how MFT data is valued and accessed in an ethical, legal and transparent manner.
  - We will maximise the use of MyMFT to contact potential participants, communicate with current participants and ensure a good participant experience, whilst being cognisant of equity of access to research.
  - Maximise the offer to participate in relevant clinical trials to all MFT patients through active engagement. This will be achieved through a mix of opportunities including optimising the MyMFT portal where patients can be linked to a trial offer by generative AI.
  - We will expand the use of digital technology to assist with the expansion of digital site files for MFT-sponsored research, participant information and informed consent (electronic consent), data collection and follow-up, and we will use technology to make our research more accessible and inclusive for our diverse population.
  - We will maintain a robust system of access and governance, which includes patient views, and provides assurance to our service users.
- Our default approach to clinical studies will be entirely paperless, making special consideration and taking a proactive approach to address digital exclusion.
  - We will use data, digital technology and Hive to recognise and address health inequalities and barriers to fully inclusive research.
  - We will establish new ways to harness the power of data, digital technology, artificial intelligence, robotics and automation to maximise the quality, integrity, inclusiveness and efficiency of our research and innovation.



## Provide high quality, safe care with excellent outcomes and experience

6

We will constantly work to earn the trust of everyone who may be affected by our work, maintaining the highest ethical standards

6

Research and innovation must be guided by unwavering ethical principles. Our success relies on the alignment of our work with the values of our NHS trust, ensuring that every research endeavour is ethically sound, respects the rights and dignity of participants, and contributes positively to healthcare advancements.

We will commit to continually improving the transparency of R&I operations within MFT. To build and maintain trust within our work force, our processes must be consistent and well-defined. Embracing a positive and inclusive research culture, we will support our Chief and Principal Investigators to meet their responsibilities in relation to oversight of their research studies, care for their research participants and the integrity of the research data collected.

#### Our Actions:

- We will produce explanatory materials for MFT researchers and R&I staff to demonstrate how R&I finances operate, and how R&I finances can be utilised.
  - We will work to increase the transparency of our financial operations and promote the autonomy of individual research teams to manage their R&I income, while fulfilling our responsibility to maintain financial sustainability across MFT R&I.
- Recognising the diverse ways in which people access information, we will proactively ensure that our processes are easily accessible to those who need to know about them, and the findings of our research and innovation are accessible to end users and other relevant stakeholders. This should be openly available on the staff intranet and MFT internet site.
- We will develop new guidance for inclusive communications, recognising the importance of language, culture and accessibility. We will work with Vocal, community groups and partner charities to achieve this.



## Be the place where people enjoy working, learning and building a career

7

**We will create an inclusive and welcoming environment, encouraging and celebrating diversity in our leaders, our staff and the people who take part in our research**

7

Research consistently demonstrates that diverse teams foster creativity and innovation<sup>8</sup>. Embracing the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) in research ensures that studies are representative of the diverse populations they aim to serve. Inclusivity contributes to improved patient outcomes<sup>9</sup> and provides the psychological safety that allows staff to thrive<sup>10-11</sup>.

We recognise that many people from marginalised and under-served communities will feel that we should not claim to be inclusive when we still have substantial progress to make. As well as addressing health inequalities for our service users and local communities, we must also ensure that we work hard to address and reduce inequalities across all protected characteristics for all of our MFT staff.

Learning from and implementing MFT's Diversity Matters and the ED&I strategy produced by the MFT-hosted NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre and NIHR Manchester Clinical Research Facility (which we will fully support the delivery of), our vision for ED&I within R&I centres around three themes that emerged from the work informing that strategy. Our aim is to ensure that taking a proactive approach to ED&I is seen as core business for all R&I staff.

