

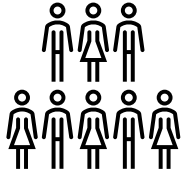
## Research Annual Report 2025~6

**Research provides hope and meaning as well as saving lives and improving outcomes**

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| <b>Audience</b>            | Public                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Purpose</b>             | <p>To describe the number and range of research studies active at the Lister, New QEII or Hertford County hospitals in 2025/6 together with descriptions on benefit for patients.</p> <p><b>In total there were 103 actively recruiting research studies with a total of 4,173 participants in 2025/6.</b></p> <p>We believe research is important because it brings hope to patients, it adds meaning to the work of colleagues and this results in an organisation that is better able to serve others.</p> <p>We are sharing this as part of our <a href="#">2025 – 30 Research Strategy</a>.</p> <p>Our goal is <i>“to be recognised and valued as an organisation where people can take part in, and benefit from, research”</i>.</p> <p>This strategy supports, and contributes to, the organisation being <i>“trusted to provide consistently outstanding care and exemplary service”</i>.</p> |
| <b>Author</b>              | Lister Research Office                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Version and date</b>    | V1 dated 4 <sup>th</sup> August 2026.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Approach</b>            | This information was obtained from an internal database of research activity and weblinks identified from the public domain.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Further information</b> | If you would like further information, please make a request by email to <a href="mailto:researchanddevelopment.enh-tr@nhs.net">researchanddevelopment.enh-tr@nhs.net</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

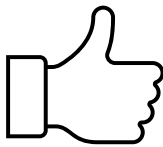
## Research and Development Annual Report 2025/6

### Research saves lives and improves outcomes.



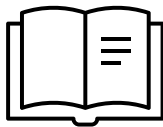
*Thank you to the 4,173 people who took part in one of 103 research studies that took place across our hospitals.*

*By volunteering you have helped develop better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat illness for future generations.*



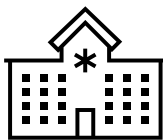
*We are pleased 85% of research participants rated their research experience positively*

*Patients said they felt respected, valued and supported. We can and want to improve this experience.*



*Our research generated new knowledge published in [321 scientific papers](#) in 2025.*

*This included 34 publications with the University of Hertfordshire.*



*One example of our research is the OPTIMA trial ([Optimal Personalised Treatment of early breast cancer using Multi-parameter Analysis](#)).*

*This found that many people with a common form of breast cancer can safely avoid chemotherapy. This helps patients avoid unnecessary side effects with more personalised treatment.*

**1 Context: Research is a key enabler to deliver the Trust's strategy, it enhances patient experience and outcome, and supports financial sustainability.**

1.1 Encouraging a research-positive culture in health and care organisations is important to give patients wider access to clinical research and improve patient care and treatment options. Evidence shows clinically research-active hospitals have better patient care outcomes.

1.2 The Trust's [research strategy](#) has a single goal "**to be recognised and valued us as an organisation where people can take part in, and benefit from, research**". Our 2025/6 Progress against strategic objectives for research and future plans is given overleaf.

## Our 2025/6 Progress against strategic objectives for research and future plans

### Objective 1 Research to be aligned to local needs: We will listen to, and act on, the voice of our people to ensure our research is aligned with local needs.

- ✓ Supported public and patient groups to help align our research with local need.
- ✓ Continued to design and Sponsor research to meet the needs of our patients.
- Recruit new lay members to R&D Board FOR public oversight - **planned for 2026/7**.

### Objective 2 Research for All: We acknowledge there is much to do to make research inclusive for all people and we will make research more accessible.

- ✓ Maintain a wide range of research opportunities for our patients.
- ✓ Seek out and set-up research that offers participation from groups that are currently under-represented e.g. the [Improving Black Health Outcomes \(IBHO\) BioResource](#).
- ✓ Production of videos to tell stories to encourage research participation for all – **planned for 2026/7**.

### Objective 3 Research in partnership: We will foster local and national collaborations to increase the amount, depth and breadth of local research participation.

- ✓ Review and expand collaborative working with research partners – ongoing.
- ✓ Review and implement initiatives to increase research opportunities – ongoing.

### Objective 4 Research is a service expectation: We will include the opportunity for people to take part in research as an essential service design consideration.

- ✓ Seek to embed research into business planning, ensure internal visibility of funding – ongoing.
- ✓ Provide relevant information and attend care group meetings to promote research - **planned for 2026/7**.

