



# **Delivering World Class Research for Lincolnshire Patients**

**Update on**

**Trust Research 2021 Strategy**

**2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019**



## **Summary**

Trust Research Strategy was developed and approved by the Board in April 2018. The Strategy described our ambition is to be a national leader in clinical research, with particular emphasis on rural health, which translates into improving patient care in the rural county of Lincolnshire.

The strategy implementation work started with the launch of Strategy on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Work is on-going to ensure we implement the 9 strategic objectives within a limited resources envelope. As part of on-going strategic development, particularly with the establishment of the Medical School in Lincoln, and also feedback received, the research strategy has been revised to incorporate *Innovation* as the Research and Innovation Strategy. As a living document, this Revised Research and Innovation strategy will be developed further over the next 6-12 months.

## **Update against Strategic Objectives**

### **Funding**

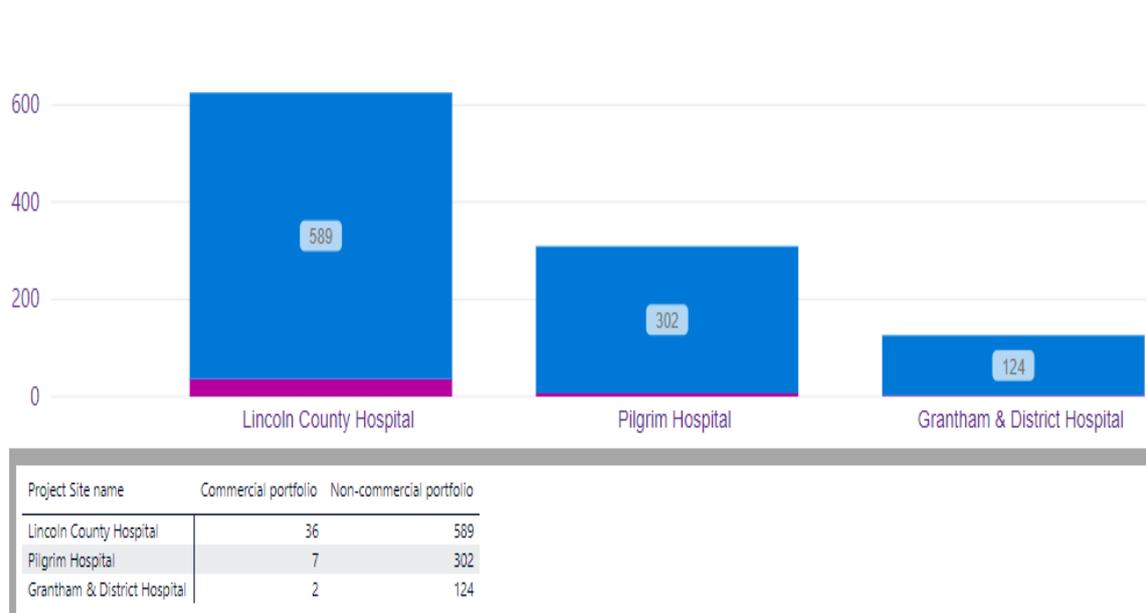
The Trust main sources of funding in the Trust has been via the NIHR Clinical Research Network, East Midlands (CRN) and commercial clinical trials. The Department is working to develop performance management tools to ensure we continue to maintain our patient recruitment into multi-centre clinical trials and funding from the NIHR CRN. The Trust R & I Department has negotiated extra funding from the CRN and expect to deliver our financial targets in the current financial year. At the time of writing (end Feb 2019) R&I is over spending by £11K. Following discussions with the CRN in 2018, it was informally agreed that the CRN may fund this overspend. The Network has already provided extra £25,000 in January 2019.