### People

#### Our Actions:

- A commitment to supporting ED&I relating to service users and colleagues from all protected characteristics will be affirmed in all new job/role descriptions within R&I.
- We will develop a set of written commitments to proactively promote and monitor the diversity of representation at all levels within and across R&I: within our leadership, within our wider work force, and among our research participants.
  - We will maintain our support for R&I staff to have dedicated, funded time to lead on the delivery of our ED&I strategy. This includes a dedicated lead for ED&I and a coordinator with dedicated time for ED&I. Our leaders should be able to show how they are proactively supporting ED&I as a foundation of what we do.
  - Our staff will be encouraged and supported to dedicate their time to initiatives promoting ED&I. All appraisals for R&I staff will include at least one objective relating to ED&I. Our ED&I lead/coordinator will continue to build strong working links with the trust ED&I team and will share examples of best practice with leaders and other colleagues in R&I.
  - We will ensure that we have robust systems to collate and analyse data relating to staff feedback on ED&I issues.



## Be the place where people enjoy working, learning and building a career

- We will work with patient and public groups (e.g., the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Research Advisory Group, BRAG); voluntary, community, social enterprise (VCSE) groups; and internal MFT networks (e.g., the staff LGBT group) to enhance our approach to ED&I. We will report back to the groups we have engaged with to demonstrate our progress, build trust and continually improve our approach.
  - We will continue our initiatives to promote the involvement of women in research and innovation, and we will implement systems to monitor our progress. We will identify the factors that matter most to women pursuing careers relating to research and innovation, and we will take proactive measures to address any barriers identified.
- We will review and report on the impact of our work in this area by analysing monitoring data, by surveying our R&I staff and affiliated researchers.
- We will report on our progress to diverse stakeholder groups including patient and public groups, staff groups and partner charities.
  - We will be able to demonstrate the actions we have taken to be proactively inclusive based on all protected characteristics and relevant additional factors, particularly for individuals and communities that have been poorly represented or marginalised.

### Processes

#### Our Actions:

- Working with the MFT ED&I team, we will maintain a calendar of ED&I activities, which we will support, participate in and communicate widely to staff working in R&I.
- All interview and appointment panels should demonstrate their commitment to ED&I. Job or role descriptions will seek to proactively encourage applications from under-served and/or marginalised groups including all protected characteristics.
- All internal funding panels will score all applications for their approach to ED&I
  - We will establish robust processes to ensure that ED&I is promoted at every level within R&I, as part our organisational culture.
  - We will establish mechanism(s) to share learning and identify examples of best practice for ED&I across the organisation, with and among our hosted R&I infrastructure and with key external partners including those represented within Health Innovation Manchester and Manchester Academic Health Science Centre, with relevant stakeholder voluntary and charity sector organisations, and with industry partners.
  - We will ensure that our programme of internal communications includes a regular celebration of our diversity through the sharing of stories, which allow our staff to communicate something about themselves to colleagues working across R&I.
- We will implement transparent mechanisms to monitor and report on our progress against our ED&I objectives.
- We will ensure that meaningful ED&I training is incorporated at induction, at annual appraisal, and within leadership training.
  - The academic training schemes, fellowship programmes and grants workshops that we deliver should include consideration of ED&I, with particular regard to inclusivity and novel methodological approaches to address poor representation of marginalised or minority groups.
- We will develop an ED&I toolkit for R&I, which can be used to ensure retention of learning within the organisation. The toolkit should provide information for those working at all levels within R&I, including senior leaders, ED&I champions and R&I staff.



## Be the place where people enjoy working, learning and building a career

8

We will inspire, train and support diverse people to build flourishing careers around research and innovation

8

### Protecting time for research and innovation

Over the next five years, we will continually learn from external stakeholders including other NHS trusts, sharing examples of best practice regarding training, capacity building and the protection of working time for R&I activity for all staff groups. We will work closely with our partner universities to agree strategic joint academic appointments with mutual benefit. We will also ensure that the processes for securing and monitoring the use of protected time for R&I purposes are transparent and accessible to all staff.

#### Our Actions:

- We will formally launch new guidance that has been agreed for the allocation of protected R&I time to medical consultants. This will provide a transparent description of the routes to securing protected R&I time and the criteria for review. It should ensure financial sustainability while also providing consultants with the support that they require to generate research ideas, work with relevant stakeholders including patient and public representatives, secure external funding, deliver health and care research alongside their other commitments and effectively communicate their findings.
- Working with internal and external stakeholders including the Manchester Clinical Academic Centre (MCAC) and our partner universities, we will produce MFT guidance for the allocation and use of R&I time within the job plans of health and social care professionals. The guidance will clearly outline how MFT will support our staff before, during and after externally funded awards.
  - We will work with our partner universities to share areas of priority, strength and unmet need and to continually develop new ways of building capacity and achieving our mutual objectives.
- We will launch an MFT-wide annual competition for pump-prime funding that will protect some of the paid time of the lead applicant to pursue external funding for R&I purposes.
- We will produce and implement new trust-wide guidance for the appointment, support and training of research fellows, in collaboration with partner universities and other external stakeholders.



