Contents

Our vision and mission .................................................................................. 2
What we do ........................................................................................................ 4
Our work and goals .......................................................................................... 4-7
Research strategy ............................................................................................ 8
Our themes ......................................................................................................... 9-10
Research funding ............................................................................................. 11-12
Our vision and mission

The challenge

Pharmacy is one of the key building blocks of health provision in the UK, supporting the health of the nation in many different ways, from the work of local community pharmacies and hospital pharmacy, to specialist pharmaceutical care. But there is increasing pressure across all health services, including pharmacy, in meeting the needs of a population that is living longer, often with multiple complex conditions. Building the services that can meet those needs requires high-quality, focused research and evaluation, increasing the understanding of what makes a difference for patients, and how that support can be delivered more effectively and efficiently.

This means that there is an important role for pharmacy research to drive improved patient outcomes, but for this to happen we need:

- to build the skills and the capacity of the pharmacy research workforce, supporting pharmacists to use their skills and experience to drive impactful research;
- to make sure that pharmacy research is an integral part of health research, recognising and exploring the part that pharmaceutical care plays in improving the public's health;
- to build a body of significant research, conducted according to the highest standards, that can in time help to drive improvements in policy and practice of pharmaceutical care;
- to address the barriers that can prevent pharmacists from getting involved in and leading research;
- to raise the profile of pharmacy research, both through sharing and promoting research projects and through supporting the development of leaders and champions for pharmacy research within the health research community and beyond.

Our mission

Pharmacy Research UK (PRUK) funds capacity building and original research to help pharmacy and pharmacists improve the public’s health and deliver better outcomes for patients.
Our work and our goals

Building the pharmacy research workforce

We believe that pharmaceutical care and the work of pharmacists plays a significant role in the health of the public. And we believe that pharmacy research can therefore play an important role in improving outcomes for patients. Research can help us to understand and develop the provision of pharmaceutical care, the work of pharmacists and the needs of patients. This understanding can lead to policy development and ultimately to practice change that will make a difference to the experience of patients. In order to deliver this sort of change we need to help build and develop the pharmacy research workforce – helping both to embed research skills among pharmacists and to create the pharmacy research leaders of the future.

To do this we will:

✔ Deliver, as resources allow, an annual programme of developmental grants and bursaries, supporting pharmacists to deliver research and enhance their research skills;

✔ Explore opportunities and seek funding / partnerships that could allow us to develop a programme of support to help pharmacists achieve doctoral degrees exploring relevant areas of pharmacy research.

How do we measure success?

✔ Number of developmental grants/PhDs/Fellowships awarded/delivered and active Red-Amber-Green status monitoring of project progress;

✔ All projects to deliver key outputs: final report, summary, and abstract

✔ Feedback from grantees monitoring satisfaction with PRUK and identifying areas for development.

Supporting high quality research into the practice of pharmacy

Alongside building and developing the pharmacy research workforce we want to support significant original pharmacy research. In particular we want to fund research that helps to deliver real patient benefit, building our understanding of how pharmaceutical care and the work of pharmacists can be improved to deliver better outcomes. We want research into the practice of pharmacy to be a key part of health services research, with PRUK supporting high-quality, impactful projects that can open doors to major funding.
To do this we will:- Update our research strategy and priorities (see page 8) to set out our new priorities for pharmacy research;- Deliver a programme of larger grants, targeted to both deliver positive impact to pharmacy practice and to help open doors towards further funding;- Explore opportunities and seek funding / partnerships that could allow us to develop a prestigious academic fellowship programme.

How do we measure success?- Conduct annual reviews of the research strategy and priorities to ensure it remains fit for purpose; Number of grants awarded / delivered and active RAG monitoring of project progress;

- Use of monitoring tools to understand and record research impact, such as whether research has led to further funding, changes in practice etc.;
- All projects to deliver key outputs – final report, summary, abstract
- Feedback from grantees monitoring satisfaction with PRUK and identifying areas for development.

