*The**AHSN**Network*

NIHR | National Institute for Health Research

SURVEY OF LOCAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION NEEDS OF THE NHS

REGIONAL STATEMENT FOR HEALTH INNOVATION NETWORK (SOUTH LONDON AHSN)

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NHS
England

HEALTH INNOVATION NETWORK: DRAFT STATEMENT OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PRIORITIES

BACKGROUND

In November 2017, NHS England and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) published the paper "Twelve actions to support and apply research in the NHS". The paper requested that, in order to articulate regional NHS needs the 15 Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) working with their regional NIHR infrastructure, each produce a statement of regional NHS innovation and research needs on behalf of their regional Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STPs). The AHSN Network commissioned an independent research consultancy, ComRes, to design, implement and deliver a survey that would provide a detailed understanding of the innovation and research needs at regional level and across all AHSNs. A governance group was established to oversee the project, with representatives from NHS England, the AHSN network, and NIHR. The project gathered the views of regional health stakeholders between June and October 2018, with 61 qualitative telephone interviews conducted, followed by a quantitative survey of 257 stakeholders.

This exercise focused on the views of clinicians and managers rather than researchers and short to medium term priorities.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PRIORITIES FOR HEALTH INNOVATION NETWORK

Of the stakeholders identified by the Health Innovation Network (AHSN for South London), 4 stakeholders were interviewed and 15 completed the survey about local innovation and research needs. Given the size of the sample that the research draws upon, we have reported the results as indicative findings in the context of the larger set of national data, with many of the national findings reflected in the consultation with the Health Innovation Network's stakeholders.[1]

Key themes emerged in the national findings to do with workforce issues, mental health, an aging population, multi-morbidities, and frailty. Within these high-level issues, challenges around new models for organisational and service delivery, and use and application of digital technology are areas where participants felt innovation and research could help.

SYSTEM-LEVEL PRIORITIES[2]: When asked about system-level topics (broad challenges or opportunities spanning the health service) national stakeholders identified their top three priorities as **workforce issues** (41% had in their top three), **integrated care** for those with multi-morbidity and/or complex social care needs (39%) and optimising the use of **digital technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI)** (33%). Health Innovation Network stakeholders similarly viewed workforce issues as a high priority, and placed the same emphasis on integrated care. Fewer Health Innovation Network stakeholders mentioned optimising the use of digital technology and AI as a high priority.

MEDICAL TREATMENT AREAS: National stakeholders were most likely to identify **mental illness**, **multi-morbidities** and **frailty** in their top three priority medical treatment areas for research and innovation (57%, 46% and 44% respectively). This was reflected amongst the Health Innovation Network stakeholders, for whom mental illness was also viewed as a priority area, but with frailty and multi-morbidities less so.

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[1] In this report, the term "national" is used to refer to the total population of stakeholders who participated in this project on the invitation of all AHSNs involved. This group incorporated the stakeholders of 14 AHSNs who completed the online survey and the stakeholders from 15 AHSNs who took part in a telephone interview.

[2] System-level priorities refer to any aspect of the processes, infrastructure and resources used in the delivery of public health services and care. By system level we do not mean specific conditions/ diseases, or the functionality of individual organisations and practices.

SPECIFIC GROUPS: 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 top three priorities for research and innovation (62%, 50% and 46%). The Health Innovation Network stakeholders also viewed those with mental health conditions and socially-isolated people as priorities, but were less likely to select older people as a priority group.

NEXT STEPS

AHSNs will facilitate further discussions at regional level to refine the priorities identified through the project. These discussions will include the research community, health and social care partners, health care practitioners, as well as patients and the public NHS England and NIHR will consider these findings and each AHSN's final list of research priorities.