## Be the place where people enjoy working, learning and building a career

### Helping people and teams to develop

Over the next five years, we will maintain support for the successful NIHR grant research assistant role and the grants support team, supporting project and fellowship applications and enhancing their quality. We will maintain and expand the NIHR grants workshop, increasing support for MFT staff who wish to apply for external grant and/or fellowship funding. We will also monitor and report on the number of applications for external funding submitted by MFT staff and their success rate.

#### Our Actions:

- We will provide specific support to teams that have high strategic importance for MFT and our service users/communities but a less established critical mass of researchers/innovators. This includes, for example, our Local Care Organisations, helping to drive forward research and innovation in areas such as community and social care. We will report on how we have supported these areas and the impact of that support on an annual basis.
  - We will seek the funding required to continue our successful bridging and capacity building fellowship scheme (formerly known as the Peter Mount and Houghton-Dunn schemes)
- We will support the growth of R&I in all areas, implementing a maturity matrix within our annual planning process to encourage self-assessment and benchmarking within research teams, and developing inter-disciplinary collaborations to develop R&I in poorly represented areas.
- We will build links with NIHR Incubators and the NIHR Academy, we will implement a system to routinely horizon scan for external funding opportunities and we will communicate and support those opportunities widely across MFT and with key stakeholders such as our university partners.
- We will increase both the success rate and the number of grant applications from researchers at all hospitals/Managed Clinical Services within MFT.
- We will increase the number of grant and fellowship applications from non-medical (health and social care professional) staff.
- We will develop and implement a mentorship programme for new investigators who are starting their R&I journey. This will go beyond Good Clinical Practice (GCP) and will complement existing training programmes to incorporate training in research design and methodology, ethics submissions, patient and public involvement and engagement and other material required for the conduct of high-quality research and innovation.
- We will develop a framework for supporting students and trainees to get more involved with our R&I. This will include the provision of opportunities around research delivery, dedicated support for fellowship applications and the showcasing of R&I careers, particularly with our partner universities and within our local communities.
- We will look to establish multi-professional training forums, enhancing dialogue and sharing learning. For example, we will work with stakeholders to determine the feasibility and value of establishing a multi-professional MFT R&I training forum.



## Be the place where people enjoy working, learning and building a career

### Looking after our staff

Throughout the next five years, we will continue to provide a wide range of staff wellbeing initiatives. In every R&I team across MFT, staff should be supported to undertake activities dedicated to wellbeing, within working time, at least twice per year. We will encourage and support our R&I staff to develop their careers, proactively promoting the full spectrum of opportunities available. We will commit to offering flexible working opportunities wherever possible, while recognising the importance of maintaining service provision and building strong interpersonal relationships through face-to-face contact. Importantly, we will also continually consider accessibility needs to maximise opportunities for our diverse work force.

#### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will update the systems by which we monitor, analyse and report data relating to staff wellbeing and retention. Data sources may include initiatives such as (or similar to) annual staff surveys, feedback forms and suggestion boxes, lessons from incident and excellence reports, annual mandatory stress risk assessment, feedback from Freedom to Speak Up guardians and champions, information from exit surveys and interviews and data on sickness and turnover from our people & performance dashboard.
- ◆ We will initiate a system for annual reporting describing the themes identified from the above analyses and how we have responded to drive improvements for staff wellbeing.
- ◆ To promote career development, we will implement a shadow management board for R&I staff who are early in their careers or seeking new career development opportunities. We will promote diverse representation within the shadow management board.
  - When R&I staff leave from their positions, we will continue to routinely offer exit interviews with line managers, and we will seek feedback in an exit survey. We will analyse themes from the exit interviews, and we will demonstrate how we have responded to the themes emerging in our annual report.
- ◆ We will review, update and optimise the training opportunities that are available for all staff working in R&I, updating current courses, making the best possible use of secondments, providing new opportunities to gain experience of R&I operations at all levels (for example, by attending management meetings as observers)
  - We will demonstrate how we have acted on any recommendations provided by the shadow management board.



