

**South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board**  
*Pharmacy Research Strategy &  
Implementation Plan*  
**2026-2030**



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**Written by**

Hazel Jamieson, Embedded Pharmacist Researcher, South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

**Approved by**

Medicines Optimisation Strategic Oversight Group, South Yorkshire ICB

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# Introduction

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, collectively referred to as *pharmacy professionals*, remain underrepresented in research roles across the UK (National Institute of Health Research, 2017). Lord Darzi's independent review described the vital role that clinical academics play in bringing together research and practice but that their numbers are in decline (Lord Darzi, 2024). This strategy outlines a pragmatic and ambitious plan to grow pharmacy research capacity and capability across South Yorkshire. It is aligned with the priorities of the National Health Service (NHS), the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR) and the South Yorkshire Integrated Care System to meet the latter's vision:

*“for everyone in South Yorkshire to have the best possible start in life, with support to be healthy, and live well for longer.”* [South Yorkshire Integrated Care System, 2023]

Research is currently a statutory function of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) under the Health and Care Act (2022). However, in the context of ongoing NHS structural reforms, national policy indicates that some research responsibilities will be transferred to regional structures over time. ICBs will continue to play a key role by sustaining and expanding strategic partnerships that support population health priorities (NHS England, 2025). This strategy therefore describes how pharmacy teams can contribute to improving population health and reducing health inequalities through high-quality research. It aligns with the three national system shifts, from sickness to prevention, from hospital based to community based care, and from analogue to digital with neighbourhood level care at its core (Department of Health and Social Care, 2025).

The plan recognises the dual research role of pharmacy:

1. Designing and leading research that addresses local and national priorities; and
2. Supporting the safe and effective management of Investigational Medicinal Products (IMPs) across care settings.

It also acknowledges the crucial enabling role of quality improvement (QI) and clinical audit in building research ready professionals and generating research relevant questions. The strategy also emphasises strengthening capability in digital tools, data driven methods and emerging technologies to improve research quality, streamline delivery and enable broader collaboration within and beyond the pharmacy professions (NHS England, 2022; NIHR, 2023).

Finally, the strategy sets out a clear roadmap for establishing sustainable research leadership, developing the workforce, strengthening partnerships and measuring the impact of pharmacy research across South Yorkshire.

## Our Aims

| Aim                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Mapped to the National Pharmacy Research Strategy Goals* |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Establish new clinical academic pharmacy roles with an emphasis on primary care and population health                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 3.1, 3.3                                                 |
| 2. Design and implement an inclusive research support programme for pharmacy professionals in South Yorkshire that includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. research training, including in the use of digital tools,</li> <li>b. mentorship,</li> <li>c. job description and person specification research criteria for pharmacy roles linked to <a href="#">RPS learning outcomes</a> and</li> <li>d. support for pharmacy audit and quality improvement projects</li> </ul> | 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4                                       |
| 3. Understand the challenges and needs in relation to managing investigational medicinal products (IMPs) in primary care and identify collaborative ways of working to streamline services and support new ways of working                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 3.1, 3.2, 3.4                                            |
| 4. Set pharmacy research priorities for South Yorkshire in line with local, NHS and NIHR policy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 3.3                                                      |
| 5. Develop and maintain effective research partnerships and collaborations including a strategy for partnering with industry                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 3.2                                                      |
| 6. Develop and implement a plan to measure the impact of pharmacy research in South Yorkshire                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 3.2                                                      |
| 7. Develop a sustainable model for pharmacy research leadership across South Yorkshire                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 3.1                                                      |

| *UK Pharmacy Research Strategy Goals                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3.1. Build Research Skills and Leadership</b>         | Enable pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to develop the skills, confidence, and leadership needed for research, making research an essential competency across the professions.                                                             |
| <b>3.2. Develop Supportive Systems and Structures</b>    | Ensure pharmacists and pharmacy technicians across all settings have the potential to access organisational support, resources and the infrastructure needed to engage in and lead research                                                    |
| <b>3.3. Foster a Research-Positive Culture</b>           | Create a professional culture where research is a valued, expected and celebrated part of pharmacy roles, fostering engagement in research at every level of the professions                                                                   |
| <b>3.4. Embrace Digital and Technological Innovation</b> | Increase capability to use digital tools and emerging technologies to maximise the use of data and information to enhance research quality, streamline processes and expand research collaboration within and beyond the pharmacy professions. |

## A. Research Leadership

The ability to design and deliver research requires research skills, confidence and leadership which will be developed across pharmacy careers as described in the UK Pharmacy Research Strategy. This will be achieved through promotion of training programmes and mentorship schemes and the creation of opportunities for pharmacy professionals to participate in and lead research projects. The establishment of new clinical academic pharmacy posts is key to building a culture of research.

