

# Research at UHCW

A lay summary of our Research Strategy  
2022 – 2026

*With thanks to UHCW Research Champions Jane Sausman and Evelyn Waddell, who were instrumental in the development of this document.*



# Our Vision

To conduct transformational and impactful research that empowers UHCW staff to be truly world-class in their practice

# Our Mission

Inspiring research innovation and collaboration for the benefit of our patients and the communities we serve

## Introduction

Why the 2022-2026 UHCW Research & Development Strategy is important for patients and the public:

- Research enables us to move forward and find new, more effective treatments.
- Patients attending hospitals which conduct research have been shown to respond better to care and treatment.
- Our new strategy will enable us to deliver the highest quality of care to our patients, relatives and carers, and wider community.
- The strategy will help us to get more funding for research and to increase research activity across Coventry University Hospital and the Hospital of St Cross in Rugby.

Each year, over 5,000 people are recruited to take part in research studies at UHCW. Our 2022-2026 Research Strategy builds on this existing research to offer more people the opportunity to take part in world-class research at UHCW.

## Our Strategy

### 1) Further develop the research culture at UHCW

In the past, UHCW has led the way by creating a research culture which encourages and supports our staff to do research. Our well-established Research and Development Team support UHCW staff to develop and deliver high-quality research. Our new strategy aims to develop this positive research culture further for the benefit of our staff, patients, and the public.

#### 1.1) Nurture the research culture at UHCW

To develop our research culture we will encourage, support, and nurture a new generation of staff from different backgrounds and healthcare professions to be involved in and lead research at UHCW.

We have already started doing this through our **Centre for Care Excellence**, which is a collaboration between UHCW and Coventry University. Launched in 2020, the

Centre for Care Excellence aims to empower nurses, midwives, and allied health professionals, such as physiotherapists and dietitians, to develop ideas to improve patient care through research.

To support this further, the new Research Strategy includes our **'Research for All'** initiative, which aims to encourage all staff at UHCW to be involved in research. This will include:

- Supporting and recognising staff involved in research, or wishing to become involved, so they can take part in research as part of their roles.
- Enabling more staff from underrepresented groups to apply for research funding.

## 1.2) Raise the profile of research

To raise the profile of the world-class research conducted at UHCW and how it can improve patient care, we will further engage with staff, patients, and the public. This will be supported by our UHCW Research Champions who raise awareness of research from a patient perspective.

Working with our staff will enable us to promote the 'Research for All' initiative, encouraging staff to become involved in research. It will also allow us to ensure staff use the evidence from research in their patients' care. Staff engagement will be enhanced by:

- Including research in the induction process for new staff.
- Developing an "Introduction to Research" course for all staff and other training courses to support the workforce.

We will engage with patients and the public to ensure they can take part in research which is important to them. This will include further developing our Patient and Public Involvement initiatives to ensure the patient's voice is at the centre of the research that we do.

## 2) Work with other organisations

Working with a wide range of organisations will provide staff, patients, and the public more opportunities to be involved in research and give them access to new technology and treatments. These organisations include:

- Universities
- Other NHS organisations
- Integrated Care Systems (partnerships of health and care organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined services to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area)
- Industry (such as pharmaceutical and medical device companies)

We want to not only work with organisations in the UK but those around the world to give our staff, patients and the public access to the best research available. To do this we will make it easier to plan, set-up and conduct research with other organisations.

### 3) Create the best environment for research

Making sure we have the best environment to conduct research is key to delivering world-class research. This includes the physical space we have for research and the ways we support staff to make research happen.

#### 3.1 Space for research

We already have some dedicated space for research at UHCW; this includes opening a brand-new Inpatient Research Unit in 2022 as part of our Clinical Research Facility. The Inpatient Research Unit specialises in research which needs participants to stay in hospital overnight. These research studies are normally investigating products at the very start of their development. We will increase the number of these studies at UHCW over the next 5 years. This will provide more opportunity for staff, patients, and healthy volunteers to get involved in research on brand-new drugs and medical devices at a very early stage of development.

#### 3.2 Creation of specialised research units and institutes

To support research at UHCW we will create specialised 'Units' and 'Institutes for Excellence'. These will enhance the research culture, making research central to the routine care of our patients and giving every patient an opportunity to take part in research.

The Institutes for Excellence will focus on areas identified as priorities for our patients, local communities, national healthcare, and other organisations we work with. With plans for more Institutes in other areas of priority in the future, the first Institutes to be developed are:

- **Institute for Precision Diagnostic & Translational Medicine** will bring together scientists, clinicians, and academics to develop and validate new approaches using digital technology to help prevent, predict, diagnose, and treat disease.
- **Institute for Cardio-Metabolic Medicine** will focus on research into cardiovascular disease (disease relating to the heart and blood vessels), metabolic diseases (diseases that disrupt normal metabolism; the chemical reactions in the body's cells that change food into energy), cardiology (diseases and abnormalities of the heart) and renal medicine, transplant and dialysis.
- **Institute for Health Equity & Social Care** will develop expertise in health inequalities that impact negatively on the health of people living in different parts of Coventry & Warwickshire. It will focus on research which reduces inequalities (e.g., in patient access and experience of health care services), improve population health outcomes (e.g., looking at the impact of programmes that aim to reduce smoking) and improve outcomes for vulnerable groups (e.g., people from poorer areas of towns and cities).
- **Institute for Applied & Translational Technologies in Surgery** will bring together clinicians and academics to focus on developing new technologies to improve surgical interventions (e.g., robotic surgery) and improved programmes to



better prepare patients for surgery or improve patient outcomes following surgery. There will also be a focus on trauma (unexpected and serious injury) to develop research expertise in accidents and emergencies.

Specialised Units will be created to support the work of the Institutes for Excellence and other research at UHCW.

- The **Health Inequality Research Unit** will support research into reducing the unfair and avoidable differences in both physical and mental health across the population, known as health inequalities.
- The **Digital and Data Driven Research Unit** will support and develop digital health research, enabling world-class leading digital research that benefits patients, healthcare services and wider society. The Unit will work closely to build partnerships with other health, social, academic, and industrial organisations, ensuring the patient is always at the centre of those collaborations.

## What next?

Moving forward, our goals include the following:

- Further developing our work on public and patient involvement in research to ensure that we conduct high quality, relevant research.
- Through effective training and support, to fulfil the potential of our research workforce. Providing staff with the necessary skills and confidence will enable them to conduct research studies which address clinical needs and to secure funding for further research. Our ultimate aim is for all clinical areas to conduct research.
- Further developing our existing research partnerships with Warwick and Coventry Universities and NHS organisations in the West Midlands. We will also work with other organisations in the UK and internationally to enable the sharing of facilities and expertise. This collaboration will enable larger, more complex studies to be conducted on the development, prevention, and treatment of diseases, leading to improvements in the health of our patients and the wider public.

The full version of the UHCW Research Strategy can be found at <https://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/leading-research/about-us/>