## Ensure value for our patients and communities by making the best use of our resources

9

We will look after the environment, improving the ways that we work and researching new ways to protect our world while still delivering outstanding care

9

The NHS contributes 4% of the carbon footprint of the entire United Kingdom. Clinical trials themselves also have a substantial carbon footprint; on average, clinical trials have a carbon footprint that is equivalent to that of nine people in an entire year. The NHS has set out a commitment to have a net zero carbon footprint for the emissions that are directly under its control by 2040 and to have a net zero carbon footprint for all emissions that it can influence by 2045<sup>1</sup>. Research and innovation have a vital role to play if we are to achieve that.

Since 2022, MFT R&I has set out that a commitment to environmental sustainability is a key foundation of our work. We appointed a lead for environmental sustainability within R&I and we are delivering a programme of work to promote this. It is vital that we should maintain and build on this work over the next five years.

#### R&I Vision for Environmental Sustainability

Working with the MFT Sustainability team, with our hosted R&I infrastructure and key external partners, our vision for environmental sustainability sets out goals for environmental sustainability in two key areas set out below.

### Environmental sustainability in our working practice

We must ensure that R&I develops a culture where environmental sustainability is seen as everyone's business. We should also appoint advocates or leads with responsibility for specific initiatives, e.g., the Green Impact Scheme. We will recognise and celebrate the achievements of our staff in this regard. We will actively seek out collaborations, funding streams and innovations with a strong link or focus on sustainability. After making an intervention to promote environmental sustainability, we should quantify and communicate its effect.

#### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will finalise our R&I Sustainability Framework, which will detail specific areas of focus with measurable outputs, aiming to reduce the carbon footprint of R&I.
  - We will continue and expand upon our existing Sustainability Lead, Deputy Lead, and Advocate roles, with individuals being given protected time to devote to sustainability initiatives. We will review and evolve the structure of our R&I sustainability team.
  - A commitment to supporting sustainability initiatives should be affirmed in job / role descriptions within R&I.



**Ensure value for our patients and communities by making the best use of our resources**

- We will expand our carbon literacy training programme for R&I staff.
- Upon completion of carbon literacy training, R&I staff will be asked to make a pledge, affirming what they will do within their role to contribute to the fulfilment of our objectives around environmental sustainability. We will identify themes in the pledges, allowing staff to work together on green impact projects, supported by the R&I sustainability team.
- We will ensure that R&I is meaningfully represented in all relevant MFT sustainability initiatives including, for example, representation at the Climate Emergency Board and at the Sustainability Steering Group.
- ◆ We aim to have achieved full cost recovery for the protected time of the R&I sustainability team.
- ◆ We will develop and implement a framework for training in environmental sustainability. This will enable shared learning of best practice across the organisation while stimulating research questions and innovations and supporting grant applications.
- ◆ We will work with MFT procurement and the wider NHS to implement/develop a procurement framework with a standardised assessment tool and consideration of novel approaches to reduce our carbon footprint such as applying carbon budgets.
- We will work towards establishing a system that allows us to identify carbon hotspots within R&I (relating to our trials or working practices) and/or areas where specific interventions (such as using digital technology) may have particular impact in reducing our carbon footprint. These initiatives should then be prioritised for active intervention.

**Environmental sustainability in our health and care research and innovation**

We will support our innovators and industry partners to co-design more sustainable innovations for the future, meeting NHS sustainability targets.

**Our Actions:**

- ◆ All internal R&I funding applications will score applications for their approach to environmental sustainability. We will provide training for R&I Managers, coordinators and chief investigators to support this process.
- ◆ We will set out a framework for ethical partnership, which will be used to guide R&I collaborations and to ensure that the external partners we choose to work with share our commitment to environmental sustainability and either have or are developing a high level of maturity in that regard.
- ◆ All internal academic training schemes, fellowship programmes and grants workshops will include consideration of environmental sustainability.
- ◆ We will develop case studies of how we have supported the development of research questions and innovations centred around environmental sustainability and leveraged external funding to pursue them.
- Working with external partners, we will establish methods to quantify the impact our work has or will have on the carbon footprint of health and care pathways.