### Objective 5 Research is everybody's business: We will ensure that all our colleagues recognise research as an essential and rewarding part of effective patient care and that there are also opportunities to devise and deliver research.

- ✓ Implement an action plan to meeting ambitious targets to support the [UK's Life Sciences sector](#) through board level oversight of key metrics – ongoing.
- ✓ Identify baseline and highlight opportunities to increase research workforce capacity – ongoing.
- ✓ Promote specific research time in roles and job planning – ongoing.

### Objective 6 Trusted use of data for research: We will implement national approaches that have public support to make best use of data, digital systems and AI (Artificial Intelligence) to support research in a way that is trusted.

- ✓ Devise, implement and review an approach to digitally capture research participation - **planned for 2026/7**.
- ✓ Seek to establish an ability to review our records to identify and contact potential research participants (if consent to contact obtained) - **planned for 2026/7**.

All our research is well governed, subject to external ethical and peer review and is delivered by colleagues who have undergone specialised research training.

## **2 Context: The Trust is part of the National Institute for Health and Care Research**

2.1 The Trust is proud to be part of the [National Institute for Health and Care Research](#) (NIHR) which has a national vision “to *improve the health and wealth of the nation through research*”.

2.2 In 2025/6 the NIHR [Research Delivery Network](#) was in its second year to achieve its vision for the UK to be a global leader in the delivery of high-quality research that is inclusive, accessible, and improves health and care. The NIHR mission is to enable the health and care system to attract, optimise and deliver research across England and has two primary [sic] purposes:

- to support the successful delivery of high-quality research, and
- to increase capacity and capability of the research delivery infrastructure

## **3 Context: The Trust also provides system leadership across our local geography to support partnership working.**

3.1 The Trust provides leadership and support across our local system, the East of England, and nationally. Examples include leading the [East and North Hertfordshire Health Care Partnership](#) Research and Innovation Group, seconding research staff to the [Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board](#) and working with the National Institute for Health and care Research [East of England Regional Research Delivery Network](#).

3.2 The Trust works in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire, the life science industry and non-commercial research funders to enhance patient and experience through research and innovation. The Trust’s partnership research with the University of Hertfordshire made a significant contribution to the Trust gaining Teaching Hospital status from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

3.3 The Trust provided leadership and support across our local system, the East of England, and nationally. Examples include:

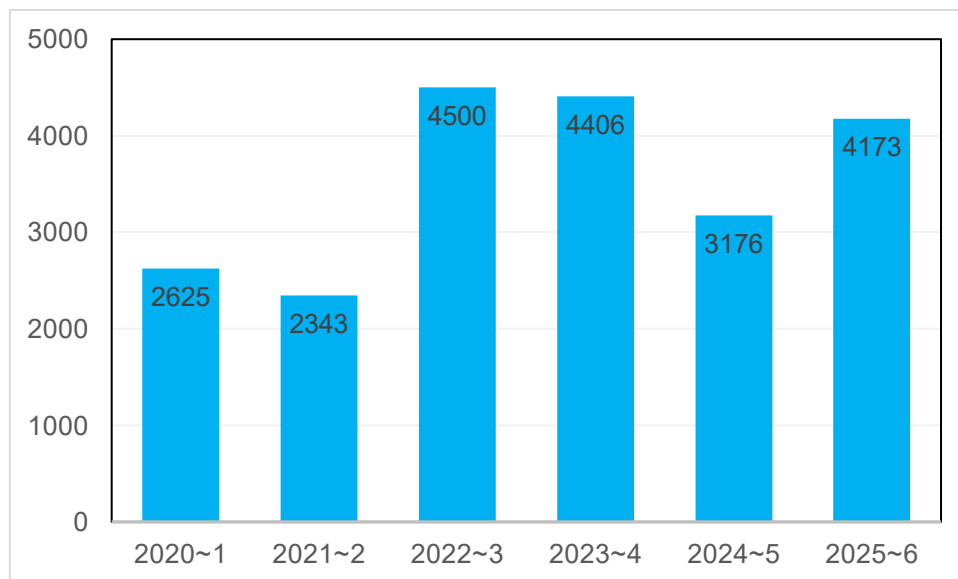
- leading the [East and North Hertfordshire Health Care Partnership](#) Research and Innovation Group,
- providing Research and Innovation support services to services to the [Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board](#) and supporting the development of research and innovation
- leading a programme or work (Research Engagement Network) to develop a more inclusive research participation with the goal of enabling all individuals and communities to be offered the opportunity, and be supported, to be involved in research,

- providing leadership and direction to the University of Hertfordshire Research and Innovation Hub as part of their [Integrated Care System Partnership Programme](#), and
- acting as a representative for large acute hospital Trusts at the National Institute for Health and care Research [East of England Regional Research Delivery Network](#) stakeholder meetings.