Consultant pharmacists are clinical academics who are credentialed by the [Royal College of Pharmacy](#); both the individual *and* the post must be credentialed separately (Royal Pharmaceutical Society, no date). Working across practice, research and education settings clinical academics play a crucial role in utilising learning from clinical practice to inform research, translating research into practice and training future pharmacy professionals (NHS England, 2024b). Taking a strategic approach based on the priorities described in Section D, new consultant pharmacist posts will be established in South Yorkshire according to these criteria:

- Clinical specialties will be prioritised by a specially convened stakeholder group.
- Clear remits for each post with measurable outcomes will be defined.
- Job descriptions and job plans will be devised based on the four pillars of practice and the person specification will be mapped to the [RCPharm Consultant Pharmacist Curriculum](#)
- Line management, mentorship, peer support and supervision will be defined and established.
- Contingency and succession planning will be clearly described.
- A risk assessment will be conducted, and appropriate indemnity and governance arrangements made.
- Funding model(s) will be designed based on the four pillars of practice, varying where required according to speciality and identified need.
- Partners will be sought:

| Pillar of practice      | Likely role(s)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Anticipated time (wte) | Potential partners and collaborators |                          |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Clinical                | Clinical management of complex patients in designated speciality<br>Clinical supervision                                                                                                                                                                                      | 0.2-0.4                | Primary and secondary care providers |                          |
| Leadership & Management | System wide role in medicines leadership within designated clinical speciality working across the system for example commissioning intentions<br>Seek funding in collaboration with others to create new posts to support the role with consideration for succession planning | 0.1-0.2                | SY ICB<br>SY ICS<br>SYMCA            |                          |
| Education               | Teaching and module/course design<br>Supervision of audit, QI and research projects at undergraduate and post-registration level                                                                                                                                              | 0.2-0.3                | HEIs                                 |                          |
| Research                | Plan and lead a programme of research<br>Apply for research grants and funding<br>Supervise junior researchers                                                                                                                                                                | 0.2-0.3                | NIHR<br>HEIs<br>VSCE                 | SY ICB<br>Private sector |

## B.Supporting and Developing the Workforce

### Research Support

Informed by evaluation of the SY programme delivered in 2025-2026, a programme of support will be developed delivered with these elements:

- Drop-in research cafes
- Signposting to 1:1 mentoring schemes and local, NIHR and academic support
- Training in use of digital tools
- Job description and person specification research criteria for pharmacy roles linked to RPS learning outcomes for all levels of practice will be developed or otherwise made available.
- Research training linked to RPS curricula learning outcomes will be made available.

### Resources

- A “one stop shop” of research opportunities will be made available and maintained on the SYICS website signposting to NHS, NIHR and other opportunities.
- One SY pharmacy research conference or research poster session will be held each year to showcase local pharmacy and medicines research and require commitment from stakeholders

### University of Sheffield Pharmacy Undergraduates

- Fourth year students must complete a QI or research project and a health promotion project entitled *Managing Change*.
- All SY consultant pharmacists are expected to co-supervise, or delegate to within their team, at least one pharmacy undergraduate project annually, which will be part of the consultant’s programme of research and aligned to the research themes in Section D.
- Additionally, the ICB will work with the university and providers to identify other pharmacy professionals in all sectors to co-supervise undergraduate projects aligned to the research themes.
- As the first cohort will commence their projects in October 2028, the ICB will begin this collaborative work in 2027.

### Quality Improvement and Audit

Recognising the importance of QI and audit in developing research skills and in generating potential research questions, the ICB will work with the SY Primary Care Training Hub and other partners to identify and meet QI and audit training and support needs of pharmacy professionals in SY.

## C. Investigational Medicinal Product (IMP) Management

Lord O'Shaughnessy's review described a drop of 44% in commercial clinical trials activity in the UK between 2017-18 and 2021-22 and recommended simpler and quicker processes to preserve competitiveness (Department of Health and Social Care 2023). The biggest overhaul of clinical trials regulations in 20 years will be enforced from 1st April 2026 and will address this by simplifying and streamlining approvals, reducing duplication and improving transparency (The Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025). The UK Government's Life Sciences Sector Plan aims to reduce commercial clinical trial set-up time to fewer than 150 days (Department for Business and Trade et al., 2025). Coupled with the drive to increase primary care research capacity (NHS 10yr plan) pharmacy must prepare for an expected increased demand for IMP management in primary care and wider settings.

IMPs must be managed in accordance with Good Clinical Practice (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, 2025), a function typically delegated to pharmacy professionals. However, the extent and type of trials involving IMPs and how they are managed in primary care and wider settings in SY is unknown.