**10**

**Our research and innovation should be high quality, efficient, inclusive and accessible**

**10**

To drive positive change, our research and innovation must be of the highest quality. Good governance and ethical oversight are vital for achieving that. While robust processes are essential, we must also make them accessible, proportionate, pragmatic and efficient. This will encourage more people to get involved and will accelerate the pace of innovation in health and care for the benefit of our service users.

**High quality research and innovation**

**Our Actions:**

- We will continue to provide in-house methodological support for MFT investigators, and we will explore every opportunity to expand and develop this service. We will ensure that MFT methodologists have access to wider networks, training and support to flourish in their roles.
- ◆ To improve the accessibility of our research to MFT staff while also optimising adherence to R&I standard operating procedures (SOPs) and maximising integrity and quality, we will develop new training materials for chief investigators, principal investigators and research fellows. We will find new ways to communicate the content of SOPs in ways that are accessible to investigators, and new ways to support investigators through research setup and delivery.
- We will review the way that we manage research data, making full use of Hive and our forthcoming secure data environments, and supporting the use of preferred external data capture and management solutions that are fully compliant with all regulations.
- We will explore innovative ways to capture and manage our research data to promote both data quality/integrity and efficiency, including the use of routinely collected data and using technological solutions to assist with contemporaneous data capture.
- ◆ We will revise our induction and training materials for R&I staff relating to research governance, setup and delivery to promote, maintain and improve both quality and efficiency.



## Ensure value for our patients and communities by making the best use of our resources

### Maximising our efficiency

The ability to be agile and efficient is crucial for the success of R&I at MFT. With the increasing complexity of healthcare and of health and care research, it is imperative that we constantly focus on ways to improve the efficiency of an increasingly complex system. To achieve this, we will pay attention to the following. Wherever possible, we will identify processes that can be undertaken in parallel rather than in series. We will take a proportionate approach as standard, emulating the risk-based approach to study monitoring to allow more attention to be given to higher risk studies in setup, with lighter touch processes in place for low-risk projects.

To achieve these goals, we must continue to build and maintain good working relationships across all our teams in R&I. Where possible, we will take opportunities for periodic face to face meetings or summits to build rapport and understanding. We will maintain and continually improve the systems that we have in place to prioritise research. Decisions about capacity and capability should be made quickly after consultation with multi-professional stakeholders. Where it is not possible to support a proposed new study within a given research team, we will consider whether the study could open at another MFT site. If setup may reasonably be deferred, we will be transparent with research sponsors about the anticipated timeline. We will endeavour to make early decisions about which research projects we cannot support.

We will commit to constantly improving our efficiency regarding research setup and delivery. Quality improvement projects conducted by R&I staff must be encouraged, supported and incentivised. There should be clear mechanisms for suggestions and feedback, which should be collated and made visible to the R&I leadership. We must demonstrate how we are acting upon the feedback obtained to improve quality and efficiency. We will commit to pragmatism and proportionality, managing risks and devolving responsibilities where appropriate to improve efficiency.

#### Our Actions:

- We will complete a full review of all our processes for research setup. This will take account of the perspectives of all internal stakeholders. We will seek external peer review of our R&I setup and delivery processes. This will lead to a report detailing how we may maximise internal efficiency and reduce research setup times.
- We will review our system for supporting commercial research sponsors, guiding them through setup processes to reduce setup times and maintain full transparency.