#### 4 Quality: Research activity at the Trust

4.1 We are grateful to all those who chose to volunteer to take part in a research study as research enables the NHS to meet the changing health needs of those we serve.

4.2 The number of research participants in 2025/6 was 4,173 from 103 projects covering 8 Care Groups and 13 Specialties. The six-year trend is given in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Research activity trend (based on research adopted to the NIHR Portfolio)**

4.3 Research activity also attracts external funding and investment into the Trust, helping support specialist staff, equipment, infrastructure and patient access to new and innovative treatments.

4.4 Most of our research relates to improving care of patients. One example is a breast cancer trial called OPTIMA ([Optimal personalised treatment of early breast cancer](#)) which has demonstrated that many people with a common form of breast cancer can safely avoid chemotherapy. Previously, doctors often treated 100 patients to benefit just 10, meaning around 90 people received chemotherapy without benefit.

4.5 This research is helping patients avoid unnecessary side effects while receiving more personalised treatment. It helps the environment too as less travel and production of drugs.

4.6 Some of our research also helps us better understand how we work. For example, the Trust has worked closely with the University of Hertfordshire to run a [Study to Evaluate the Introduction of new Staffing Models in Intensive Care: a realist evaluation \(SEISMIC-R\)](#). This work has led to revised national guidance on staffing, used to underpin national commissioning of intensive care services.

4.7 Of particular interest is the research that is Sponsored by the Trust. These studies are designed by Trust colleagues, and the Trust takes on overall responsibility for the study. A list of these studies can be found [here](#).

4.8 This programme of research strongly supports the [NHS Long Term Plan](#) by improving early diagnosis, personalising care, preventing avoidable harm and helping people live well with long-term conditions.

## 5 Quality: The patient experience of research at the Trust

5.1 We actively seek patient and public feedback. Here are some quotes:

*‘The team are very approachable and friendly, appointments run on time and it is easy to access’.*

*“Our research team have been totally comforting, professional and supportive. They have made us feel important and valued”.*

5.2 From our ongoing research participant survey in 2025/6, we received 39 responses. Responses to three questions (as % saying Strongly agree or agree) are given below (Table 2) for the last three years. We note the slight decline in score and are looking into how we can address this.

| Questions                                        | 2023/4     | 2024/5     | 2025/6    |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| • My taking part in the research has been valued | 95%        | 87%        | 82%       |
| • Always been treated with courtesy and respect  | 97%        | 95%        | 92 %      |
| • I would consider taking part in research again | 90%        | 83%        | 82%       |
| Research Participation score (%)                 | 94%        | 88%        | 85%       |
| <b>Responses</b>                                 | <b>111</b> | <b>132</b> | <b>39</b> |

**Table 2: Feedback trend from research participants**

5.3 Research participants also provided qualitative responses summarised below.

- **What was positive?** A total of 32 responses were received, and this can be summarised as follows. Most participants felt respected, comfortable, and well-supported by professional, caring staff who communicated clearly throughout their involvement. Many valued the opportunity to contribute to research and hoped their experiences would help improve future treatments and health outcomes. Several participants appreciated consistent updates, good monitoring, and straightforward, well-explained processes. A few noted areas for improvement, such as lack of feedback or earlier communication issues at certain hospitals. Overall, participants reported positive interactions, feeling valued, and recognising the importance and usefulness of the studies they took part in.
- **What could be improved?** A total of 29 responses were received, and this can be summarised as follows. Patients generally reported positive experiences, with many stating they had no complaints and felt their treatment had been successful. Several people expressed a desire for more regular feedback, especially regarding MRI scans, blood tests, and overall study results. A few participants wanted clearer comparisons of their results with others in the research. Some noted practical issues outside the study team's control, such as hospital parking or initial discharge decisions. Overall, most participants were satisfied, highlighting good staff interactions and minimal suggestions for improvement.

