

UHNM Research and Innovation Update:

Five Things Friday

Welcome to our 'Five Things Friday' update!

On the last Friday of every month, we'll share a quick snapshot of what's happening in Research & Innovation (R&I) at University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM). These updates are designed to help you better understand the wide range of support our R&I department offers.



1. Home-Grown Research and Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)

Our experienced team can support you in developing high-quality proposals and securing local, national, or international funding.

We'll support you through every stage of your study, from design to delivery and ensure patients and the public are meaningfully involved through our dedicated PPIE team. We also offer tailored communication support to help your research find the right audiences.

New robotic research lead appointed at UHNM

Mr Richard Laing, Consultant Hepatopancreatobiliary Surgeon, has been appointed UHNM's first Clinical Lead for Robotic Research, helping to drive research alongside the Trust's growing robotic surgery programme.

Mr Laing joined UHNM in 2022 and has since performed around 150 robotic procedures. He has played an important role in the development of the Trust's robotic surgery strategy and brings a strong research background, having completed a PhD focused on liver transplantation and the application of novel technologies in healthcare.

Mr Laing will work with clinical teams and research colleagues to develop and coordinate research activity across UHNM's robotic surgery services.

He said: "We are one of the highest-volume robotic surgery centres in the UK and, as we continue to expand, we want to ensure our research activity develops alongside our clinical work."

Research priorities will include generating evidence from existing robotic surgery activity, developing new studies and clinical trials, and exploring opportunities to work with partners including Keele University and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).



2. Research Delivery

Our hands-on research delivery team works directly in clinics and services across UHNM to support study recruitment, ensuring our patients have access to world-leading research opportunities.

UHNM research helps shape major review on vaping and young people

Dr Francis Gilchrist, Deputy Director of Research and Innovation at UHNM and Consultant in Paediatric Respiratory Medicine, has helped lead a major national review into the impact of vaping on children and young people. Working alongside Professor Will Carroll, Consultant Paediatrician at Staffordshire Children's Hospital, Dr Gilchrist co-authored the review for the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH).

The review examined more than 14,000 published articles and brought together evidence from 81 studies. It found clear links between vaping and respiratory health problems, including coughs, wheezing, bronchitis symptoms and asthma attacks. The evidence also showed that young people who vape are more likely to go on to smoke cigarettes.

Researchers also identified possible links between vaping and poor oral health, anxiety and depression, alongside emerging evidence around sleep, eye health and allergies. The findings will help inform future policy and public health action aimed at reducing the appeal and accessibility of vaping products to children and young people.



3. The North Midlands Commercial Research Delivery Centre (CRDC)

UHNM is home to a dedicated Commercial Research Delivery Centre (CRDC), working with industry partners to deliver high-quality commercial studies.

This centre strengthens our reputation as a research-active Trust and brings cutting-edge treatments to our patients faster.

For further information please contact our team via research@uhnm.nhs.uk

Join September's PPIE drop-in session

UHNM staff involved in research, innovation, quality improvement and engagement are encouraged to join the next UHNM CRDC Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) Drop-In Session on 21 September 2026.

Taking place from 12pm to 1pm via Microsoft Teams, the informal session will provide practical guidance on embedding patient and public involvement throughout the lifecycle of research and innovation projects. Attendees will be able to hear examples of PPIE in action at UHNM, explore how involvement can strengthen project development and delivery, and discuss ideas with members of the PPIE Team.

The session will also provide an opportunity for colleagues to share experiences, learn from others and ask questions about incorporating meaningful public involvement into their work.

Whether you are new to PPIE or looking to build on existing experience, the drop-in session offers a valuable opportunity to learn more about approaches that can help ensure research and innovation are shaped by the people they are designed to benefit.

Teams joining details will be circulated ahead of the session. For further information contact louise.barlow@uhnm.nhs.uk.





4. Innovation

From concept to implementation, our Innovation Manager helps staff bring ideas to life, supporting evaluation, adoption, and spread of innovations that improve patient care and operational efficiency.

Please contact our team via innovation@uhnm.nhs.uk for further support.

New support to help staff protect and develop innovations

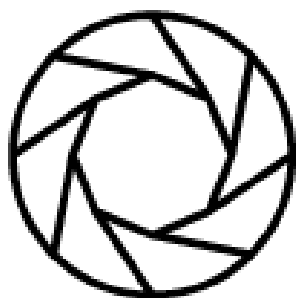
UHNM is launching a new awareness programme to help staff better understand Intellectual Property (IP) and how innovations developed across the Trust can be protected and taken forward to benefit patients.

Innovation at UHNM takes many forms, from new devices and digital tools to research findings, educational resources, artificial intelligence applications and service improvements. By identifying and protecting these ideas early, the Trust can maximise opportunities to improve care, support further innovation and work with external partners where appropriate.

The programme will also help staff understand how IP ownership and commercialisation work at UHNM. Where innovations generate commercial income, a share of the revenue is returned to inventors, clinical directorates and the Trust, helping fund future research, innovation and patient care.

Improved guidance and resources for staff will be available on the intranet soon.

For more details [email](#) Mohammad Syed, Innovation Manager.



TriNetX

5. Governance, Research Funding and More

Our expert support teams set-up the study, keep your research safe, compliant, and on track, handling governance, costing, contracts, and everything in between.

Please contact us via research@uhnms.nhs.uk.

Using TriNetX to support research at UHNM

TriNetX® is The Global Truth Engine for Better Human Health®. Powered by a secure, connected network across more than 14,200 clinical sites in 20 plus countries, TriNetX delivers trustworthy evidence that stands up to the world's most rigorous scientific scrutiny. By combining global data, relentless integrity, and a rare fusion of AI and human intelligence, TriNetX accelerates discovery and drives better health outcomes worldwide.

TriNetX partners with UHNM and has done since 2016 to offer commercial research opportunities to UHNM from our network of life science industry partners. In addition, TriNetX has purpose-built analytics and global, real-world evidence to inform decisions across research, care delivery, and operations.

Gain deeper insight into patient populations, care pathways, and performance and elevate your impact as a trusted research and healthcare organisation. If you want support from our Academic Education and Research Services team to deliver your own real-world data research, put together competitive grant proposals, or to simply take a research idea to publication, get in touch today with your TriNetX Healthcare Partnerships Manager, [Laura Reid](#).