

January 2026 Update

This monthly update summarises recent news, announcements, guidance, and updates on progress made to propel the aims of the UK Clinical Research Delivery (UKCRD) programme of work.

As such, this update provides examples of how organisations individually and collaboratively are achieving the collective goal of making the UK a world leader in clinical trials.

This update covers news from December 2025 and January 2026.

Highlights

- MHRA shared [new figures](#) indicating progress in 2025 and reforms to provide faster clinical trial assessments and agile regulation. These efforts are boosting the UK's attractiveness for global clinical research and supporting the 150-day study set-up target to ensure patients benefit from innovative treatments sooner.
- The UKCRD programme published [new guidance](#) in December on detailed definitions and processes for site-level performance reporting.
- NIHR has published a dedicated [page](#) on support for the 150-day study set-up for clinical trials. It covers the 3 stages of the 150-day metric and NIHR's key workstreams to support delivery organisations to reduce clinical trial set-up times.

UK Clinical Research Delivery Performance Indicators Report

The [UKCRD key performance indicators \(KPIs\) report](#) brings together data from the NIHR and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to monitor the delivery of globally competitive clinical research across the UK. It is produced by DHSC on behalf of the UK research delivery system each month. **The report provides transparent updates on progress towards our goals over time.**

From 17 December 2025 onwards, an updated version of the report is published as 'official statistics in development' on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

The updated report includes:

- Changes to the analysis, assurance and presentation of the data to ensure accuracy and transparency in the reporting and to better align it to DHSC quality assurance and publication standards and Code of Practice for Statistics guidance.
- A new high-level commentary to aid interpretation of the report.
- An accompanying detailed methodology note to help users better understand how the indicators are calculated.
- Accompanying data tables to provide much greater detail and historical context.

The UKCRD website will continue to provide access to the [previous versions](#) of the report.

On the following page is a snapshot of the full UK Clinical Research Delivery Performance Indicators Report. [Click here to read the full report.](#)

Contact

UK Clinical Research Delivery

UKCRDprogramme@dhsc.gov.uk



Performance Indicators Report summary

UK Performance Indicator	Latest figure	Target
1 Proportion of studies receiving combined review approval within 60 days (or 90 days for advanced therapy investigational medicinal product (ATIMP) studies)	100%	More than or equal to 99%
2 Proportion of commercial contract studies opening to recruitment within 60 days of Health Research Authority (HRA) approval letter or equivalent process used by the Devolved Administrations	37%	90%
3 Proportion of commercial contract studies recruiting first participant within 30 days of opening to recruitment	53%	90%
4 Proportion of NHS trusts in England who accept the local price generated as part of the national contract value review (NCVR) process for late-phase commercial contract studies without further negotiation following agreement of the resource required by the lead site	100%	100%
5 Proportion of open studies on track, delivering recruitment to time and target	83%	80%
6 Average monthly recruitment to all studies is maintained at high levels compared to the pre-pandemic baseline	87,654 participants	No target
7 Average monthly recruitment to all commercial contract studies to be monitored in support of the ambition to double and double again from the pre-pandemic baseline	3,774 participants	No target
8 Proportion of studies open to recruitment or suspended	82%	More than or equal to 80%
9 Be Part of Research monthly registrations	11,527 participants	No target

Trust Level Set-Up Report

One of the deliverables of the 150-day [Study Set-Up Plan](#), a UKCRD programme of work aimed at streamlining and reforming the set-up and delivery of clinical trials, is to provide an additional monthly snapshot of site-level commercial study set-up performance. The aim of this report is to take initial steps in improving the granularity of study set-up activity to support closer to real time monitoring of system performance.

You can find the latest report here: [Trust Level Set-Up Report](#).



News and Announcements

The following updates are from our dedicated partners from across the sector.

- NIHR Newcastle Commercial Research Delivery Centre has recruited the first global patient to a major trial evaluating a novel treatment for COPD. With support from the [NIHR Industry Hub](#), the study's [first participant was recruited in 103 days](#), significantly ahead of the government's 150-day metric.
- The NIHR is proud to announce that on 16 December, it [increased the payment rate for public involvement](#) within the NIHR by 10%.
- Health and Care Research Wales have launched the [first centre for women's health research to tackle inequalities](#), the centre aims to strengthen investment in women's health research, including improving women's representation in clinical trials.
- HRA published a [blog](#) on progress made in 2025 including inviting the first users to access the new digital service, Plan and Manage Health and Care Research, marking the start of a major UK-wide transformation of research services. The blog also highlights upcoming plans for 2026 including the roll out of the updated clinical trials regulations across the UK.
- MHRA and Northern Ireland partners have confirmed a [strengthened programme of collaboration](#) to support innovation, enhance patient safety and ensure people in Northern Ireland continue to benefit from world-class regulation of medicines and medical technologies. MHRA has pledged to establish a clear point of contact in Northern Ireland.
- [Jennifer Crooks](#) has joined the CRDC UK Network as Network Operations Director. The Network brings together 21 CRDCs and 14 Primary Care CRDCs across the four nations to strengthen the UK's position as a global leader in commercial clinical research and accelerate the setup and delivery of commercial clinical trials.
- The latest [ECMC Industry Engagement Report 2025](#) was published by the ECMC network, highlighting how targeted, proactive engagement with industry partners is helping position the UK as a competitive and attractive location for innovative oncology trials.
- DHSC announced the [2026 payment percentage for newer medicines](#) under the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access (VPAG) will be 14.5%. The cut to the rebate rate follows a landmark [UK-US pharmaceuticals deal](#) which aims to encourage investment and the faster launch of innovative medicines while making the UK a more attractive destination for clinical trials.
- The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) published the [UK industry clinical trials: Translating actions into impact report](#) which highlights progress in the number of industry trials initiated in the UK but continued challenges in recruitment and delivery.
- Visit the NIHR [Life Sciences Industry Hub webpage](#), the hub serves as a single point of entry for commercial researchers in England to access the UK's clinical research infrastructure, offering expert support for study feasibility, site identification, and end-to-end delivery of clinical trials.
- Two leaders have been appointed to the Health Data Research Service (HDRS), [Baroness Nicola Blackwood](#) was appointed as Chair of the HDRS and [Dr Melanie Ivarsson](#) was appointed as CEO of the HDRS. The HDRS will accelerate medical breakthroughs by slashing red tape and provide a secure single access point for approved researchers to national health data.
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) confirmed there will be [reforms to cost-effectiveness thresholds](#) used to evaluate new medicines starting in April 2026 to accelerate patient access to innovation.

If you would like to submit an update to this monthly publication, please email UKCRDprogramme@dhsc.gov.uk.



Department
of Health &
Social Care