

Implementing research and innovation strategy principles in Norfolk and Waveney ICS (2023-2028)

Recommendations
May 2024

Introduction

In pursuit of a dynamic and impactful health and care environment, the Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care System (ICS) has embarked on a transformative journey outlined in the [Norfolk & Waveney Research and Innovation Strategy](#). Central to this strategy are four fundamental principles, each serving as a guide towards the realisation of a thriving research and innovation system. These principles are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, working together to create a more integrated, responsive, and effective health and care system that prioritises the needs and well-being of individuals and communities. As we implement these principles, the recommendations that follow reinforce our commitment to excellence, collaboration, community engagement, and delivering research and innovation benefits for patients and our communities.

The Norfolk & Waveney ICS Research & Innovation Strategy (2023-2028) recognises research and innovation as catalysts for positive change in health and care delivery and patient outcomes. Embracing inclusivity, empowerment, and collaboration, the strategy sets out a vision where communities are at the forefront of decision-making, the workforce is equipped with the skills and confidence needed, and research and innovation is seamlessly woven into the fabric of the system.

The primary purpose of this report is to provide recommendations for translating and implementing our system strategy, ensuring a systematic and cohesive approach towards achieving the collective vision of the Norfolk & Waveney ICS, partners and community. By outlining these recommendations, this report seeks to empower stakeholders to actively participate in, and contribute to, the realisation of these shared goals.

Approach taken to develop recommendations

Workstream leads were appointed to develop recommendations and suggested timeframes for each strategy principle:

- Focused on our communities - Sarah Hanson and Katy Rutherford
- Driven by a confident and capable workforce - Helen Hall
- Collaborative and co-ordinated - Titilopemi Oladosu
- Embedded in everything we do as a system - Tessa Kasia

Workstream leads produced comprehensive reports following a qualitative approach, drawing on insights gathered through extensive stakeholder engagement, literature reviews, and best practices in the field of health and care research and innovation. Through collaborative workshops, consultations, and expert views, they have endeavoured to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, thereby enriching the robustness and applicability of the recommendations. The comprehensive reports can be found in the accompanying appendices, available on request.

Recommendations in this report have been distilled from these comprehensive reports by NHS Norfolk& Waveney ICB on behalf of the ICS. This has been done taking into account the background context of limited additional system resource. These recommendations should be read alongside the Research and Innovation Strategy for context.

These recommendations may not require extensive operational changes or additional resources. Maximising or refocusing existing resources will enable integration of research and innovation into current practices, rather than creating entirely new structures. Creative approaches and small adjustments can yield significant, sustainable benefits for our patients, workforce, community, practices and infrastructures.

Table 1: Consolidated recommendations

Key actions	Sub-actions (where necessary)	Timeline (short/medium/long-term)
Ensure health inequalities are considered and addressed in research and innovation activities	<p>Health inequalities will be considered in all funding applications for research and innovation projects with activities and appropriate funding included.</p> <p>Consider where we place research studies and innovation initiatives to minimise health inequalities and maximise participation.</p> <p>Champion and actively support research and innovation projects that focus on addressing health inequalities.</p> <p>Ensure research and innovation is an integral part of the ICS health inequality framework.</p>	<p>Short</p> <p>Short</p> <p>Short</p> <p>Medium</p>
Develop community engagement and activity plans to understand our residents and communities needs for research and provide sustained engagement and feedback.	Consider using creative health approaches, including working with the cultural sector and the wider VCSE, to support the creation of community engagement activity plans that make best use of creative health assets.	Short-medium
Co-ordinate and promote the importance of research and innovation on wellbeing, prevention and early intervention.	<p>Identifying existing activity in Norfolk and Waveney, gaps and opportunities</p> <p>Supporting research and innovation in wider health and care settings, such as Public Health, VCSE organisations</p>	<p>Short-medium</p> <p>Short-medium</p>
Identify activities to enhance engagement with communities and learn from initiatives and programmes such as asset based community development.		Short-medium
Support initiatives to maximise sharing the research expertise that exists within the ICS to help build research literacy and capacity within community-based organisations e.g. via a community research network.		Short-medium
Create an annual plan for how we engage with communities around research and innovation, incorporating community research, with transparency about timelines, available funding, and how communities will be involved	Co-ordinate activities across the system to ensure they involve excluded communities and do not put an undue burden on particular neighbourhood or community groups.	Short-medium