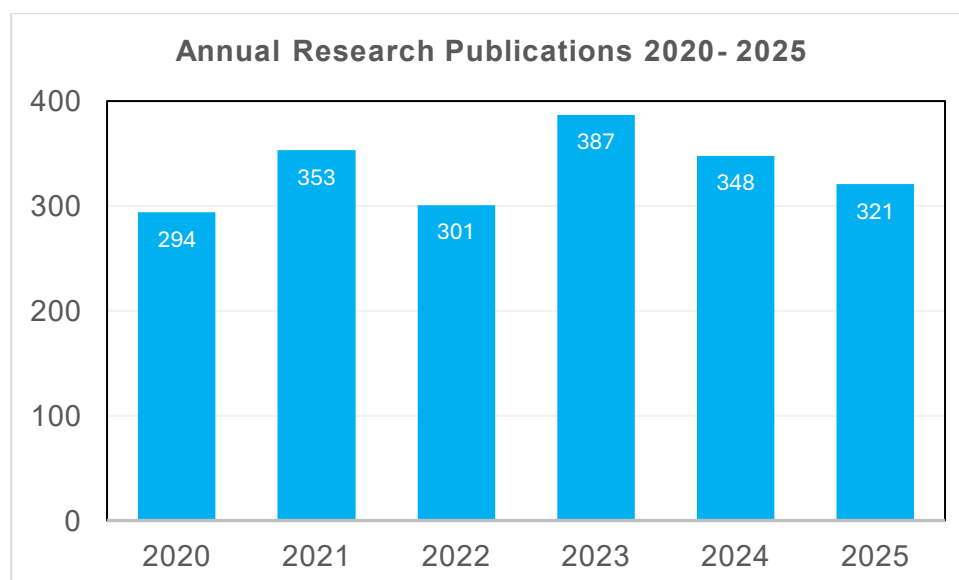
5.4 The Trust's Patient and Public Involvement in Research Panel meets on a regular basis to help us better understand how we can design our local research to meet the needs of our patients.

5.5 As a Trust we also place information on our [website](#) to support public and patient engagement events, to signpost how people can find out how research affects patient care and to provide examples of how research can enhance patient outcome and experience.

5.6 In addition we signpost people to the [#BePartofResearch](#) website – this is a free service which makes it easy to find and take part in vital health and care research across the UK.

## 6 Quality: Embedding research into practice for the benefit of patients.

6.1 Research at the Trust supports the development of new knowledge. In 2025, the Trust had 321 [research publications](#) including 34 jointly published with the [University of Hertfordshire](#). A full list can be seen on the [Trust's website](#).



**Figure 2: Trend in number of research publications by Trust colleagues**

6.2 Examples of the impact of our published research

### [AI-Assisted vs Unassisted Identification of Prostate Cancer in Magnetic Resonance Images](#)

- Illness is spotted sooner.
- Fewer unnecessary tests
- Less time spent worrying while waiting for results.

### [Implementation of a Quality Improvement Tool “Recover25” to Guide the Care of Patients Experiencing Prolonged Critical Illness: A Mixed-Method Feasibility Study](#)

- Better support after intensive care.
- Fewer complications.
- Help returning to everyday life.

### [Development and validation of a measure to assess patient experience of needing of arteriovenous fistulas or grafts for haemodialysis access: the NPREM](#)

- Better symptom control.
- Feeling listened to and respected.
- Care based on what matters to you.

[Health inequalities in access to keloid scar surgery: An analysis of funding criteria and their impact across England](#)

- Improved access to treatment.
- Services designed for different needs.
- Care that is fairer for everyone.

[A closed-loop audit to assess and improve surgical site infection rates across all surgical specialties](#)

- Fewer infections.
- Safer operations.
- Fewer avoidable complications.

[Decarbonising Respiratory Care: The Impact of a Low-Carbon Salbutamol Pressurised Metered-Dose Inhalers](#)

- High-quality care with less impact on the environment.
- Cleaner air and safer surroundings.
- Protecting health for future generations.

[Finerenone in the management of diabetes kidney disease](#)

- Better management of long-term conditions.
- Improved day-to-day life.
- Support to stay independent.

[RESECT: A Randomised Controlled Trial of Audit and Feedback in Non-muscle-invasive Bladder Cancer Surgery](#)

- Treatments based on the latest evidence.
- More consistent care.
- Improvements felt quickly, not years later.

[Uses of augmented reality in surgical consent and patient education – A systematic review](#)

- Clearer information.
- Better support for loved ones.
- Shared decision-making you can trust.

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