

CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

August 2025

UKCRF NETWORK



Thank you!

With over 900 attendees and representatives from CRFs, BRCs, DHSC, NHS R&D and more, this years' Conference is our largest yet and a true demonstration of collaboration across the experimental research infrastructure.



Contents

- 1 [Celebrating the Conference](#)
- 4 [Highlights from Social Media](#)
- 7 [Poster Winners](#)
- 10 [Conference Resources](#)
- 11 [Save the date](#)
- 12 [Acknowledgements](#)

Celebrating the Success of the Joint NIHR BRC & UKCRF Network Conference 2025

We are delighted to reflect on the huge success of this years' Conference, held on the 14th and 15th July in Birmingham and jointly hosted by NIHR Birmingham Biomedical Research Centre (BRC), NIHR Birmingham Clinical Research Facility (CRF) and the UKCRF Network.

This landmark event marked the first-ever joint conference between BRCs and CRFs, bringing together over 900 delegates from across the United Kingdom and Ireland — a true collaboration on a national scale.



Victoria Day, Head of NIHR Birmingham BRC, said:
“It’s been brilliant to have BRCs involved in the conference this year. We are an enormous, extensive research community, and we must work together. By doing so, we have the potential to drive and shape experimental research that benefits all patients.”





Jo Gray, Clinical Manager, NIHR Birmingham CRF and UKCRF Network Work Package Lead said:
The conference featured a dynamic programme of “plenary speakers including global pharma and NIHR leads, delivering on a variety of topics from women’s health to anti racism topics.

Break out sessions were also led by staff representing BRCs, CRFs, CRDCs as well as other infrastructures, offering a broad range of interactive sessions.

The conference has been completely inspiring. We’ve had so many interesting sessions delivered by staff from a range of organisations, bringing a whole new dimension to our annual conference.”

The parallel sessions offered interactive, diverse, and engaging content providing an excellent learning environment and reinforcing the importance of ongoing professional development across the research delivery workforce.



Reflections from UKCRF Network Director, Paul Brown



“I’d like to put on record my sincere thanks to the Birmingham Conference planning team and Sophie and Lucy in our own operations team, for the huge effort that went into another magnificent UKCRF Network Conference.

As a veteran of all 20+ to date, I honestly feel this one reached a high-water mark for collaboration across UK and Ireland and NIHR infrastructure, not just with our co-hosts the BRCs, but also other NIHR networks. This was especially apparent in some of the day 2 parallel sessions – these really are proving to be an excellent learning environment for our delivery staff.

What is always the best and most significant aspect of these events though, is the chance to network and catch-up with friends and colleagues. I’m sure I’m not alone in saying the organisation, space and environment allowed for literally dozens of great conversations over the 2 days and Birmingham both as a team and a city, proved warm and welcoming hosts.

Many thanks to all who attended and don’t forget to provide feedback as this will really help shape the future.”



Highlights from Social Media

We've been thrilled to see delegates take to social media to share their experiences at the NIHR BRC & UKCRF Network conference, using hashtag #CRFBRC25

From insightful takeaways to heartfelt shout-outs and photos capturing the energy of the event, your posts have shown just how impactful these two days were.

Here are just a few of the highlights shared by attendees...

Research & Innovation Department at Leeds T... + Follow ...
2,990 followers
2d • 🌐

We were proud to attend the recent 20th annual UKCRF Network Conference in Birmingham, the first joint event with @NIHR Biomedical Research Centres. 🌟

It was a fantastic opportunity for our team to connect, share insights, and explore innovations shaping the future of clinical research.

Highlights included sessions on **#AI** in research, embedding best practice in NHS teams, and powerful discussions on inclusive public engagement.

We're already looking forward to next year!

Read the more here 📄 <https://lnkd.in/eYCKQJn8>
#CRFBRC25 #NIHR #UKCRF #ClinicalResearch #HealthInnovation #PPIE #ResearchImpact



NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Cen... + Follow ...
1,869 followers
4d • Edited • 🌐

What does meaningful research look like in 2025? The Joint CRF-BRC Conference this week offered a compelling vision, one grounded in collaboration, equity, and patient voice.