	Assess best practice in establishing feedback loops in research and innovation and make practical recommendations on better communication (accessible and meaningful) that can be adopted in Norfolk and Waveney.	Medium
Develop mechanisms to systematically collect evidence of the impact of research on our communities and populations, outside of research results.		Long
Identifying the needs of our research and innovation workforce e.g. via a system wide survey / training needs analysis including understanding access to library services and other relevant resources		Short
Identify, collate and share the available training, funding and education pathways available to our workforce for research and innovation via a central resource e.g. via an FutureNHS Site (available to all).		Short
Identify, collate and share research and innovation support available in the system. Where research and innovation support is limited, to provide system support or signpost to additional help.		Short-medium
Identifying and sharing learning from workforce, education and training initiatives already taking place and, where they are impactful, embed within organisations.		Medium
Work with local education and training providers to embed research and innovation within existing educational programmes for health and care e.g. research and innovation-related projects and placements		Medium-long
Facilitate translation of research and innovation into practice for maximal impact.	<p>Explore opportunities to enable equitable access for all N&W ICS workforce to research databases and library services.</p> <p>Enable access to knowledge mobilisation/ implementation training for our workforce.</p> <p>Have a co-ordinated approach to activities within the ICS to celebrate research and innovation (e.g. conferences / symposium) and recognition of research achievement.</p>	<p>Short</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Short</p>

Establish system-wide forums to drive research and innovation strategy delivery.		Short
Develop an annual engagement and communication plan for research and innovation across the system.	<p>Defining what good collaboration, coordination, and communication looks like in research and innovation.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to embed research and innovation within existing communications and health promotion initiatives e.g. where campaigns are promoted to incorporate ongoing research and innovation activities within the ongoing campaign (e.g. diabetes research within diabetes week)</p> <p>Publish and promote achievements and opportunities.</p>	<p>Short</p> <p>Short-medium</p> <p>Short-medium</p>
Establish commitment from system partners to work together to jointly bid for cross organisational funding streams (e.g. InSites, Research Engagement Network, NIHR infrastructure, innovators and companies).		Short-medium
Collaborate with current regional and national representation to identify gaps and ensure that Norfolk and Waveney has a regional and national voice with respect to research and innovation.		Medium-long
Influence and support partners to incorporate research and innovation into the design, planning and delivery of services and infrastructure	<p>Support organisations to embed research and innovation (either directly or indirectly) in committees and/or boards at an organisational and system level.</p> <p>Support the embedding of research and innovation considerations in procurement of services, contracts and/or service specifications.</p>	<p>Medium-long</p> <p>Medium-long</p>
Collaborating to ensure research and innovation undertaken in Norfolk and Waveney is insightful and impactful with respect to the health and care system and linking up partners and initiatives.	<p>Match system priorities and needs against research and innovation activities.</p> <p>Encourage the development of multi-institutional roles particularly beyond traditional research and innovation leadership positions.</p> <p>Supporting multidirectional knowledge transfer between academic researchers and the health and care system.</p> <p>Ensure VCSE and cultural sector colleagues are considered and included where appropriate in mechanisms for multidirectional knowledge transfer.</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium-long</p> <p>Medium-long</p>

Next steps

These recommendations mark a significant milestone in the implementation of the Norfolk & Waveney ICS Research & Innovation Strategy. Through a systematic approach guided by the core principles of community-centricity, workforce empowerment, collaboration, and system integration, we have outlined actionable steps to drive meaningful change and innovation in health and care delivery.

Anticipating the evolving landscape of health and care research and innovation, we expect these recommendations and their ensuing implementation plans to function as dynamic frameworks, subject to ongoing refinement and adaptation throughout the implementation process. Recognising the necessity for agility and responsiveness in our approach, we anticipate regular reviews and updates to ensure alignment with emerging priorities, changing circumstances, and feedback from stakeholders. By adopting a dynamic approach, we can maintain the relevance and effectiveness of our actions, thereby maximising the impact of the Norfolk & Waveney ICS Research & Innovation Strategy.

As we embark on the implementation phase, we carry forward the lessons learned and the shared aspirations that have brought us to this stage. Looking ahead, the successful execution of these actions will require commitment, system integration, and collaborative engagement from all stakeholders involved. By leveraging the collective wisdom and expertise of our diverse community, we have the opportunity for research and innovation to redefine the future of health and care in Norfolk and Waveney, ensuring its equality, accessibility, and sustainability for generations to come.

Acknowledgments

Significant work and energy has gone into developing the recommendations contained within the document and those in the accompanying appendices. We would like to thank the workstream leads for driving the development of these and for system partners in helping to support and craft them.