

EPUT

RESEARCH STRATEGY 2023-2026

BEST RESEARCH TOGETHER



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Foreword from Executive Medical Director

The best healthcare research is produced when researchers and communities work together, listening and exchanging knowledge.

Reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic, the value of clinical research became clear in the national consciousness as vaccines and treatments were rapidly developed.

In order to position EPUT as a centre of excellence in research, now is the time to take the positive influences from the pandemic and build on government policy and investment commitments and raise our ambition for research and development at EPUT.

We already have some of the foundations at EPUT that we need to succeed in this research journey, drawing on expertise from staff, people who use our services, their supporters, our collaborators and the public.

This strategy sets out an ambitious overall vision but recognises we have work to do in evolving the way we approach research to be inclusive, proactive, co-designed with lived experience partners, supportive and broad in its scope and application.

Only by building a culture that supports research and embraces “successful failure”, balanced with appropriate risk assessment, can we achieve our vision of being a leading health and wellbeing service in provision of mental health and community care.

As executive lead for research at EPUT, I want to personally encourage anyone with an idea to consider a research project – whatever the scale – and leaders in our organisation to come together to clear the barriers that lie in the way of high quality research.



Dr Milind Karale - Executive Medical Director



The context of research in the NHS



What does research mean to you?

Research is a very broad term and it plays an important role in most advancements – it can simply mean “finding out something new”

Why do research?

- People are diagnosed with new mental or physical illnesses every day. The treatment and support they receive will, at some point, have been informed by research. Research changes lives, saves lives and improves outcomes.
- Research conducted in healthcare today shapes the care people receive tomorrow. The NHS has made huge progress in developing new treatments and medicines, but there is still much that is unknown.



What are the benefits of doing research?

- Research is beneficial to people and patients, with breakthroughs enabling earlier diagnosis, more effective treatments, prevention of ill health, better outcomes and faster returns to everyday life.
- Research is beneficial to healthcare professionals who are able to develop imaginative solutions for real NHS problems, improving care and increasing job satisfaction.
- Research is also beneficial to NHS systems; we know that NHS Trusts that are more research active have lower mortality rates than those that are not. They are also better able to recruit and retain staff.

EPUT's vision for research

Where do we want to be by 2026?

With a deliberate focus on clearing the barriers to research, EPUT should aim to have the following in place within three years:

- Evidence of increased research awareness across the Trust
- Active research led by the full range of EPUT's professional groups
- Evidence of partnership working with people that use our services and their supporters in shaping the research portfolio
- A more diverse research portfolio that leverages National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and other funding opportunities, including growth in commercial trials.

Defining three current challenges to research

Feedback from engagement workshops revealed consistent themes relating to three areas of focus: **workforce**, diversity of **funding sources**, and **communication**.

1 Our skilled workforce encounters challenges in allocating time, capacity, tools, space and access for individuals to train in research methods and becoming involved in research projects. With demand for services unlikely to decrease in the short to medium term, if service managers are helped to appreciate the value of research, they will be more inclined to allocate staff time to it. Due to significant workforce challenges in some areas, it is sometimes not possible to identify suitable backfill even when funding is available.

2 There are significant amounts of funding available through the NIHR, academic institutions and higher education facilities dedicated to the training of professionals in undertaking research career pathways. It is not always easy to access these funds. EPUT will need to be more creative in its pursuit of a range of revenue sources to support its research ambitions.

3 Communication is the key that links all of our challenges together. Better use of technology will be necessary to communicate key messages to target audiences. Accessible and transparent communications across a range of channels will be critical to improving research awareness and confidence across EPUT, sharing learning from research and working effectively with our partners, people and communities.

EPUT commits to a three year research strategy implementation programme

OUR VISION

To be the leading health and wellbeing service in the provision of mental health and community care.

VISIBILITY & AWARENESS



- 1** We will make research visible in all aspects of the Trust's core business.
- 2** We will increase awareness of the value and impact of clinical research.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

We have four strategic objectives to achieve our vision:

We will deliver safe, high quality integrated care services.

We will work with our partners to make our services better.

We will enable each other to be the best we can be.

We will help our communities to thrive.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



- 3** We will support the development of and nurture a sustainable workforce.
- 4** We will empower staff to promote evidence based practice.

WORKING TOGETHER



- 5** We will empower people and staff together in high quality research.
- 6** We will collaborate to align our research activities with care units and with other provider partners.

INVESTMENT



- 7** We will embed integration of learning through evidence based practice.
- 8** We will grow our aspirations to become a recognised centre of excellence.

Measuring progress in delivering the strategy

Specific

A number of key actions have been formulated to create measurable outcomes in delivering on the key commitments of this strategy.

Measurable

Measuring the impact of what we do will require the creation of a local SMART impact dashboard that will use current national data sets that monitor research activity along with agreed local metrics.

Achievable

Relevant

Metrics will align to the three challenges this strategy is designed to address: workforce, funding and communication. Each metric will set a baseline measure of where we are starting from and evidence the progression over time associated with key actions.

Time-bound

Key milestones for delivery reflect growing maturity over time:

Year 1

Evidence of increased research awareness across the Trust, together with evidence of partnership working with people that use our services.

Year 2

Evidence of increase in research activity led by the full range of EPUT's professional groups, and providing an increase in NIHR funding.

Year 3

Evidence of an increased and more diverse NIHR research and grant funded portfolio with an increase in commercial clinical trials.



Towards 'Best Research Together' at EPUT

Engagement in clinical research is not yet consistent across the wide range of EPUT's services. The delivery of this strategy will be contingent on:

- A programme of inclusive and consistent partnership development with all care units and clinical service areas designed to promote the benefits of research involvement and advertise the corporate support offering.
- Nurturing relationships with EPUT's clinical academics and leveraging their insight and networks – alongside that of a diverse stakeholder group – in co-designing a set of research priorities for EPUT over the next three years.
- Continuing to build our relationships with existing and new academic partners.
- Systematically partnering with those who have lived experience or using our services to define research priorities and design research projects.