- Wherever possible, we will reduce duplication of effort between teams. We will continue to work with external partners to identify the potential for regional or national approval to support and/or bypass local internal processes.
- We will support development of the roles, infrastructure and financial models required to enhance efficiency and optimise capacity within vital supporting services (including Pharmacy, Radiology and Laboratory Medicine).
- We will introduce a new system to seek feedback from our principal investigators and research sponsors. The feedback will be collated, analysed and presented at the R&I Management Board on an annual basis. We will use the feedback to drive positive change to R&I operations. The system established must embrace automation to reduce human resource requirements to maintain it.
- We will complete a review of how research is prioritised, set up, delivered and archived within individual teams, systematically involving all stakeholders across R&I. We will implement the recommendations.
- To understand our performance, we will review and improve our systems for monitoring granular data relating to research setup. Our systems should be automated wherever possible, reducing the demands on our human resource. They should enable us to monitor, for example, time for sponsor approval prior to submitting applications for regulatory approval; time to approval of amendments; setup times within supporting services such as pharmacy, radiology and laboratory medicine; response times from principal investigators; and we must be able to quantify any delays or pauses to participant recruitment during the conduct of our research.
- We will work with colleagues in Human Resources to reduce the turnaround time to make new appointments in R&I.
- We will review our processes for supporting clinical research delivery with temporary staff, e.g., secondments, students and temporary positions, and through agile and mobile roles, e.g., the cross-specialty research nursing team.
- Each stage of research setup and delivery, for categories of projects across the spectrum of R&I, will have an associated process map, which clearly sets out the responsibilities of each stakeholder and the target timelines associated with each step. The process maps will link to researcher road maps (see below).
- Within our review of processes, we will work with internal and external stakeholders to focus specifically on the management of low-risk studies (for example, staff questionnaires/interviews and retrospective studies using routinely collected data). We will use the findings to drive a pragmatic and proportionate approach to improve efficiency while maintaining quality.
- We will consider the potential for automation to improve our efficiency.
- We will review our processes regularly, collating feedback obtained from multi-professional stakeholders. Refinements to our processes will be ratified by the R&I Senior Leadership team.
- We will continue to monitor our progress through an internal audit cycle and the R&I dashboard (with targeted and periodic focus on individual R&I processes where there may be emerging bottlenecks).
- We will work with external partners, both regionally and nationally, to identify potential innovations and efficiencies in setup and delivery. This includes the NIHR Research Delivery Network and partners across Health Innovation Manchester.



## Ensure value for our patients and communities by making the best use of our resources

### Making Research and Innovation accessible

As healthcare increases in complexity over time, so do research and innovation in health and care. Our stakeholders have consistently voiced that it is now very difficult to undertake research in the NHS. We would now expect that it is likely to take two years from the time of conceiving an idea to recruiting the first participant to a clinical study.

This time is taken up by: preparing funding applications; awaiting decisions from funders; contracting; writing protocols and producing study documentation; undertaking patient and public involvement and engagement activities; preparing applications for regulatory approval; ensuring adherence to all relevant regulations; determining appropriate management of intellectual property; obtaining approvals from the sponsor, the Health Research Authority (HRA), the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) and other relevant bodies (e.g., Medicine and Health Regulatory Authority [MHRA], Confidentiality Advisory Group [CAG]); agreeing on an appropriate delivery plan; ensuring appropriate training for all relevant staff; and ensuring good governance arrangements are in place (e.g., site file, Trial Steering Committee, Data Monitoring and Safety Committee, Trial Management Group). Sometimes, researchers are unaware of all the necessary steps at the outset. At other times, delivery is compromised by unanticipated events such as staff turnover.

Given the obvious challenges to our efficiency, we must constantly strive to make research and innovation easier to lead and deliver without compromising on its quality. We must be pragmatic, and we must always seek to identify potential innovations and efficiencies that would enhance delivery without compromising safety. We should work closely with our partner organisations to reduce duplication and learn from each other.