The conference brought together over 900 delegates from across the UK's experimental medicine infrastructure to share knowledge, spark collaboration, and shape the future of **#healthresearch**.

From practical sessions on embedding health economics to powerful contributions from public contributors, the event was a celebration of shared purpose and a call to action to keep building **#research** that is **#inclusive #impactful** and ready for the future.

Commenting on the event, our BRC Director **Rachel Upthegrove MBE** said "This conference exemplifies the collaborative spirit we need to tackle complex mental health challenges"

Learn more about our contribution to the event on our website:
<https://lnkd.in/eHP69Ugw>

#CRFBRC25



Check out more posts on social media by searching **#CRFBRC25**



 **Michelle Anderson**
@LeedsPci



Fantastic time at the UK joint CRF/BRC conference in Birmingham!
[#CRFBRC25](#) [@NIHR_UKCRFN](#) [@LTHTRResearch](#)



Carly McDonald • 3rd+

Research Manager for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Inte...
1w •

[+ Follow](#) ...

It's a real privilege to be at the UKCRF and BRC Conference in Birmingham, representing LLR Integrated Care Board and hearing firsthand about the incredible work happening across the research landscape. The energy in the room is palpable, from the delivery of early-phase trials to the strategic impact of Biomedical Research Centres (BRCs) and Clinical Research Facilities (CRFs), it's clear that research is not just thriving, it's evolving.

As someone from an ICB, I'm especially encouraged to see how these research infrastructures are driving innovation and shaping care pathways. The alignment between research delivery and system transformation is vital, and it's exciting to see how BRCs and CRFs are making that real.

The headline "Build an NHS Fit for the Future" resonates deeply. It's not just a vision, it's a necessity. And being here, surrounded by people who are making it happen, fills me with hope and determination!



Chioma Osuji Casimir • 3rd+

Biomedical Scientist | Researcher | Clinical and Laboratory Sp...
3w •

[+ Follow](#) ...

Today I had the privilege of speaking at a national research conference in Birmingham on a topic that's very close to my heart collaboration in research and inclusive involvement.

I shared my journey/experience as a research volunteer and expert by experience how working with delivery teams across different settings like mobile research units has shown me the true value of sitting with participants, listening to their questions, and helping them feel part of the research process.

We discussed how collaboration across different teams and organisations helps make research more inclusive, meaningful, and accessible to everyone, especially underrepresented communities. It's not just about collecting data it's about building trust, breaking barriers, and being present.

This session reminded me that even small actions like helping someone understand a questionnaire or making space for new voices can lead to big change.

Looking forward to continuing this work and learning from others who are passionate about making research more inclusive and collaborative.

Team King's CRF at the #CRFBRC25 conference in Birmingham 🇬🇧

Our outreach work led by our Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Lead and created in collaboration with our PPI group is also represented at the conference!

@NIHR_UKCRFN @NIHRresearch @BirminghamBRC @BirminghamCRF



Michael Oluyemi OWUSU • 3rd+
RN || MPH || Chief Nurse Fellow || MReS Candidate || Public Heal...
4d • 🌐

+ Follow

Over the last two days, I had the privilege of attending the CRF and BRC Conference at the ICC Birmingham — an inspiring gathering of clinical research professionals, innovators, and thought leaders dedicated to advancing health research. The energy throughout the day was palpable, with stimulating talks and meaningful conversations around the progress we're collectively making across research infrastructure and patient-focused studies.

One of the standout moments for me was the session on the NIHR BioResource and the IMGID – INCEPTION study. As the Lead Nurse for this important study, it was incredibly rewarding to see it featured so prominently and discussed in such depth. Hearing colleagues engage with the science and recognise the potential impact of this work reaffirmed the significance of our efforts in driving personalised medicine forward.

The conference also provided a valuable opportunity to connect with peers across various NIHR-funded programmes, sharing best practices and discussing how we can continue to deliver excellence in clinical research. It was especially inspiring to see so much enthusiasm for collaboration, innovation, and the ongoing commitment to improving outcomes for patients.

