

**Universities' Report**  
**to**  
**STHFT Board of Directors – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

**UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD – PROFESSOR TONY WEETMAN**

1. *INSIGNEO*

In previous reports I mentioned that the £10m Polaris project (£3m from University; £7m from MRC and BHF) of Professors Jim Wild and Paul Griffiths and their colleagues. The project is on schedule and the major building works in SIMFANI and Claremont Crescent (Digital Disease Phenotyping lab) will be complete at the end of January. The old 1.5T MR scanner is being taken out and replaced with a new scanner. An extension to the project is that the old scanner is to be placed in a mobile unit using MRC monies to provide further capacity for scanning. This is a joint STH/UOS project. The mobile unit will be commissioned in time for academic year 2016/17.

2. *Connected Health Cities*

This is a £20m project announced by the Chancellor and negotiated through the Northern Health Science Alliance. Sheffield has made a significant contribution to one of the four regional proposals 'Connected Yorkshire (cYorkshire)'. This will utilize cross-regional collaboration to produce learning health systems through data linking in our connected health region, and provide a shared platform for developing and testing innovative approaches to improve health and wellbeing. The aim of this programme is to demonstrate the feasibility and utility of linked health data.

cYorkshire will provide a population data laboratory (an 'Ark') by linking data from Bradford and Sheffield to demonstrate a large scale collaborative approach to the development of a connected health region. The University of Leeds will provide analytical and warehouse infrastructure through the newly established Leeds Institute for Data Analytics. The University of York will provide epidemiological and health services research expertise to support how data linkage can transform the region. The objectives are as follows:

- To develop a regional informatics platform that unites the five Yorkshire cities in harnessing the potential of the health informatics revolution
- To test different models and share the lessons of success (and of failure) in developing learning health systems in five different cities
- To put patients and communities at the centre of decision-making on data linking and data sharing
- To host innovative methodologies in linking data across health, education and social services to inform and transform delivery of healthcare
- To build regional capacity in health informatics as a driver for growth in health and wealth
- To work closely with the other North of England Connected Health Cities to identify and share good practice

3. *MRC Doctoral Training Programme*

As a further example of successful collaboration, the Universities of Newcastle, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield ("Discovery Medicine North") were recently awarded a prestigious MRC Doctoral Training Partnership on the theme of "Discovery Medicine Across the Lifecourse". With matched funding from the four partners, this funds 24 studentships each year across the network at Home/EU or international rates for 3.5 years. We are now inviting applications

from potential supervisors for non-clinical PhD student projects to start in October 2016. A further bid to the Wellcome Trust for studentships is in train.

#### 4. *Comprehensive Spending Review and Green Paper*

In terms of the future of health education, the Spending Review announced the following:

'The Spending Review reforms the funding system for health students by replacing grants with student loans and abolishing the cap on the number of student places for nursing, midwifery and allied health subjects. The current grant system means that there is a cap on student nurses and over half of all applicants to nursing courses are turned away. This reform will enable universities to provide up to 10,000 additional nursing and other health professional training places this Parliament. This will ensure that there are enough nurses for the NHS while cutting the current reliance on expensive agency staff. The move to loans will also mean access to 25% more financial support for health students during their studies. The government will work with key stakeholders to implement the reforms.'

It is understood that the government will carry out a consultation on these reforms in early 2016, with a view to implementation by 2017, but the details are yet to be announced on this. We understand that the new system will cover both tuition and maintenance costs and further details are expected to emerge in the coming months and will be confirmed in HEFCE's grant letter and the forthcoming consultation.

The Green Paper *Higher education: teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice* sets out proposals to change the higher education landscape and seeks views on proposals to:

- introduce a Teaching Excellence Framework that will deliver better value for money for students, employers and taxpayers
- increase access and success in higher education participation for those from disadvantaged and under-represented groups
- establish a new Office for Students to promote the student interest and ensure value for money, and to reduce the regulatory burden on the sector

The consultation also considers the implications of the proposals on the research landscape, the most important feature being the possible creation of a single overarching Research Council, with the concern that the current dual support mechanism for research funding would come under this new body (rather than through the current research councils and HEFCE separately). It will be vital to maintain the strong links between the MRC, NIHR and the Wellcome Trust in any new arrangements.