Therefore funding will be sought to establish a senior clinical trial pharmacy leadership role to work closely with research delivery teams across South Yorkshire and conduct scoping work.

## D. Research Themes

| Local and National Clinical & Research Priorities                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Proposed Pharmacy Research Themes<br>(based on local & national priorities)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SYICS</b><br>(South Yorkshire Integrated Care System, 2023)                                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tackling health inequalities and helping people to have the best start in life</li> <li>2. Improving mental health and wellbeing</li> <li>3. Tackling the 'burden of illness' (prevention to reduce ill-health and early deaths caused by smoking, alcohol and obesity)</li> <li>4. Support early diagnosis and increased survival from cancer</li> <li>5. Improve the quality of care and outcomes in key areas such as cancer, children's and maternity services, and mental health and learning disabilities.</li> </ol> | <b>Clinical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cancer</li> <li>• children's &amp; maternity</li> <li>• cardiovascular disease (CVD)</li> <li>• diabetes &amp; obesity</li> <li>• frailty &amp; dementia</li> <li>• genomics</li> <li>• mental health &amp; learning disabilities</li> <li>• multiple long-term conditions (MLTC)</li> <li>• renal</li> </ul><br><b>Cross-cutting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaboration with life sciences industry</li> <li>• digital capability</li> <li>• health inequalities</li> <li>• prevention of disease</li> <li>• research in under-served communities, including primary care &amp; wider settings</li> </ul> |
| <b>Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England</b><br>(Department of Health and Social Care, 2025) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Hospital to community</u><br/>Neighbourhoods<br/>Local provision of services</li> <li>2. <u>Analogue to digital</u><br/>Digital capability in pharmacy teams</li> <li>3. <u>Sickness to prevention</u><br/>Genomics: cardiovascular, renal and diabetes<br/>Prevention of obesity</li> <li>4. <u>Quality Strategy</u><br/>Cancer, cardiovascular disease, mental health, frailty &amp; dementia</li> </ol>                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Y&amp;H NIHR RDN</b><br>(NIHR Yorkshire and Humber Regional Research Delivery Network, 2025)            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building on lessons from the COVID-19 response (agile delivery workforce)</li> <li>2. Strengthening preventative, public health &amp; social care research</li> <li>3. Improving care for people with multiple long-term conditions</li> <li>4. Expanding clinical research to under-served regions and communities</li> <li>5. Embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion</li> <li>6. Strengthening careers for research delivery staff</li> <li>7. Expanding collaboration with the life sciences industry</li> </ol>   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Transforming the UK clinical research system</b><br>(Govt. 2025)                                        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Streamline and reform the set-up and delivery of clinical trials through digitalisation and reducing unnecessary bureaucracy.</li> <li>2. Drive a 'right research, right setting' initiative, to include a radical move to research delivery in primary and community care.</li> <li>3. Move from a reactive to a proactive model of portfolio management (more industry engagement)</li> </ol>                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## E. Collaborations and Partnerships

Equality, diversity and inclusion is a core principle of how we collaborate.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>South Yorkshire Pharmacy Research Group</b></p> <p>The group will meet bi-monthly, with inclusive membership and agreed terms of reference and report to the ICB Digital and Innovation Group. It will monitor and review this strategy, examining the outputs and impacts and escalating risks as they arise.</p> | <p><b>Academia</b></p> <p>Strong relationships between NHS providers and academia are fundamental to creating successful clinical academic roles and partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All newly created consultant pharmacists will hold an academic contract.</li> <li>• Different models of employment will be explored including joint appointments and honorary contracts.</li> <li>• The employment model may be different for each post.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Follett principles for health and care professionals</a> will be followed where relevant</li> </ul> | <p><b>South Yorkshire</b></p> <p>Clinical Trials Research Unit<br/>Research and Development services for governance purposes<br/>Community Pharmacy South Yorkshire (CPSY)<br/>SYCMA<br/>SY Pharmacy Forum<br/>SY Primary Care Research Collaborative<br/>SY Digital, Research and Innovation System Delivery Group<br/>SY Health Innovation Network (HIN)<br/>SY Innovation Hub<br/>Healthcare Providers<br/>Patient groups and representatives<br/>Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE)<br/>Primary Care Commercial<br/>Research Delivery Centre (as they are established)</p> |
| <p><b>NHS North East &amp; Yorkshire Region</b></p> <p>NIHR Y&amp;H Research Delivery Network<br/>Y&amp;H Agile Research Team<br/>Great North Pharmacy Research Collaborative<br/>Office of Pan-ICB Commissioning (OPIC)</p>                                                                                             | <p><b>National</b></p> <p>NIHR Pharmacy Incubator<br/>NIHR School for Primary Care Research<br/>Pharmacy Research Advisory Group</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p><b>Private Sector</b></p> <p>Strategic partnerships with private sector organisations play a vital role in supporting research, innovation, and the translation of evidence into practice.<br/>Pharmaceutical industry<br/>Biotechnology and life sciences companies<br/>Digital health organisations<br/>Other commercial partners</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |