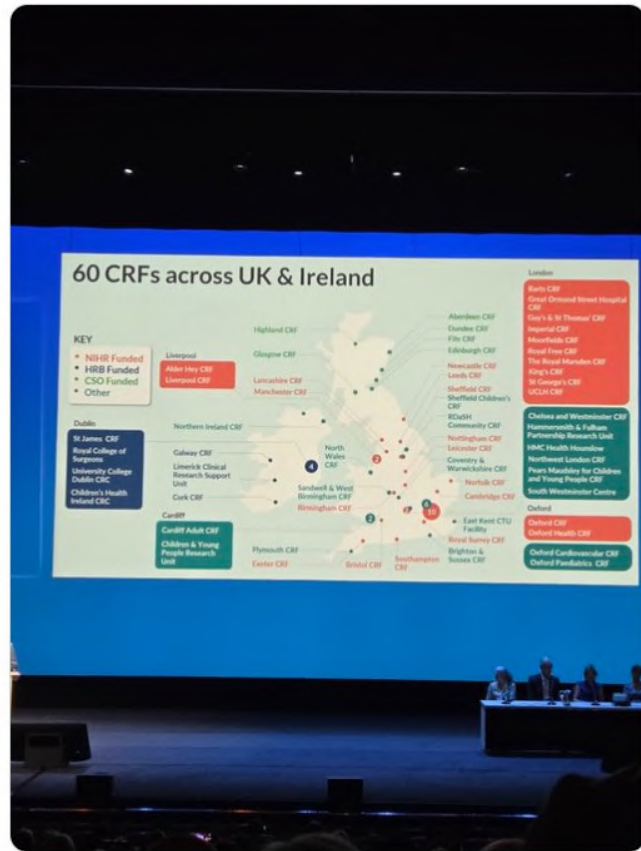
A huge thank you to the organisers and speakers for such a well-structured, informative, and motivating event. I left the ICC Birmingham feeling energised and proud to be part of a community that is passionate about pushing the boundaries of research and care. Looking forward to the continued progress of the INCEPTION study and future opportunities to engage with colleagues across the research landscape. #CRFBRC25 #Research #Innovation

Enjoying our time at Joint UK CRF & BRC Conference in Birmingham! So much learning, networking and collaborating! #CRFBRC25
@NIHR_UKCRF @BirminghamBRC
@NIHRresearch @BetsiResearch @BetsiCadwaladr



Michelle Smyth
@smythm86

First time attending @NIHR_UKCRFN conference. Fantastic two days in Birmingham with excellent speakers and informative parallel sessions. Coming away with even more knowledge and tools in the tool kit 🧰 looking forward to 2026 in Dublin 🇮🇪
#UKCRF #CRFBRC25



Georgina Hopkinson • 3rd+
Superintendent MRI Research Radiographer
1w • 🌐

+ Follow

The NIHR Royal Marsden West Wing CRF team have made it to Birmingham for the first combined CRF and BRC network conference. 6 posters accepted at this year's conference demonstrates the hard work of the team is paying off! Achieving Impact through collaboration #CRFBRC25 #marsdenmagic



2025 Poster Winners!

This year's Conference saw an incredible amount of poster submissions, with 250 received.

The posters showcased a diverse range of topics, from innovative ways of working to breaking down barriers.

