

Meeting:	NHS Grampian Board Meeting
Meeting date:	13 June 2024
Item Number:	9
Title:	R&D strategy 2024-29
Responsible Executive:	Professor Nick Fluck, Medical Director
Report Author:	Professor Seshadri Vasan, R&D Director

1 Purpose and recommendations

This is presented to the Board for:

- Endorsement of the NHSG Research and Development (R&D) strategy 2024-29 and delivery plan approach and timescale

This report relates to:

- Embedding R&D in NHS Grampian Strategy: Plan for the Future - People, Places and Pathways
- Approach and timescale for the R&D strategy 2024-29 delivery plan, which will feed into the Board Annual Delivery Plan

This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition:

- Effective

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

As the previous R&D strategy 2019-23 ‘Our Commitment to Research’ expired on 31 March 2023, the new R&D Director who joined NHS Grampian in October 2023 has prioritised the development of a new strategy for 2024-29 (**Appendix 1**), and outlined the approach and timescale for its delivery plan. Going beyond just expressing our commitment, it emphasises the need to embed R&D in health service delivery and track key performance metrics and outcomes. It is to be viewed as contextualisation and implementation of the NHSG Board’s Strategy (Plan for the Future) and Sections (People, Places, Pathways) for the R&D domain.

2.2 Background

The previous strategy, which was 24 pages long, created a solid foundation by expressing our commitment to research. NHS Grampian conducted a well-publicised stakeholder consultation from 1 December 2023 to 31 January 2024. The feedback indicated a desire for a shorter strategy document with key performance metrics and clearer outcomes, and a greater stakeholder involvement in the development of the strategy and its delivery plan. Hitherto, our commitment to research has been viewed primarily from a workforce lens – to facilitate staff recruitment, retention and self-actualisation by providing a varied and interesting workload. The new strategy reiterates such benefits to staff, but places the focus

on the importance of embedding R&D in health service delivery to deliver outcomes better and faster for our patients and populations (**Appendix 1**).

Global thought leaders recommend that an organisation does not have multiple documents called 'Strategy', and that a clear distinction is made between strategy and planning. Accordingly, this 1-page strategy document is to be seen as part of the overarching NHS Grampian Strategy, contextualising and implementing the Board's Plan for the Future for the R&D domain. A delivery plan will be developed with stakeholders, and will feed into the Board Annual Delivery Plan. The previous strategy had a useful 'brochure' element, and this will be developed as a separate document with our academic partners, University of Aberdeen and Robert Gordon University.

2.3 Assessment

The R&D strategy closely follows the three Sections (People, Places, Pathways) of our Plan for the Future. To embed R&D in service delivery, people naturally come first. We shall improve the NHSG's research culture, monitor EDI (equality, diversity, inclusion) and performance, and promote PPIE (patient and public involvement and engagement). Places we work from and work with come next. We shall address our site issues, make the R&D Office the go-to space for collaboration, and work with industry, innovators as well as public and third sector partners. Pathways to achieve our strategy is the last but not the least. We wish to look at trebling recruitment, leverage advances in AI (artificial intelligence), genomics and data science, address career pathways for all, and develop at least new areas of excellence.

2.3.1 People (PE)

This section has four strategic objectives PE1-PE4.

- PE1 *Research Culture* – Enabling a positive research culture and careers across all clinical and care services
- PE2 *Equality Diversity Inclusion* – Improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) of all those, and wanting to be, involved in R&D
- PE3 *Monitor Performance* – Monitoring our performance against EDI metrics, outcomes and impact
- PE4 *Patients & Public* – Promoting Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement

2.3.2 Places (PL)

This section has four strategic objectives PL1-PL4.

- PL1 *Fewer Better Sites* – Modernising and consolidating our 16 clinical research facilities and 6 office locations
- PL2 *Collaborative Spaces* – Engaging physical and virtual collaborative spaces to facilitate R&D
- PL3 *Industry & Innovators* – Collaborating with UK universities, industry, Innovation Hubs, InnoScot Health, Opportunity North East
- PL4 *Deliver with Partners* – Delivering R&D with regional Health Boards, Health & Social Care Partnerships, public health and third sectors

2.3.3 Pathways (PA)

This section has four strategic objectives PA1-PA4.

- PA1 *Trebling Recruitment* – Trebling recruitment into clinical studies to meet ‘The Future of Clinical Research Delivery’
- PA2 *Leveraging AI/Big Data* – Leveraging Artificial Intelligence, Big Data and Genomics across clinical and care pathways
- PA3 *Careers Pathways* – Incentivising and developing R&D career pathways for all health and care professions
- PA4 *Areas of Excellence* – Shaping two new centres of UK-wide excellence while maintaining our eminence in existing areas

2.3.4 Delivery Plan and Financial Impact

The new R&D strategy has been developed by carefully considering feedback from the stakeholder survey, and three iterations of presentations to the Clinical Board and other relevant forums. All stakeholders have been invited to an inaugural deep-dive workshop at the University of Aberdeen (25 June 2024, 10 am – 2 pm) and a final workshop at the Robert Gordon University (17 December 2024, 10 am – 2 pm). These workshops will be independently facilitated by Dr Priti Singh (consultant psychiatrist and Chief Scientist Office innovation fellow) and Dr Deborah Baldie (lead nurse for research and practice development, and long-standing member of the Research Delivery Group).

A number of short life working groups (SLWGs) will be formed in the inaugural workshop. Each SLWG’s co-chairs (one from R&D Office, one external) will be identified and its terms of reference (remit, scope, membership, meeting frequency, timetable for delivery) agreed. The outputs of all SLWGs will be presented and harmonised in the final workshop. The ninth Grampian Research Conference (4-5 October 2024, ONE BioHub) could provide another opportunity for the SLWGs to discuss progress. The output of each SLWG will follow the same template as the Board Annual Delivery Plan so it can feed into it. One SLWG, co-led by Dr Baldie (NHS Grampian), Professor Ian Stansfield (University of Aberdeen) and Professor Kay Cooper (Robert Gordon University), will collate and classify all Grampian research investigators by NHS Research Scotland specialties, so their output will be a public brochure.

The financial impact of delivering this strategy can only be quantified after the SLWGs have made their recommendations, on or before the final workshop in December 2024.

2.4 Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- **Endorsement** – endorse the NHSG Research and Development (R&D) strategy 2024-29 and delivery plan approach and timescale

Additional recommendation to be added if appropriate:

- **Future reporting** – biennial progress report for September 2026 Board Meeting
- **Ad hoc reporting** – if the financial impact for delivery is deemed significant, then the Medical Director may bring this to the attention of the Board as appropriate

3 Appendix

The following appendix is included with this report:

- Appendix 1 – R&D strategy 2024-29 (*Embedding R&D in Plan for the Future*)