Throughout the next five years, we will continually work to earn the trust of principal investigators, colleagues across MFT and individual R&I teams by maximising the transparency of R&I finances. We will work to ensure that R&I teams have a good understanding of how the R&I income they generate can be used to benefit their teams and future work. We will embrace and encourage the use of platform research designs to improve efficiency and build capacity



## Ensure value for our patients and communities by making the best use of our resources

### Our Actions:

- We will publish updated standard processes for managing R&I finances within Research Support Units, considering the potential for automation to enhance streamlining.
- We will develop and publish transparent and accessible research road maps for our researchers. These road maps should set out the precise requirements to set up a research project of any given type (e.g., randomised controlled trial, diagnostic test accuracy, prospective cohort, retrospective cohort, qualitative study, etc.). These should be revised and updated every five years or in the event of substantial developments in the field that would justify an early update.
- We will update our database of template answers that may be used in research application forms (e.g., IRAS form for different study types), making this easily accessible to chief investigators and study coordinators. The resource should be linked to from the research road maps and should be openly accessible to all MFT staff who wish to conduct research. This may be stored within template site files, complete with a full set of template documents for a given study type.
- We will expand upon our database of template study documents using examples from previous studies, which can be used by other MFT researchers, and we will enhance our communications to ensure that chief investigators and study coordinators are aware of this resource and how to access it. All patient-facing documents should have been subjected to review by patient and public representatives, which will be resourced either by MFT R&I or using individual study budgets. We will increase our use of digital technologies and reduce our reliance on paper.
- We will capitalise on the potential for innovative technologies including automation and artificial intelligence to improve our efficiency, for example by streamlining the preparation of research applications and research setup processes. To achieve this, we will complete a review of how these technologies may be systematically utilised and we will implement the findings.





## Deliver world-class research and innovation that improves people's lives

11

**We will excel as a host and sponsor, maintaining and where appropriate further expanding our diverse spectrum of research and innovation infrastructure, programmes and personal awards**

11

One of the most important R&I functions of MFT is to host and sponsor R&I projects, programmes, fellowships and infrastructure. In fulfilling these functions, we generate the investment that allows us to build capacity and deliver the exciting research and innovation that will drive improvements for service users and the NHS.

### Our hosted R&I infrastructure

#### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will provide the support and oversight required for our hosted R&I infrastructure to fulfil all agreed annual objectives. This requires attention to our processes, estates and equipment.
  - We will ensure support the re-bidding process for the NIHR Greater Manchester Applied Research Collaborative.
  - We will work with colleagues across MFT to ensure R&I representation at all decision-making space committees / meetings and we will work with colleagues across MFT to ensure that our teams have the space and physical resources they require to fulfil our R&I objectives.
- ◆ We will review the function of the successful Greater Manchester NIHR R&I Oversight Board, ensuring that the terms of reference and membership are optimal.
  - We aim to host a thriving and expanding portfolio of R&I infrastructure to align with our principles and objectives. We will wholeheartedly support future bids that will add value for MFT, our region, our partners, our service users and our communities.
- ◆ We will measure and monitor the time to initiation of external funding awards in line with contractual obligations and we will consistently meet our milestones in at least 90% of external awards.



## Deliver world-class research and innovation that improves people's lives

### Our sponsored studies

Throughout the coming years, we will demonstrate how we regularly review and update our processes for making sponsorship decisions ensuring that they are optimally lean, proportionate and agile, maximising opportunity for MFT researchers while working within the capacity of our teams to delivery high quality research.

#### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will assure the quality of our research by demonstrating ongoing compliance with all regulatory requirements and the absence of any major findings at regulatory inspections. We will be able to continually demonstrate our preparedness for regulatory inspections.
- ◆ We will work to ensure that at least 85% of our sponsored studies are completed to time and target in each financial year.
  - We will work with partner organisations across the region and across the country to share learning and, wherever possible, to make our processes more efficient, reducing duplication.
  - We will ensure that every research team across MFT has an established and agile process for the prioritisation of research involving multi-professional teams. MFT sponsored studies with external funding will be our highest priority for delivery, followed by hosted industry sponsored studies and hosted studies that are aligned with our hosted NIHR infrastructure or support internal capacity building. Individual research teams will be given autonomy to prioritise their own workload within this framework.
- ◆ Working with external stakeholders such as the Health Research Authority, we will develop and implement a new framework for a proportionate and risk-based approach to research sponsorship, including the provision of lighter touch processes for lower risk studies such as staff interviews.
  - Working with partner organisations, we will respond to the demands of our research pipeline, including consideration of how we may best support and/or sponsor phase 1 trials, medical device trials, advanced therapy investigational medicinal product (ATIMP) trials and trials relating to artificial intelligence.
  - We will develop an MFT study management team, which will bring together study coordinators, methodologists and data managers/scientists to support multi-centre MFT sponsored studies that are not being supported by a Clinical Trials Unit. We will also work with external partners across Manchester Academic Health Science Centre (MAHSC) to develop the systems that will replace the Manchester Clinical Trials Unit.



