

Executive Summary

Report to the Board of Directors Being Held on 28th July 2020

Subject	Clinical Research Network Yorkshire and Humber (CRN Y&H) Annual Report 2019-20
Supporting TEG Member	Sandi Carman, Assistant Chief Executive
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Status¹	Agree

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (STHFT), as Host organisation of the CRN Y&H, is contractually required to submit an Annual Report each year, detailing the work undertaken across the Network in the previous financial period against the Annual Plan. However due to the current COVID 19 pandemic this requirement has been suspended and the annual report has been replaced by a three page high level summary report. The attached report is the Annual Summary Report for 2019/20, which has now been submitted (18 May 2020) to the national CRN Coordinating Centre – as required by the contract this report is also submitted to the Board of Directors.

The purpose of the Annual Report is to provide the Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre (CRNCC) with an outline of the work undertaken for the CRN Y&H, against the 2019/20 annual delivery plan. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the delivery of the Plan for Sheffield Teaching Hospitals as the host of the contract.

The Host Director, CRN Y&H Clinical Director and Chief Operating Officer will be presenting the report to the CRNCC as part of the LCRN Annual Performance Review Meetings on 30 July 2020.

The financial outturn figures 2019/20 for CRN Y&H are in the process of being finalised. These will be submitted to the BoD in due course.

KEY POINTS

The attached report consists of a high level summary report of key highlights throughout the year including performance against the Networks high level objectives. The report also details the Networks response to the COVID 19 pandemic which impacted the networks business in quarter four.

IMPLICATIONS²

AIM OF THE STHFT CORPORATE STRATEGY 2017-2020		TICK AS APPROPRIATE
1	Deliver the Best Clinical Outcomes	
2	Provide Patient Centred Services	
3	Employ Caring and Cared for Staff	
4	Spend Public Money Wisely	
5	Deliver Excellent Research, Education & Innovation	✓

RECOMMENDATIONS

BoD is asked to AGREE the Clinical Research Network Yorkshire and Humber (CRN Y&H) Annual Report 2019-20.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Meeting	Date	Approved Y/N
Y&H CRN Executive	12 May 2020	Y

TEG	8th July 2020	Y
Board of Directors	28th July 2020	

¹ Status: A = Approval
 A* = Approval & Requiring Board Approval
 D = Debate
 N = Note

² Against the five aims of the STHFT Corporate Strategy 2017-20

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a. Three highlights from 2019/20

Clinical Achievements

There were significant clinical achievements in patient recruitment across a range of specialties in 2019/20. Of particular note, the Cancer specialty built on the success of 2018/19 with recruitment increasing from 7,570 to 13,194 taking the national ranking from 9th to 2nd and constituting 18.4% of cancer recruitment in England. This portfolio also addressed a population health need in relation to the high incidence of smoking related lung cancer with recruitment in a large community based project. In other specialties, CRN Y&H was the highest recruiter to Gastroenterology studies with 5,814 participants, equating to 23% of national recruitment. This was in part due to facilitating engagement with the region's clinical endoscopy network and the local gastroenterology community, as well as strong collaboration with Chief Investigators of locally led studies. The Early and Late Life strategies had a positive impact on recruitment, particularly in the following specialties, Children (6,395), Public Health (21,290), Dementia (2,121) Age & Aging (652).

Workforce Review and Organisational Development

Following a period of significant change in both the core team and the flexible workforce, 2019/20 saw a level of stabilisation across the organisation. The Chief Operating Officer position was successfully appointed to and the Study Support Service is at full complement after a structural review. Most significantly, organisational change took place within the flexible workforce, now the Agile Research Team (ART) with the year seeing agreement of a new team structure and standard roles and working practices. This included the delivery of services to trusts based on an Integrated Care System model. The final staff consultation process required to move staff to new roles was paused due to COVID -19, but will resume as soon as possible. Additionally, the role of Workforce Lead was successfully appointed to support both workforce planning and organisational development. CRN Y&H continued to develop its training capacity and capability through partnering with the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTHT) Research Academy. This will provide training to all CRN Y&H Partners with a focus on staff from emerging portfolios relating to population health needs and their providers, including local authorities and care homes.