### **Recruitment**

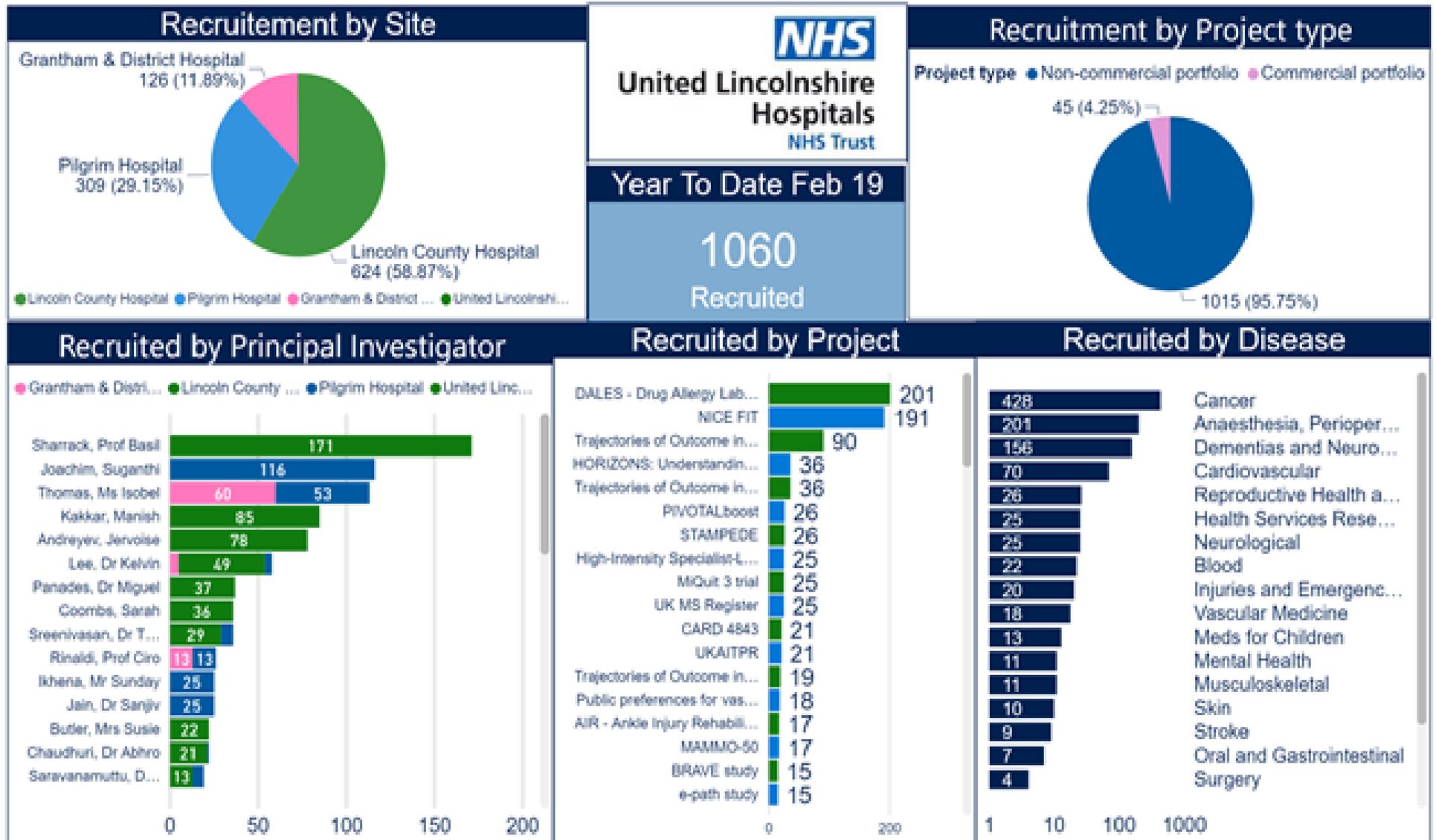
The Trust is recruiting well against its target of 1200 patients. By end of February 2019, the Trust has recruited 1060 patients from 21 disease areas in the current financial year 2018/19; this includes 145 cancer and 124 non-cancer patients from randomised control clinical trials. Whereas previously we supported clinical trials of only 3-4 specialities (particularly oncology and haematology), this has grown significantly in last few years. Clinical Research Facility (CRF) team members have