**Entering partnerships to amplify the value and reach of pharmacy research**

Using pharmacy research to improve the health of the public is a challenging, long-term goal, and while we can continue to fund important and impactful projects we can both extend our resources, and increase our impact, through partnerships. We will seek to build links with organisations who share our ambitions to improve the health of the public and improve patient outcomes. This might be other research organisations, funders, campaigning organisations or anyone who shares our values and can expand our reach. This work might involve working in consortiums to help deliver a unified voice on key issues, or it might involve creating individual matched-funding projects to help increase the scale of research project that we can fund.

**To do this we will:**

- Establish new funding relationships to support research with partner organisations who share our vision, and meet the requirements of our ethical policy;
- Identify and make contact with any relevant coalitions and consortiums which we feel could help to advance the cause of pharmacy research.

**How do we measure success?**

- Number of formal funding partnerships;
- Added value to our research portfolio secured through partnerships.

**Using and promoting research**

Funding pharmacy research is the core activity of PRUK, but we also need to ensure that we make best use of that research. This includes promoting and publishing research ourselves, as well as through partner organisations, and working where we can to ensure that pharmacy research is seen as an integral part of wider health research. Using our research means ensuring that all projects we fund produce outputs that we can use and disseminate, as well as ensuring that we are working with others to find the right channels to increase awareness and understanding of pharmacy research.

**To do this we will:**

- Publish summaries and reports from all our research on our website, and encourage our researchers to use the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) Open Research platform;
• Use traditional and social media to publicise research findings to maximise awareness and understanding; - Over time develop a ‘hub’ for pharmacy research, providing a one-stop site that raises awareness of our research, connects pharmacy researchers to other health service researchers across the nation, and supports researchers to find the relevant patient
• Develop our own surveying and social research to help us monitor our effectiveness and to provide opportunities to promote the importance of pharmacy research.

How do we measure success?
• Number of publications each year from PRUK funded research;
• Monitoring the impact of our communications through other relevant platforms;
   Bench marked stakeholder survey to track the impact of our funded activities.

Building a sustainable organisation

PRUK uses the returns on our investment portfolio to support research, along with any other funds we can secure. But to increase our impact we need also to increase the resources available to us. We will need to maintain active budget controls, working closely with our investment managers to ensure we are maximising our investment. We will also need to find new sources of income, pursuing fundraising and partnership opportunities with like-minded organisations and individuals. Our long-term aim will be to delivering, and eventually growing, our research portfolio sustainably, maintaining the organisation’s assets, will increasing our impact.

To do this we will:
• Meet our Charity Commission requirements to maximise our investment returns, in line with our agreed ethical policy;
• Maintain active financial management processes, including through an annual budget, and quarterly financial reports overseen by our finance and investment committee;
• Develop and implement a fundraising strategy, aiming to grow our income year on year.

How do we measure success?
• Annual return on investment;
• Number of funding applications submitted / success rate;
• Income, broken down by source.

Understand our current and potential stakeholders and beneficiaries

In order to ensure we are meeting our goals we need to understand and communicate effectively with our current and potential stakeholders. This means regular and ongoing engagement to ensure that our beneficiaries know what we are doing, as well as regular feedback to help us develop and improve what we do. In the longer-term we need to ensure we understand the pharmacy research landscape, as well as the issues and barriers that can limit the impact or development of research.

To do this we will:
• Develop a communications strategy to ensure we have regular ongoing communication with current and potential stakeholders;
   Ensure we are providing regular, relevant and up-to-date information through our website, social media and other channels;
• Receive regular feedback from grantees to ensure we are continually developing and improving the support that we can offer;
• Develop a stakeholder survey to understand the pharmacy research environment.
How do we measure success?
• Recording website visits and social media reach;
• Benchmarked stakeholder survey;
• Regular feedback from grantees.