Inauguration of the IQVIA Northern Prime Site

The inauguration of the Northern Prime Site took place on 25th November. Guests included CRN Y&H and CRN Greater Manchester (CRN GM) senior leaders, NHS Chief Executives, University Vice Chancellors and the media from across the North of England. Included in the UK Life Science Sector Deal (2018), this Prime Site is a collaboration between IQVIA and the CRNs Y&H and GM. The Northern Prime Site hopes to bring benefits to patients, clinicians, NHS organisations and trial sponsors by facilitating rapid access to new therapies; improved patient outcomes; and faster, more efficiently delivered trials. Already, IQVIA studies have increased by 48% in the two regions.

b. High Level Objectives (HLO) Performance

	HLO 1a	HLO 1b	HLO 2a	HLO 2b	HLO 6a	HLO 6b	HLO 6C	HLO 6d	HLO 7	HLO 8	HLO9 a	HLO 9b
Target	68,824	4,000	80%	80%	100%	70%	45%	200	2,080	1,000	80	60
Achieved	70,905	2,611	106/136	90/97	22/22	16/22	318/682	200	2,121	1,462	105	58
Performance	103%	65%	78%	93%	100%	73%	47%	100%	102%	146%	N/A	N/A

CRN Y&H has had its most successful year in terms of overall performance against the High Level Objectives (HLOs) with 9 of the 12 objectives being met. (Further detail explaining the HLOs is attached at Appendix 1). Of particular note, CRN Y&H achieved the highest ever performance in the number of studies achieving Recruitment to Time and Target (RTT - commercial studies at 78% and non-commercial studies at 93%). However HLO9a has been a key challenge for the network, a target to reduce the time it takes to set up studies at sites. At mid-year an improvement plan was implemented which saw positive improvement from Q2 (133 days) to Q4 (105 days). Delivery against the plan continues in the next financial year to ensure this ambition is achieved in 2020/21.

c. Response to COVID-19

The CRN Y&H Urgent Public Health (UPH) Plan and the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan were reviewed and actioned in full early March 2020. Pre-incident planning had already included identification of sleeping public health research studies and the assessment of CRN Y&H staff capacity, capability and training needs. By mid-March, the risk assessment indicated a move to a level four major incident which led to changes to the way the network delivered its business. The Network identified key leads for priority areas including; UPH research studies, workforce planning and development, wellbeing, communications and weekly Partner organisation engagement. Throughout the initial phase of the public health emergency the Clinical Director acted as UPH Research Lead with support from two strategic clinical leads and the Infectious Diseases Specialty Lead, who is also the national lead. At the end of the reporting year CRN Y&H were recruiting into 19/26 UPH badged studies and acting as the lead CRN for the Priest study, a research study which aims to optimise the triage of people using the emergency care system during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. All acute Trusts were recruiting into the Recovery Trial and the Clinical Characterisation Protocol for Severe Emerging Infection (CCP) Trial with 257 participating sites and 2575 patients recruited. CRN Y&H supported staff redeployment activities and the Agile Research Team had been deployed to support the recruitment to COVID-19 studies. Research staff from community trusts were also used to support acute trusts where that was appropriate and safe.

d. Targeting Health Needs

Through the VISION2021 program the Network continued to consider the specific health needs of the 5.4 million people living in Y&H. The Network built on the work started in 2018/19, developing strategic clinical leadership to allow greater focus on important aspects of this agenda. Key regional meetings attended by research staff from many clinical disciplines spent time understanding the research opportunities across the following areas;

cancer, prisons research, social care, end of life care and public health. To progress the targeting health needs agenda the Network funded a Local Authority Research Collaborative (LARC) and supported the leadership of the Public Health Practitioner & Academic Research Collaborative Hub. This helped us understand the wider health and social care needs of the different local populations and facilitated joint working between Sheffield, Doncaster, Bradford, Leeds and Hull. CRN Y&H successfully developed a Multimorbidity Strategy based on wide consultation and with a primary focus on common mental health disorders. Together with Professor Chris Witty, the Network met with Doncaster Council and made a prison visit to understand the high levels of clinical need and comorbidity.

e. Partner Engagement

CRN Y&H is a geographically large network with Partner organisations clustered within three main integrated care systems (ICS). During the reporting year CRN Y&H worked with Partners to explore the potential of working in an integrated, system-wide organisation in line with the ICS footprint. This strategy emerged from a series of VISION2021 network meetings and through discussions with the Partnership Group. During the current COVID-19 crisis the model of joint working across established ICS trust partnerships allowed effective deployment of staff and patient identification. Additionally, Y&H have promoted collaborative working between regional Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and NHS Trusts, enabling increased recruitment into mental health and dementia studies. Support was also provided for research activities within dentistry services, schools, local authorities, social enterprises, care homes and hospices. In relation to the 2019/20 Partner Satisfaction Survey CRN Y&H has continued to have excellent engagement from Partners in the Survey with 21/22 Category A Partners responding. Satisfaction levels expressed across a number of domains have been good including participants, carers and general public representation within the Partnership Group. A number of domains relating to LCRN funding allocation and management, and Partnership Group engagement in transparent decision making on funding distribution require improvement. The new Chief Operating Officer made this domain an immediate priority and improvements are anticipated in the next financial year.

f. Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)

CRN Y&H have performed well in the Patient Research Experience Survey (PRES, HLO 8) designed to collate experiences of patients taking part in research. CRN Y&H exceeded the target of 1000 surveys completed to collect 1453 replies. In addition, the Network held the first inter-regional Patient Research Ambassadors (PRA)/Champions meeting with CRN North East & North Cumbria, which was co-produced by groups of PRAs/Champions from the two regions. The first Prison Population Research Champion in CRN Y&H attended to inform discussions about promoting research to underserved groups, which was the focus of the meeting along with multimorbidity. The Network also held a focus group with support from NIHR CRNCC PPIE Small Grants scheme which consisted of participants from underserved groups that the PRES 2018/19 suggested were not participating in research. As a result, greater involvement from the wider BAME community was secured to support research promotion in underserved communities.

g. Social Care Pump Priming Pilot, including confirmation of any underspend

This funding was utilised to support the contracts framework with the 15 Local Authorities (LAs). The Network identified and funded a lead for oversight of local authority research intelligence gathering. This exercise was instrumental in facilitating the submission of a bid to the NIHR Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR Programme) for the Adult Social Care Partnership of which CRN Y&H are through to the second round. The pilot strengthened links between social care leads and the network. Of note the Network facilitated a Yorkshire Cancer Research PhD student partnering with a local authority exploring research opportunities associated with cervical screening uptake within the Polish community. In addition, each local authority was funded to map their research governance and interests for their local populations. At the end of the reporting year, 4 out of 15 LAs had responded but this work was affected by COVID-19 in the final quarter. CRN Y&H also funded a research assistant at the University of Bradford to quality assure Y&H ENRICH homes (N=100) to ensure the information on care homes is up to date and to reaffirm interest in research participation. This work was also put on hold due to the pandemic response in quarter four of the reporting year.

Appendix 1

NIHR CRN High Level Objectives (HLOs)

Objective		Measure
Deliver significant levels of participation in NIHR CRN Portfolio studies	HLO1a	Number of participants recruited to NIHR CRN Portfolio studies
	HLO1b	Number of participants recruited to commercial contract NIHR CRN Portfolio studies
Deliver NIHR CRN Portfolio studies to recruitment target within the planned recruitment period	HLO2a	Proportion of commercial contract studies achieving or surpassing their recruitment target during their planned recruitment period, at confirmed CRN sites
	HLO2b	Proportion of non-commercial studies achieving or surpassing their recruitment target during their planned recruitment period
Widen participation in research by enabling the involvement of a range of health and social care providers	HLO6a	Proportion of NHS Trusts recruiting into NIHR CRN Portfolio studies
	HLO6b	Proportion of NHS Trusts recruiting into NIHR CRN Portfolio commercial contract studies
	HLO6c	Proportion of General Medical Practices recruiting into NIHR CRN Portfolio studies
	HLO6d	Number of non-NHS sites recruiting into NIHR CRN Portfolio studies
Deliver significant levels of participation in NIHR CRN	HLO7	Number of participants recruited into Dementias and Neurodegeneration

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Portfolio Dementias and Neurodegeneration (DeNDRoN) studies		(DeNDRoN) studies on the NIHR CRN Portfolio, each year
Demonstrate to people taking part in health and social care research studies that their contribution is valued	HLO8	Number of NIHR CRN Portfolio study participants responding to the Patient Research Experience Survey, each year
Reduce study site set-up times for NIHR CRN Portfolio studies by 5%	HLO9a	Median study site set-up time for commercial contract studies, at confirmed Network sites (days) 2
	HLO9b	Median study site set-up time for non-commercial studies (days)

Acronym	Definition
ART	Agile Research Team
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
CI	Chief Investigator
CRN	Clinical Research Network
CRN GM	Clinical Research Network Greater Manchester
CRN NENC	Clinical Research Network North East and North Cumbria
CRN Y&H	Clinical Research Network Yorkshire and Humber
CRNCC	Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre
ENRICH	Enabling Research in Care Homes
HLO	Higher Level Objective
HS&DRP	Health Service and Delivery Research Programme
ICS	Integrated Care System
LA	Local Authority
LARC	Local Authority Research Collaborative
LCRN	Local Clinical Research Network
LTHT	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS foundation Trust
NIHR	National Institute of Health Research
PPIE	Patient Public Involvement and Engagement

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PRA	Patient Research Ambassadors
PRES	Patient Research Experience Survey
RTT	Recruitment to Time and Target
UPH	Urgent Public Health
Y&H	Yorkshire and Humber