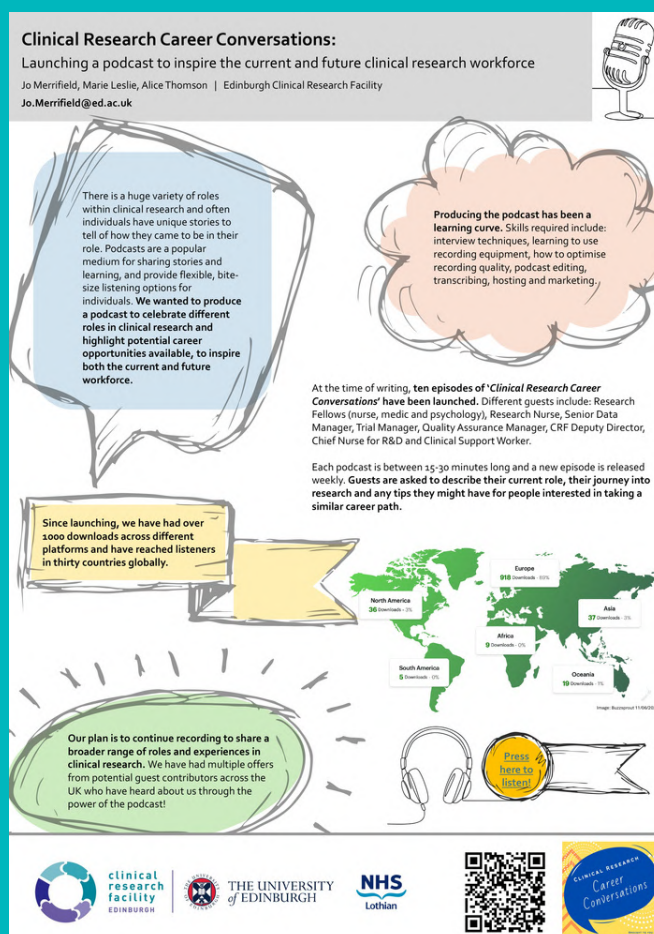
A huge congratulations to all our winners, and a heartfelt thank you to everyone who submitted a poster. Your work continues to inspire and drive forward the future of clinical research.

Explore the [Conference resources](#) on our portal to see all posters submitted.

Winner for Outstanding Leadership

Poster 9:
Clinical Research Career
Conversations: Launching a
podcast to inspire the current
and future clinical research
workforce

Congratulations to:
Jo Merrifield, Marie Leslie and
Alic Thomson from Edinburgh
CRF



Winner for Breaking Down the Barriers

Poster 10:
Community Engagement:
Joining forces with schools to make research fun!

Congratulations to:
Cat Harvey, Pratik Solanki and
Ade Shopade from NIHR King's
CRF

NIHR | King's Clinical Research Facility Cat Harvey, Pratik Solanki, Ade Shopade
King's Clinical Research Facility (CRF), King's College Hospital
Contact: catherine.harvey15@nhs.net

Community Engagement: Joining forces with schools to make research fun!

Why engage with schools?

Community engagement is an important part of King's Clinical Research Facility (CRF) Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategies. Working with schools is a good way to establish ourselves in the local community, whilst raising the profile of research and promoting different career opportunities to students. We have focused on an all-girls school to encourage engagement with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM), which is typically male-dominated.

How did we do it?

1. School Engagement Planning Meetings with two public members (x 4 held in 2024)
2. Co-produced 5-hour workshop delivered by PPI Lead, CRF Manager, Research Nurse and Clinical Research Practitioner

What did the students think?

30 Year 7 students attended and all completed evaluation forms.

70% rated the day as 'very good' or 'good'
69% now know 'a lot' about research

Designing a mini clinical trial activity was very popular. The students tried to answer the question, "Does eating broccoli make you more intelligent?"

I loved learning about all the medicines and cures and how detailed and important science really is. I loved the project, the outcome, and how lovely everyone presenting is (Year 7 Student)

What did the teachers think?

The students enjoyed their time with the CRF team, and they had an opportunity to work on their own research idea and deliver a presentation. The skills they learned will be useful in their futures. It's been such an inspiring workshop, and I hope that more students all over the country have a chance to take part in it (Careers Counsellor)

What did we learn for next time?

Have prizes for everyone
More activities & less talking

The colourful winning poster! Made by the Next-Gen Researchers team, a group of Year 7 students

Some photos from our day!

The team! Left to Right: Tatenda, Savia (public member), Elka, Cat, and Johanna

To find out more about our PPI and EDI work, visit our website:
<https://www.maudsleyhcrf.nhs.uk/crf-home/>

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An Academic Health Sciences Centre for London
Powering better health for all

Winner for Innovation and Impact

Poster 40:
Quality e-Co-systems:
Streamlining compliance and oversight through a centralised eQMS

Congratulations to:
Yousaf A, Dhanaratne M and
Prempeh B from NIHR
University College London
Hospitals CRF

NIHR | University College London Hospitals Clinical Research Facility University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Quality e-Co-system: Streamlining Compliance and Oversight through a Centralised eQMS

Yousaf A, Dhanaratne M, Prempeh B

Background and Challenge:

The NIHR UCLH Clinical Research Facility (CRF) has rapidly grown from a small, centralised unit into a multi-site, hybrid operation—placing new demands on systems and processes. Several challenges emerged:

- Inefficient processes: Training logs still required wet signatures, delaying onboarding and increasing admin, especially for remote staff. Illegible signatures were common.
- Limited oversight: SOP compliance and deviations were tracked via spreadsheets and emails, making central oversight difficult.
- Operational bottlenecks: Printing, scanning, and emailing documents introduced errors and complicated audits.
- Inflexibility: Legacy systems lacked e-signatures, version control, and remote access—essential for a distributed research model.