Be well-run and efficient
Within our limited resources it is vital that we run as efficiently as possible, maximising the resources we can offer to fund and support pharmacy research. This would include ensuring best practice in the delivery and management of our research programme, and maintaining our membership of the AMRC. We will also be a positive and inclusive employer, ensuring we follow best governance practice for voluntary sector organisations.

To do this we will:
• Maintain an active and engaged Trustee board and Scientific Advisory Panel, fully supported by the staff team;
• Ensure all relevant returns and information are submitted to the Charity Commission ahead of deadlines;
• Ensure we follow all AMRC guidelines for best practice in research funding;
• Maintain a full set of organisational policies and procedures, in line with Charity Commission guidance.

How do we measure success?
• Annual audit delivered;
• All returns / accounts submitted before deadline;
• AMRC membership maintained;
• Record and update all internal policies.
Our research strategy

Research principles

PRUK wants to ensure that our resources deliver the greatest possible impact. To ensure that the research we fund addresses key current issues and can help drive positive change, we have agreed a broad set of themes and issues as a focus for the work that we fund. These areas highlight where we feel we can make a difference and how new research projects and awards can fit in our priorities to help build a coherent, targeted research portfolio.

Research funded by PRUK will give due consideration to the potential application of research to pharmacy practice, applying robust methodologies to address the pertinent issues affecting patients. This could include, for example:

- Support during the development of the proposal at application stage and throughout the conduct of the research, via a supervisor or peers with relevant expertise such as a research track record;
- An assessment of the health economic components of the research;
- A plan of how to integrate recommendations from findings into current practice, and/or any areas where further investigative work may be required;
- The impact of the research on specific patient groups;
- Contingency plans for unexpected delays, such as with ethics or patient recruitment.

Following discussion with Trustees and the Scientific Advisory Panel, as well as discussion with selected stakeholders and relevant organisations, we have identified some key themes and issues for research. We are particularly interested in research that can ultimately help to change practice, and as a smaller funder recognise that this can often be through smaller research projects that can build towards major, long-term studies and substantial awards from other funders.
Our themes

1. The pharmacist – workforce/skills

Exploring the current and future needs of pharmacists, the nature of the role and the people who practice. This might include:

- Pharmacy education and skills / training / development
- Integration of services
- Workforce needs, structure and capacity
- Collaborative working with professionals beyond pharmacy

2. The future of pharmacy

Research investigating the role of pharmacy in the future, and how it can develop to deliver increased patient benefit, given the changing landscape of healthcare. This might include:

- Future service models and new pharmacy roles
- Personalised medication (such as stratified medicine and pharmacogenomics)
- The impact of telemedicine and internet medicines supply
- Effectiveness, cost and uptake of new technology
- Making better use of digital and data in pharmacy
- Ensuring pharmacy is at the forefront of addressing future health challenges
3. **Pharmacy and patients**

Research exploring the way in which pharmacists and other professionals in pharmacy engage with and support patients, and how this might change and develop. This might include:

- Co-production of pharmacy services with patients and carers
- Pharmacy and antimicrobial resistance
- Pharmacy and minor ailments
- Shared decision-making
- The role of pharmacy in tackling health inequalities

4. **Safe medicines use**

Research exploring medicine safety and efficiency, understanding the role of pharmacists and other service providers in ensuring the best use and outcomes from pharmaceutical care. This might include:

- Safe use of medications at home
- Multimorbidity, polypharmacy and associated risks
- Over-prescribing/deprescribing and getting the right balance
- Evaluation of new prescribing models

5. **Mental health and pharmaceutical care**

Research exploring how pharmacists can best support and work with people with mental health conditions. This might include:

- The skills/knowledge needed by pharmacists to support people with mental health conditions
- The effectiveness, efficiency and patient acceptability of pharmacy-based interventions in improving the quality of life of people with mental health conditions
- Understanding the pharmaceutical care needs of people with mental health conditions and how pharmacy, including pharmacists, can contribute to this