#### 5. *Biomedical Research Centres*

A new, open competition for NIHR Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) funding has been launched (there will no longer be Biomedical Research Units). NHS organisations in England, in collaboration with their University partner, are invited to submit a Pre-qualifying Questionnaire by mid-February 2016. All applications will be reviewed by an independent International Selection Panel who will make recommendations on Biomedical Research Centre designation and funding. The NIHR BRCs will be funded to support people- and/or patient-focused early translational (experimental medicine) research, the aim of which is to translate discoveries from basic/discovery science into clinical research, and through to benefits for patients, the health system and for broader economic gain. The scheme aims to provide NIHR BRC funding for NHS/University partnerships in England that have a very substantial portfolio of world-class biomedical research across either a range of clinical or research areas, or in a specific clinical or research area. In all cases NIHR BRCs will

contain substantial existing critical mass, a significant number of researcher leaders, and a wide range of underpinning facilities. Funding to the NHS partner is over a five year period, from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022. Work is underway to identify areas of strength in Sheffield for the Questionnaire.

#### *6. Faculty Positions*

I stepped down as Faculty Pro Vice Chancellor at the end of December 2015 and Professor Dame Pamela Shaw has taken over as the new PVC. It has been agreed that I will remain as the University's representative on the Trust Board until the end of April 2016, to allow Professor Shaw time to rearrange her clinical and research commitments before she takes over this position too.

## **SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY - PROFESSOR KAREN BRYAN**

### **Advanced Wellness Research Centre (AWRC)**

Recent developments have been the appointment of Professor Steve Haake as Director of the AWRC. At the October conference, AWRC announced Westfield Health as its second commercial partner. The post of Business Development Manager should be filled early in the New Year.

### **Institute for Health and Wellbeing Research**

The SHU Wellness project has continued to win new business and will deliver further wellness-related activities funded by Westfield Health and Health Education England. Sport, exercise and physical activity continues to be a valuable source of media coverage for the University with notable stories based on research since August including:

- the economic impact of the Ryder Cup;
- goal line technology in football;
- exercise and the Mediterranean diet;
- outdoor recreation as a driver for growth;
- legislation and sugary drinks and obesity; and
- doping in athletics following exposure of corruption within the IAAF and Russian Athletics Federation.

Dr Jeff Breckon is delivering a series of workshops on Motivational Interviewing with clinical teams from the region. These workshops will be held early 2016 in addition to workforce development programmes with IAPT services in the UK and health professionals across Ireland.

Health Research is building on the maternal health theme with recent partnership projects funded by the Medical Research Council, the projects concern the "Impacts of Demand Side financing instruments on the Continuum of Care for Maternal and Child Health in India and Bangladesh", and 'Diet in teenage pregnancy' led by Professor Hora Soltani'. Professor Karen Collins is leading a Cancer Research Interest group at SHU which is engaging researchers from across the Research Institute to promote future collaborations, activities, synergies and partnerships amongst staff. The group will also be arranging a faculty cancer showcase event in 2016.

The Orthopaedic Research Society Spine Section hosted its first webinar on "Cell and Organ Based Culture Conditions of the Intervertebral Disc" on October 28, led by Dr Christine Le Maitre from the Biomolecular Research Centre.

### **Health Professional Education**

Six performances of the play about dementia 'Grandma Remember Me' were held this year, with over 800 of our new healthcare students seeing the play, which challenges their perception of dementia.

Curtis Parker Milnes, a radiotherapy student was awarded student of the year by the College of Radiography.

A very successful event to celebrate 25 years of OT at SHU was held recently welcoming back old students and staff.

Work undertaken to develop staff in a whole team approach to supporting patients with their rehabilitation in a rehabilitation ward received mention from the CQC as 'exemplary practice'.

The NMC monitoring visit on 1-3rd December focused on mental health and learning difficulty courses was very successful with all standards met and two areas for further enhancement were noted. A postgraduate diploma course will be validated in December to commence in September 2016.