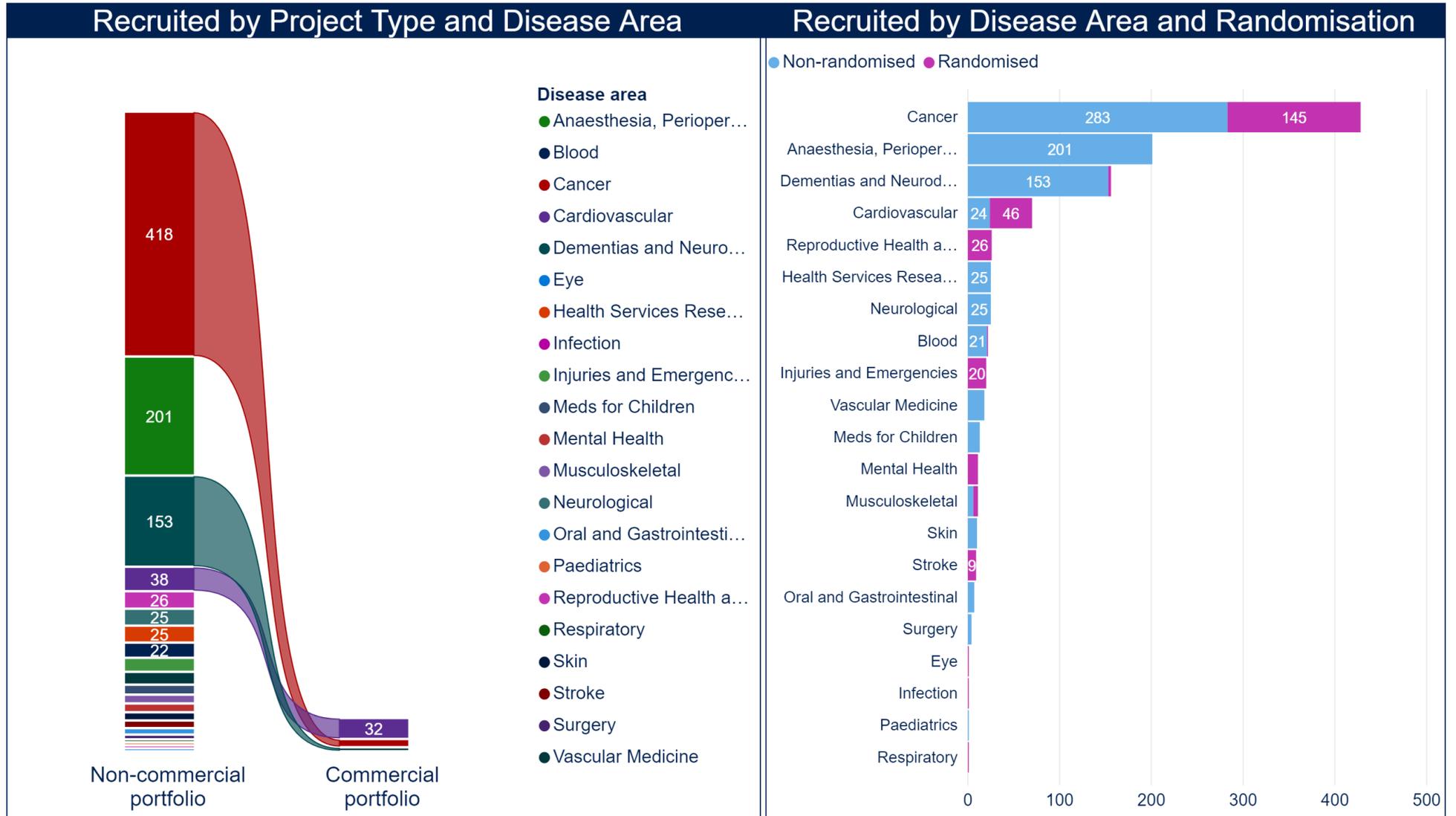
Agenda Item 9.4

been working to improve engagement with clinicians from different disease areas to ensure our patients benefit from new medication and treatments in as many areas as possible. The CRF has offices in each of the three main hospitals and has been recruiting patients from all three sites. In current financial years, the CRF team recruited 588 patients from Lincoln County Hospital, 302 from Pilgrim Hospital and 124 patients from Grantham and District Hospital.