6. **Pharmacy and long-term conditions**

Research exploring how pharmacists can best support people with long-term conditions. This might include:

- Supporting people with long-term conditions, for example, diabetes, asthma, epilepsy or heart and circulatory diseases
- Supporting people being treated for, and who have survived, cancer
- Supporting an ageing population, including patient-centred service design to support multimorbidity
- The effectiveness, efficiency and patient acceptability of pharmacy-based interventions in improving the quality of life of people with dementia
- Exploring the role of pharmacists in providing support to the wider healthcare team, including carers of patients with long-term conditions.
Research funding

PRUK offers developmental and capability-building funding to fulfil our vision to enable pharmacists to undertake research and integrate their skills within the wider research landscape. PRUK also offers awards for individuals to carry out a project as part of their doctoral studies, which has enabled them to establish themselves as a researcher and gain further funding from prestigious organisations, such as the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). We recognise the importance that these funding schemes have, as they allow the pharmacist to build a foundation of skills and knowledge they require in order to be able to apply for a larger grant. PRUK is committed to continuing to support the development of the pharmacy research workforce and pharmacists’ research skills.

We also recognise the importance of providing longer standing grants that enable the researcher time to build research networks and to produce and disseminate research outputs. Alongside the current developmental funding, we also offer grants for more established and experienced health researchers, and aim to develop funding for PhD studentships and other academic fellowships. This approach will allow us to cover a range of funding schemes at different levels, thereby allowing us to reach further to the pharmacy research community and increase the opportunities they have to input into research, from doctoral level to research that is closer to the trajectory of patient benefit.

As an organisation seeking to improve the health of the public through research into pharmacy care and services, we expect that our various funding schemes will have different types of outcomes. The general expectations are outlined below:

Research Development Awards and Bursaries

We expect these awards to benefit individuals who have a passion to get involved in research or to pursue a research career and seek further funding to develop their research proposal and expand upon the findings of their PRUK-funded projects. We would expect award holders to disseminate their findings to appropriate academic networks, with the purpose of informing further research in the area and to collaborate where appropriate with more established researchers who share similar research interests. We look at both the research topic, relevance and methodological rigour, as well as the aspirations of the award holder and their future research plans. It is expected that the awards will help the award holder to develop their skills and their research career pathway, and eventually help build towards policy change and patient benefit. A clear path of events needs to be established for the months following the end of the funded project.

PhD Studentships and research fellowships

Our hope is to be able to offer PhD studentships and research fellowships, which we would intend to be prestigious awards offered to individuals who demonstrate a clear aptitude in research that fits within a specific strategic area. Award holders will have a solid understanding of the fundamental skills required to undertake a research project and should be supervised throughout the funding period. It is expected that the award holder has ambitions to pursue a research-active career and has begun to establish networks with peers and researchers in their area. The outcome of their research should be disseminated to relevant networks, publication bodies and conferences.
Project grants and partnerships

As well as our developmental and early-career grants we will also continue to offer larger, longer-term awards, ideally in partnership with other research funders. These grants are for work led by researchers with an established track record in research and the award holder is expected to have secured funding as principal investigator before applying for this scheme. The intended outcome of these grants is to help lead to a significant impact on practice, through a change in policy or service improvement in the short to mid-term.

Throughout our existence PRUK have regularly held partnership funding calls – working jointly with other research funders and organisations who share our goals. This has included joint awards with organisations like the UK Clinical Pharmacy Association and the British Oncology Pharmacy Association. As part of our commitment to increasing our reach and maximising research opportunities for pharmacists and working pharmacy professionals, we continue to seek partnerships with other organisations and provide more specific funding calls based on our mutual interests and shared strategic areas. These awards are likely to have a more specific focus, or specific eligibility criteria, but this will always be made clear in the terms of the awards.

Pharmacy Research UK, 2019