

February 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.

Highlights

- In January, HRA announced new guidance on the interpretation of IR(ME)R in NHS research. The guidance is available on the [UKCRD programme website](#), and provides clarifications on national research review processes and IR(ME)R legislation, to help make study set-up and the delivery of research quicker and easier.
- Updates to NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN) Portfolio Eligibility Criteria have been published on the [UKCRD programme website](#), studies must comply with national policy and central guidance to avoid unnecessary duplication of processes and reduce study set-up times.
- On 4 February, the Department of Health and Social Care published the [National Cancer Plan for England](#). The plan reinforces the importance of speeding up clinical trials and improving patient access. One of the research commitments is an establishment of a Cancer Clinical Trials Accelerator building on the success of the Vaccine Innovation Pathway, hosted and delivered through the NIHR Industry Hub.

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.

From 27 February 2026 onwards, an updated version of the Trust Level Set-Up report will be available. This report supersedes previous editions of the report published on the UKCRD programme website since April 2025.

Whilst it presents data for commercial interventional clinical trials in the first instance, reporting of data for non-commercial and observational studies is expected in the future. This report will be published monthly. Data are monitored on an ongoing, realtime basis, and sites are encouraged to enter data as soon as possible.

You can find the latest report here: [Trust Level Set-Up 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)	99%	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	50%	90%
3 Proportion of commercial contract studies recruiting first participant within 30 days of opening to recruitment	21%	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	82%	80%
6 Average monthly recruitment to all studies is maintained at high levels compared to the pre-pandemic baseline	88,915 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	3,534 participants	No target
8 Proportion of studies open to recruitment or suspended	83%	More than or equal to 80%
9 Be Part of Research monthly registrations	9,698 participants	No target

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.** Above is a snapshot of the full UK Clinical Research Delivery Performance Indicators Report.

[Click here to read the full report.](#)



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News and Announcements

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

- HRA is streamlining and standardising how non-CTIMP research is managed across the UK, in line with the updated clinical trial regulations which come into force across the UK on 28 April 2026. This will promote consistency across all UK clinical research, making it simpler for sponsors and researchers to obtain approvals. [Read the new guidance on the HRA website.](#)
- HRA and MHRA are holding a joint webinar about the upcoming changes to clinical trials regulations, on **Thursday 12 March from 2 to 4pm**. The session will also cover the guidance published to support sponsors and researchers through the transition. [Find out more and reserve a spot.](#)
- Stay up to date with [MHRA's latest guidance on the Clinical Trials Hub](#) which includes [new guidance](#) on transitional arrangements for the clinical trials regulations to support sponsor implementation.
- The Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries (ABPI) and the NIHR held an event earlier this month on strengthening collaboration and unlocking research growth on behalf of the UK CRDC Network. HSC R&D Northern Ireland have shared their reflections on the event and [how Northern Ireland is connecting with the pharma industry to boost commercially sponsored clinical trials.](#)
- A pioneering Welsh initiative from the National Cardiovascular Research Network, funded by Health and Care Research Wales and the British Heart Foundation has launched [AURORA](#), expanding inclusive cardiovascular research across NHS Wales to tackle under-representation and ensure every community can help to shape the future of heart health.
- As part of February 'Heart Month', Be Part of Research has raised awareness about heart disease and vital research in this area encouraging people to sign up. BPoR now has almost 75,000 people signed up to be contacted to hear about heart-related research. [Sign up to Be Part of Research.](#)

A number of sites have published success stories of recruiting quickly. We are always keen to hear of others: UKCRDprogramme@dhsc.gov.uk

- The Royal Marsden has achieved Global first and European first participant recruitment milestones in 2 commercial cancer clinical trials. Both trials successfully set up and recruited their first participant ahead of the UK government's 150-day ambition. [Read the full case study](#) for insight into their strategy for accelerated research delivery.
- The first patient globally has been recruited to test a new preventative therapy into the life-threatening and contagious gut infection, *C. difficile*. The study was accelerated through the UK Vaccine Innovation Pathway (VIP) - an initiative hosted by the NIHR and part of the UKCRD programme - and was set up in just 86 days. [Read the news story.](#)
- Whiston Hospital, part of Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, successfully recruited the UK's first participant for a commercial gastroenterology study in just 129 days. [Read the news story.](#)

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



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