Number of patients recruited from three main ULH sites from commercial and non-commercial studies





## Developing links with Strategic Partners

It has been recognised that for the Trust research to make a step change in R&I it needs to establish a variety of strong strategic partnerships. Key partnerships include the Clinical Research networks, commercial research companies and local universities, particularly the University of Lincoln.

Whilst the Trust has been successful in attracting funding from multi-centre clinical trials both from the CRN and across the commercially it has not been successful, in attracting research grants.

This strategic objective depends predominantly on our strong link with the University of Lincoln and developing and supporting our researchers in the grant writing process.

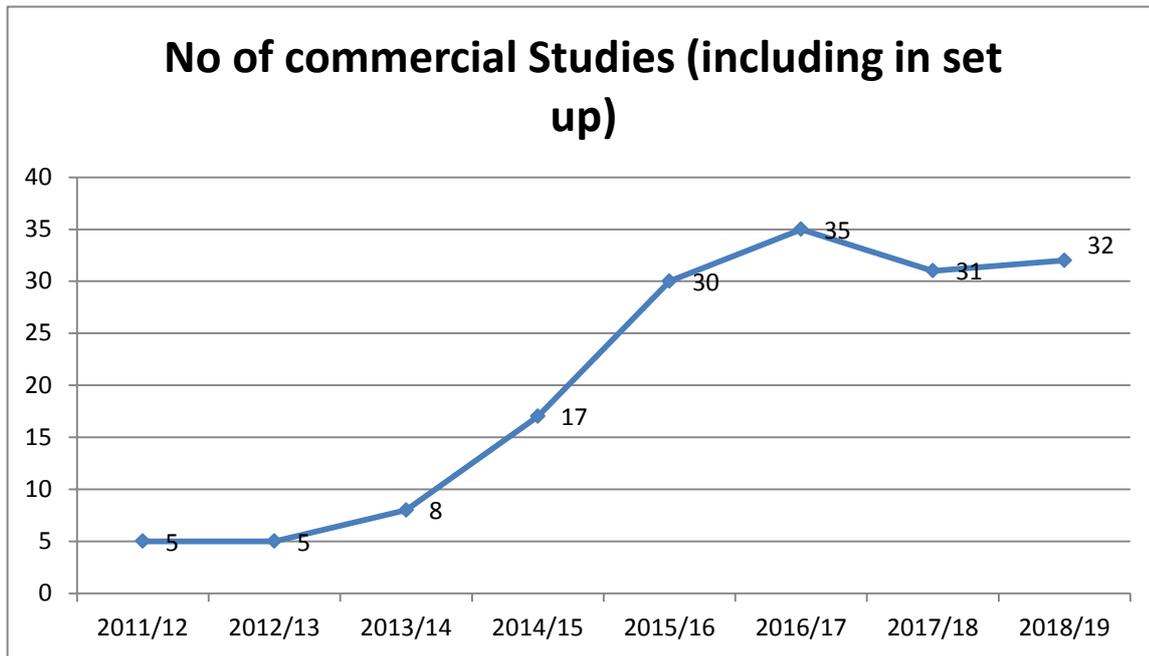
Strategic objectives 4, 5 and 6 (accommodation, strengthening of CRF and Tissue Biobank) also depends on collaborative research with local NHS Trusts and the University of Lincoln.

The Medical Director and the senior R & I team met with Professor Andrew Hunter (Deputy Vice-Chancellor) and Professor Sara Owen (pro-vice chancellor) in summer of 2018 and discussed a number of key points. It was suggested that we should meet again, when we will know outcome of the Medical School. Dr Hepburn, Professor Ahmed and R & I senior management is meeting with Professor Hunter, Professor Libby Jones (Pro-Vice chancellor) and other University senior management on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019 to discuss following key agenda items

1. Signing of memorandum of Understanding
2. Collaborative research grants
3. Joint CRF accommodation
4. Recognition of joint CRF and funding from NIHR
5. Tissue Biobank
6. Joint appointments
7. Streamlining of honorary appointments
8. Joint Research Office
9. Lincolnshire Health Research Strategy
10. Understanding and streamlining of ULH staff involvement in teaching

## Collaboration with Commercial Organisations

In last few years, the Trust has been supporting more commercial studies. Cancer and cardiology have been particularly successful in running commercial clinical trials. Whereas previously there has been no cardiology studies there are now several consultants are playing an active role in both commercial and non-commercial clinical trials.



