

## **UNIVERSITY OF READING HEALTH STRATEGY**

The University of Reading supports a broad range of health-related activities, which encompass education and training, research and innovation, and outreach. Growth of these activities is evident in the establishment of new programmes and successful initiatives, such as the integrated Masters undergraduate and postgraduate Physician Associate programmes (and the undergraduate Medical Science programme, the Collaborative Innovation Fund set-up with Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust to translate fundamental scientific research through clinical research studies for the improvement of patient care and clinical excellence, and HealthReach an outreach activity inspiring the future healthcare workforce. These developments build on well-established clinical provision at the University within our research clinics, the Charlie Waller Institute and the Thames Valley Clinical Trials Unit. Collectively, these provide real benefits to patient health and wellbeing, as well as raising the profile of health-related research across the region.

Our partnerships with the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and the Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust are a cornerstone of the University's health strategy. Through collaborative working we can help tackle the future workforce needs of the NHS in our region and place greater emphasis on a holistic, patient-centred approach to health research. Wider partnerships include Health Education England, the Oxford Academic Health Sciences Network, the NIHR Oxford and Thames Valley Applied Research Collaboration, the Southampton Biomedical Research Centre, plus charities and commercial organisations such as the British Heart Foundation, Wellcome Trust, MRC and Alzheimer's Research UK and both small and multinational pharmaceutical and other health care companies.

The University wishes to further its ambition to contribute to healthcare education and training, and health-related research and innovation through these partnerships, and in line with the needs identified in the NHS Long Term Plan and NHS Workforce Plan, which encompass the following core ambitions:

- Greater multidisciplinary and a transformed workforce with a richer mix of skills
- Lifelong learning opportunities
- Improving the leadership culture
- Growth of new professions
- Tackling the critical shortages in the NHS workforce
- Better use of data and digital technology to transform healthcare
- Preventing illness and tackling health inequalities; greater focus on preventative care and stronger links between health and social care.

This strategy outlines how the University will contribute to these ambitions supported by its strategic partnerships.

### **Primary objective**

To coordinate and develop health-related opportunities and strategic partnerships, with the aim of being a driving force for health-related research and supporting healthcare services and workforce education and training needs locally, nationally and globally.

### **What we will do to strengthen our strategic partnerships**

- i. Align internal and cross-institutional processes to ensure partnerships run effectively, removing obstacles and maximising the potential for added value.
- ii. Identify areas of synergy and explore joint opportunities, for example collaborative commercialisation opportunities and/or infrastructure investments.
- iii. Demonstrate our long-term commitment through funding for strategic joint appointments to help capitalise on knowledge exchange and the development of new collaborative activities, including education and training programmes.

### **What we will do to support excellence in, and translation of, fundamental health research**

- i. Continue to invest in curiosity-driven, fundamental research to develop our knowledge and understanding of health and disease.
- ii. Simplify the translation process for example, providing support to our fundamental scientists to overcome regulatory and funding hurdles that currently inhibit interaction with clinicians and clinical research projects.
- iii. Identify mechanisms to enhance interactions between our academic community and health-care professionals to collectively identify the pressing medical problems and routes to solve them, encouraging open-mindedness, effective communication and nurturing the careers of translational researchers.

### **What we will do to contribute to a transformed healthcare workforce**

- i. Develop innovative multidisciplinary programmes which combine science, practical skills, leadership and teamwork skills and inter-professional learning.
- ii. Support the development of responsive workforce with a richer mix of skills and the growth of new professions, with an emphasis on preventative healthcare, stronger links between health and social care, and lifelong learning.

### **What we will do to support lifelong learning opportunities and leadership culture**

- i. Address critical skills gaps and workforce development needs both through outreach activities to encourage a pipeline for a future healthcare workforce and through professional development of existing staff to support lifelong learning.
- ii. Develop a cohesive centralised approach to the enhancement of continuing professional development, using the experience gained from the Centre for Inter-Professional Postgraduate Education and Training (CIPPET).
- iii. Provide professional development opportunities for Clinicians and Allied Health Professionals through flexible accredited programmes and PhD opportunities.
- iv. Continue to develop leadership programmes in partnership with the NHS.

### **What we will do to transform healthcare through research and better use of data and digital technology**

- i. Connect core science to clinical excellence through partnerships, by exploring opportunities such as a joint artificial intelligence hub for healthcare and data sharing platform.
- ii. Sustain and develop the established culture of impact and innovation across the University, providing targeted support to enable research projects to maximise their impact through practitioner engagement.
- iii. Actively encourage entrepreneurship and provide dedicated support for turning ideas into real-world solutions for preventative health.
- iv. Develop training and/or degree programmes in Information Management & Digital Business and Digital Health & Data Analytics.

### **What we will do to strengthen links between health and social care**

- i. Work with regional partners to enhance recruitment of and training for health professionals.
- ii. Forge better links with local and regional social care providers to develop our ability to contribute to social care matters.
- iii. Contribute to the network of Integrated Care Systems and GP alliances, which support a commitment to cohesive health and social care services.