

## Introduction

This paper provides a summary of a joint workshop run by NHS Research & Development North West and the Centre for Professional Workforce Development. The workshop, attended by people with team leadership responsibility from psychology, pharmacy, healthcare scientists and allied health professionals, sought to initiate a meaningful discussion on the development of a culture of research and innovation within the North West NHS workforce and the support required to deliver on this agenda.

Over 150 delegates from 47 NHS organisations in the North West registered to attend. The morning commenced with three presentations:

- Melanie Ogden. Head of Innovation Delivery NHS England  
*The National Innovation Agenda*
- Dr Jim Gardner Medical Director Lancashire Local Area Team NHS England  
*The Role of Research in Informing Commissioning*
- Dr Liz Mear CEO North West Coast Academic Health Science Network and the Walton Centre  
*Leading cultures of research and innovation within clinical teams*

The presentations were followed by a World Café which provided the opportunity to explore 3 questions:

- What does a team with a good culture of research and innovation look like
- How should team leader support and facilitate a culture of research and innovation
- What skills and expertise do team leaders need to help them support this agenda

Table hosts were asked to provide a summary of the discussions relating to each question. The summaries have been synthesized to provide an overview of the discussions which took place

## 1. What does a team with a good culture of research and innovation look like?

a) Characteristics at organizational level were described as follows:

- The culture should be driven and owned from the top down and bottom up (including service users).
- There needs to be system of communication in place between board level and team leaders/managers to drive this culture informed by a shared ownership of the agenda.
- There needs to be a clear and shared understanding across the organization of what it means to have a culture of research and innovation and how this fits with organizational goals.
- Within the organization there should be a clear structure for supporting team leaders.

b) Characteristics of a culture of research and innovation within a team were described as:

ambitious;	forward thinking;	challenging;	engaged
supportive;	receptive;	clear vision;	enquiring
questioning;	curious;	cohesive;	

Other key themes were that research and innovation:

- should not be abstract or seen as an add on but embedded in and part of everyday work. Having separate researchers can be seen as elitist

- should be informed by collaborative working within the multi-disciplinary, with other teams and with other sectors
- requires an appropriate knowledge and skill mix located within multidisciplinary team working.

c) *The qualities of clinical leadership to support a culture of research and innovation were described as being:*

- Transformational; tenacious; strong;
- Leading by making evidence based decisions
- Being prepared to take risks
- Leadership of culture to get over barriers, be ground breaking
- Taking responsibility for creating opportunities, being creative in using resources.
- Looking for a way in, not a way out

People who have:

- an open attitude which does not close questions down
- a clear vision of what they want to achieve
- an openness for ideas but also has the ability to manage ideas
- an open door/open attitude policy
- the political skills to engage higher execs who can make or break key projects
- an understanding that research is integral to retention and recruitment
- a personal passion for research and innovation
- an awareness of opportunities and who nurture and engage staff

People who have the ability to

- create a conducive environment by ruling nothing in or ruling nothing out.
- encourage the generation of ideas, even if they fail as long as teams learn from this.
- keep the team motivated
- get people involved early on in their career encouraging staff to question as routine leading to increased confidence.
- develop a team ethos of collaborative working and researching in line with the corporate goal.
- create a culture of service improvement to improve patient care.
- Managing insecurities and rivalries within teams

## **2. How should team leaders support and facilitate a culture of research & innovation?**

a) *Developing a culture*

- Making research language more accessible to staff.
- Capturing the bridge between formal research and good innovative practice.
- Provide dedicated time and access to resources
- Develop a clear understanding of the skills of R&I that people hold within the team,
- Assign all team members to service evaluation/audit/research
- Use national strategy to promote discussion including NICE guidance and national guidelines
- Have research and innovation as a standing item at team meetings
- Display research posters in office
- Stimulate continual team debates at meetings questioning practice, discussing case studies leading to development of guidelines for standardized approach.
- Organise bi-monthly meetings/large presentations.
- Showcase research studies by presenting results of research to patients and team.
- Make good example of those involved in research for example those presenting findings at a conference, increases morale
- Develop a forum to discuss good ideas
- Encourage the team to look outwards (journals, forums etc) rather than being introspective.

- Pick the focus of research to help address challenges within the team (ie how do we work smarter, add value etc). Whole team working on one project
- Effective use of IT
- Identify funds and backfill
- Go for awards
- Set students up with small projects
- Knowing what patients think

#### *b) Developing skills and expertise*

- Map research experience of team members
- Develop a research mentorship scheme to create research champions to facilitate the culture i.e. facilitate leadership in R&D
- Providing mentorship for research active staff from outside of the team
- Encourage mentorship from experienced researchers – promoting passionate research champions
- Identify a team lead for research and innovation development
- Don't restrict ideas to the obvious team members, encourage unlikely team members to contribute and be aware that R&I isn't always a PhD
- Incentivise staff – give something back to staff for their efforts
- Make R&I an appraisal objective for all staff
- Provide time equally to all team members, lower banded staff as well as those with more experience
- Review team roles when someone leaves
- Review job plans, use appraisals to plan next activities
- Provide protected time for researchers whilst but ensuring that the whole team understand the value of research and support the 'researcher'

#### *c) Networking activities.*

- Develop effective links with HEIs, CLRN and other research centres.
- Use other resources for help e.g. NIHR website
- Links with industry
- Close working with University etc to support research. Need to link with Trusts.
- Horizon scanning
- Develop strong links with the library and clinical librarians
- Develop Research placements
- Encourage people to network outside of the organization, seeking out best practice and bringing it back

### **3. What Skills and expertise would be helpful**

The following themes were identified:

- Knowledge of the research landscape at national level
- Knowledge of expertise in own geographical area
- Knowledge of what our patients want
- Project management within teams
- How do we translate undergraduate skills into postgraduate practice
- Understanding of the funding and bid writing process
- Tools and knowledge of methodologies
- Developing a research narrative to use in teams – why is research important
- Knowledge of wider networks and how to access them
- How to manage ideas and motivate staff
- Know who can help and support and how they can be reached
- Understanding of the work of R&D departments and how to use them

- How to engage in the research community within own Trusts/organisations to understand what is going on and how to get involved
- How to develop links with an HEI
- Having a good understanding of the research process in order to demystify it for others and create confidence
- Knowing what opportunities are available in terms of awards/funding
- Knowledge of the breadth of research that teams can be involved in i.e. research is more than clinical trials of drugs
- Quality improvement methodology
- Understanding how R&I fits in with wider organizational objectives
- Development of mentors for research champions
- How to publish/display outcomes or results of research – impact
- Training of appraisers to ensure understanding/support of junior staff during PDR

### **Challenges identified which didn't fit into the above headings**

- Balancing sharing and protecting best practice in a competitive tendering environment
- Commissioners need to be part of/joined up with research as part of the commissioning process – add it to the commissioning cycle
- Commissioning can stifle research
- IT systems to support R&I within and across organisations