

Clinical leaders across the UK and our region share their priorities

It is important that research and innovation focuses on the most important questions and challenges if it is to have the best impact on patients, the health and social care workforce and the NHS. Different areas of the country have different population profiles and consequently different health needs and service delivery challenges.



What we are doing

Alongside our colleagues at UCLPartners – the academic health science network (or AHSN) for North Thames – we are working with a range of stakeholders in our region to define local innovation and research needs.

This work is informed by a [national survey](#) commissioned by the AHSN Network, NHS England and our funder the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), which aimed to provide a detailed understanding of innovation and research needs at local level across all academic health science networks (AHSNs).

National findings

The national survey, conducted by the independent research agency ComRes and published

in May 2019 collected the views of health stakeholders, including clinical leaders, managers and directors. Carried out between June and October 2018, the survey involved qualitative interviews with 61 people and a questionnaire which received more than 250 responses.

While there were some differences in regional priorities, common themes emerged which reflected wider challenges facing the NHS and align with the priorities of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#).



The NHS Long Term Plan



These include:

- **a need for innovation and research addressing workforce challenges**
- **delivery of mental health services and providing care for patients with mental health needs, particularly in children and young people**
- **integrating services to provide effective care for patients with complex needs - including multimorbidity and frailty**
- **use of digital and artificial intelligence technology**

Local findings - the picture in North Thames

Many of the national findings were reflected in the interviews and questionnaires carried out with stakeholders in the UCLPartners region (although the sample size at local level means

these can only be considered indicative findings).

Our local stakeholders interviewed as part of the survey viewed workforce issues and use of digital technology and AI as high priorities, but also viewed primary care as a priority. Mental illness and multimorbidity were also viewed as priority areas.

Of a number of specific patient groups put to them, national stakeholders chose people with mental health conditions, older people and socially isolated people as the top three priorities for research and innovation (62%, 50% and 46%). UCLPartners stakeholders also viewed the first two groups as priorities, but were more likely to view children and young people and those from low income backgrounds as a priority than older people.

Next steps

Our colleagues at UCLPartners will be facilitating further regional discussions, involving a range of local stakeholders, to refine the priorities identified. The findings from these discussions will inform a statement of local innovation and research needs.