## F. Measuring Impact

A robust framework for measuring impact is essential to demonstrate the effectiveness of this strategy and to align with the ICB Model Blueprint, which emphasises outcomes-based commissioning, evidence informed decision making and transparent demonstration of value (NHS England, 2025). Impact will be measured by:

1. Number of research-active pharmacy professionals defined by at least one article in a peer-reviewed journal or conference abstract in the previous 2 years
2. Number of pharmacy professionals with protected time for research
3. Number of credentialed consultant pharmacist posts
4. Number of commercial and non-commercial CTIMP and non-CTIMP pharmacy-led studies with pharmacists acting as CI or PI
5. Participant recruitment to commercial and non-commercial CTIMP and non-CTIMP pharmacy-led studies
6. Service re-design based on research, QI and audit outputs
7. Number and type of NIHR career development awards won/held by pharmacy professionals
8. Number, type and value of grants and donations won by pharmacy professionals
9. Number, type and value of collaborative projects with industry
  - a. Research collaborations
  - b. Joint working
  - c. Collaborative working
10. Number of pharmacy professionals on NIHR Associate PI Scheme
11. Number of pharmacists credentialed to RCPharm curricula:
  - a. core advanced
  - b. advanced mental health
  - c. advanced critical care
  - d. consultant
12. Number of publications from pharmacy professionals categorised by
  - a. journal articles
  - b. review articles
  - c. conference papers
  - d. book chapters/monographs
  - e. dissertations/theses
13. Number of pharmacy job adverts/descriptions/person specifications containing research criteria
14. Number of studies with pharmacy involvement where the [VICTOR tool](#) has been applied
15. Patient impact stories through VICTOR and patient experience colleagues
16. Number of organisations utilising a tool to
  - a. review their pharmacy research capability and capacity (baseline) and create an implementation plan
  - b. re assess capability and capacity to assess progress
17. Evaluation of SY Pharmacy Research Support Programme

## G. Implementation Plan

| Financial Year                  | Workstream                                                                               |                                                                  |                                                                                              |                                                                                                      | Measuring Impact                                                                       | Sustainability                                                                          |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                 | Research Support Programme                                                               | Establishing Consultant Pharmacist Roles                         | IMP Management                                                                               | UoS School of Pharmacy Undergraduate Projects                                                        |                                                                                        |                                                                                         |
| <b>April 2026 to March 2027</b> | Design and deliver Phase 2<br><br><i>2-year programme based on evaluation of Phase 1</i> | Develop Wave 1 business case                                     | Obtain funding to support initial scoping work                                               | Q4: Commence collaborative work with School of Pharmacy to support UG projects                       | Set up system to capture metrics<br><br>Record agreed metrics<br><br>Q4: Annual report | Identify ways to establish sustainable research leadership<br><br>Develop business case |
| <b>April 2027 to March 2028</b> | Deliver and evaluate Phase 2                                                             | Develop Wave 2 business case<br><br>Recruit Wave 1 consultant(s) | Develop business case for new agile SY clinical trials pharmacy role and recruit             | Support UoS to devise programme and assist with stakeholder engagement                               | Record agreed metrics<br><br>Q4: Annual report                                         | Establish permanent role(s)<br><br>Ongoing review                                       |
| <b>April 2028 to March 2029</b> | Design and deliver Phase 3<br><br><i>2-year programme based on evaluation of phase 2</i> | Develop Wave 3 business case<br><br>Recruit Wave 2 consultant(s) | Devise and implement a 2-year plan including impact measures for IMP support in primary care | Q2-Q4: 1 <sup>st</sup> cohort of students conduct projects<br><br>Contribute to programme evaluation | Record agreed metrics<br><br>Q4: Annual report                                         | Ongoing review                                                                          |
| <b>April 2029 to March 2030</b> | Deliver and evaluate Phase 3                                                             | Recruit Wave 3 consultant(s)                                     | Deliver and evaluate plan and make recommendations for future work                           | Q2-Q4: 2 <sup>nd</sup> cohort of students conduct projects                                           | Record agreed metrics<br><br>Q4: Annual report                                         | Ongoing review<br><br>Develop 4-year strategy for 2030-2034                             |

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