In order to strengthen our links with commercial organisations, Mr Jan Sobieraj and Dr Jonathan Sheffield (NIHR CRN CEO) have introduced two key commercial organisations. Synexus Limited was recommended by Dr Sheffield and our first meeting took place on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2018. The meeting was attended by Dr Hepburn, Professor Ahmed, R & I senior management from the Trust, Managing Director of Western Europe, and UK Director of Operations from Synexus limited. A further teleconference took place on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019 with Professor Ahmed. Synexus limited expressed interest for 500 m<sup>2</sup> area either to renovate a building or have a purpose built dedicated facility for their research based in Lincoln County Hospital. A further meeting has been set up to discuss details on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019,

Synexus has already developed a research facility in Hexham General Hospital and the University Hospital of North Tees. The Hexham Facility was set up in 2014 and due to its success, plans are under way to increase the Synexus facility.

In addition, Dr Ian Smith MBE, a founder of Synexus Limited, from which he retired a few years ago, was introduced by Dr Sheffield has now set up new company Panthera Biopartners. Dr Smith has expressed interest in setting up a High Throughput Research Centre in Lincoln. If the collaboration is successful with either, or both, of these commercial entities, it will bring additional clinical trials in Lincolnshire for our patients, increase commercial income and create additional opportunities for our researchers to work collaboratively with an international commercial organisation. They will also contribute rental income, to the Trust.

### **Drive rural health research for the benefit of Lincolnshire Patients**

Professor Ahmed, in collaboration with colleagues from the Centre for Rural health and Care, Lincolnshire STP, and Bishop Grosseteste University, has secured funding for two rural health research projects. The first research project, entitled “Understanding and improving access to medical services and information for newly diagnosed elderly patients with cancer in rural settings”, was approved by the Charitable committee in October 2018 and the second is a PhD student research project, entitled “Self-management of type 2 diabetes and rural health”, was approved by the Trust charitable funds trustees on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2018. Work has already started to apply and seek approval from Health Research Authority, Research Ethics committee and ULH Trust.

### **Reconfiguration of R & I Office**

Reconfiguration of R & I office has started and consultation was completed on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019. Further discussions are taking place to right size the staff for the next phase to move this forward.

### **Risks**

In last 12-13 years, R & I and CRF have expanded significantly and attracted funding from the NIHR CRN and other commercial and non-commercial organisations. At present, the Trust is supporting 73 clinical studies including 38 drug trials and further 100 studies are in following up. In addition, the Trust is supporting a number of commercial studies. This

represents significant success for a District General Hospital with limited financial support from the Trust. However, the funding stream from NIHR is fragile and is likely to reduce.

It has been recognised that it is unlikely that the Trust can increase further funding from the NIHR CRN. A step change is therefore required to develop collaboration with commercial and non-commercial organisations.

### Next Steps

There are several opportunities, particularly with the establishment of Lincoln Medical School, for expanding clinical research in the Trust. The R & I Department generated £1,050,000 income from commercial and non-commercial organisations which has been ring-fenced to develop the R&I accommodation in Lincoln. This funding will facilitate the implementation of strategic objectives in collaboration with commercial partners and the University of Lincoln.

Professor Ahmed attended a workshop in London in October 2018 at which it was suggested that the Department of Health and Social care and NIHR would be announcing capital funding to support High Throughput Research Centres across the Country. Mr Sobieraj had submitted an expression of interest for High Throughput Research Centre on 22 October 2018. Though announcement of this capital funding has been delayed, our bid will be strengthened by investing our own capital funding.