## Deliver world-class research and innovation that improves people's lives

### Our hosted studies

#### Our Actions:

- ◆ Regarding the NIHR Research Delivery Network portfolio, every year MFT should continue to be among the top five NHS trusts nationally for the number of active industry sponsored trials, total recruitment to industry sponsored trials and completion of recruitment to time and target.
- ◆ Every year, MFT should be the top performing trust within the Northwest NIHR Regional Research Delivery Network for total recruitment and completion of studies to time and target.
  - We will review, tailor and implement relevant recommendations from national initiatives such as the O'Shaughnessy report.
  - We will work with colleagues across MFT to ensure adequate access to supporting services for R&I including pharmacy, radiology, laboratory medicine and inpatient beds.
- ◆ We will further develop our ability to measure the delivery capacity of research teams, including the use of intensity tools.
  - We will agree transparent models to manage R&I finances with our supporting services across MFT.
  - We will work with supporting services to evolve our processes for study setup, ensuring that they are optimally lean and proportionate.
- ◆ Embracing automation to reduce the demands on human resource, we will develop a system to invite feedback from commercial research sponsors, and we will report on how we have responded to that feedback every year.
  - We will increase our income from commercial trial delivery by 10% every year.



## Deliver world-class research and innovation that improves people's lives

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Research and innovation should be seen as everyone's business. We will support diverse people to get involved, promoting the growth of R&I across all areas of the trust to make it visible, recognised and rewarded

12

The benefits of being research active for NHS organisations and our service users are clear: research active hospitals have lower mortality rates<sup>5</sup>, service users have more confidence in staff<sup>6</sup>, and have a happier work force<sup>7</sup>. The NHS Constitution requires that we inform service users of research studies in which they may be eligible to participate. It is therefore important that we continually focus on developing R&I activities across the entire trust, supporting our staff and service users to get involved and creating a culture where research and innovation are seen as core business for the trust.

Over the next five years, we will continue to develop the ways that we make our research and visible to our service users and local communities. We will communicate how they may take opportunities to get involved.

#### Our Actions:

- ◆ We will agree a mechanism to ensure trust-wide accountability for R&I performance, with particular regard to the inclusion of R&I in MFT-wide Integrated Performance Report (IPR) metrics.
  - We will support every clinical department to make their research and innovation visible, for example, using public displays or boards. Throughout these activities, we will ensure that we are fully inclusive, proactively engaging with marginalised groups.
  - We will work with colleagues across MFT to enhance the visibility of research and innovation to our staff. This includes advertising opportunities to get involved, whether that should involve leading, delivering or supporting research and innovation.
  - We will work with colleagues across MFT to establish R&I as a standing item on board meetings within the trust.
- ◆ We will support the production of appraisal guidance for R&I objectives for all MFT staff.
- ◆ We will engage with every clinical department to ensure that they have named leads and/or links for R&I, both clinical and non-clinical. The relevant research delivery teams should report on how they are working with the lead / link people in their clinical departments; and the lead / link people within clinical departments should report on what they have been doing to support and promote R&I within their area.



## Summary

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This strategy sets out a comprehensive and ambitious programme of work spanning the next five years.

By fulfilling the commitments set out in this document, we will ensure that our research and innovation are driven by the needs of our diverse service users, communities and staff; that our processes are lean, agile and efficient while maintaining quality and integrity; that we maximise development opportunities, wellbeing and retention for our staff; and that we always abide by our principles, notably including the foundations of equality, diversity, inclusion, environmental sustainability with a commitment to maintaining the highest possible ethical standards. The strategy is intended to be a living document. This means that we recognise it will need to evolve and adapt over the next five years in line with the changing needs of our service users, communities and the NHS. We hope that all our stakeholders will feel a sense of connection with our vision, will help us to deliver on our objectives and will ensure that MFT remains a world leading organisation for research and innovation in health and care.

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