Solution:

To address these challenges, the CRF adopted a **SharePoint eQMS**—a scalable, digital solution designed to support remote working, multi-site operations, and consistent, efficient compliance.

SharePoint eQMS Features:

- Reduced admin & saved time via automation**
Automated reminders and workflows minimise manual tasks (e.g. auto-sent training notifications, SOP review routing).
- Enhanced collaboration across sites**
Co-authoring and remote access enable real-time teamwork (e.g. multiple users updating a shared SOP from different locations).
- Real-time oversight for managers**
Dashboards and exportable reports support proactive decisions (e.g. live view of training compliance or open actions).
- Audit-ready with full traceability**
Access logs and document histories are readily available (e.g. export trail for inspections in minutes).
- Eco-friendly, paperless operations**
Digital forms and records reduce printing and physical storage (e.g. no need for paper training logs or filing cabinets).
- Cost-effective with no extra software**
Built into Microsoft 365—no additional licences required (e.g. use existing tools like Word and Excel within SharePoint).

Key QMS Improvements (2022-2025):

In-Date Research CV and GCP Compliance (2022 vs 2025)

Year	2022	2025 Current Status
Percentage	~45%	~85%

Further Potential for SharePoint eQMS:

- Automated Quality Workflows**
Trigger CAPAs, deviations, and change control automatically
- External Collaborator Access**
Share version-controlled logs and SOPs securely with sponsors or partner sites.
- Centralised Study File Management**
Building ISF structures directly into SharePoint
- Smart Training**
Integrate automated training assignments, reminders, and expiry alerts

Certification Compliance

- 2022: Gaps in compliance, missing entries, manual oversight
- 2025: Autogenerated expiry dates, automated email reminders

Training Delivery

- 2022: Inconsistency of location and format
- 2025: User friendly, centralised, remote access

Action Tracking

- 2022: Disorganised, decentralised
- 2025: Unified, set priority status, deadlines, assignment of activities, and checklists

CAPA Tracking

- 2022: Lack of follow-up, categorisation
- 2025: CAPA Management System implemented to categorise, analyse trends of incidents and assign responsibility of CAPA to completion

Risk-Based Oversight

- 2022: Arbitrarily allocating QA efforts without data driven strategy
- 2023: Using data insights to focus QA efforts where they're needed most

Winner for Collaborative Leadership

Poster 63:
Collaborative Delivery of Diverse NIHR Portfolio Trials at UCLH CRF

Congratulations to:
Shuk Wa Lau, Rajeshree Khengar and Marivic Ricamara from University College London Hospitals CRF

Collaborative Delivery of Diverse NIHR Portfolio Trials at UCLH CRF

Shuk Wa Lau¹, Rajeshree Khengar¹, Marivic Ricamara^{1,2}
¹NIHR UCLH Clinical Research Facility, ²UCLH NIHR Joint Research Office, Agile Research Delivery Team



Winner for Science, Technology and Data

Poster 130:
Integrating Source Data Worksheets Into Epic:
Enhancing data collection and workflow in oncology clinical trials

Congratulations to:
Frances Doyle, Fiona Eastwood, Hitham Falahi Rajesh Bhatti, Angela Little and Rachel Turner from NIHR The Royal Marsden CRF

Integrating Source Data Worksheets into Epic: Enhancing Data Collection and Workflow in Oncology Clinical Trials

Frances Doyle¹, Fiona Eastwood¹, Hitham Falahi², Rajesh Bhatti³, Angela Little¹ and Rachel Turner⁴

¹West Wing Clinical Research Centre, NIHR The Royal Marsden Clinical Research Facility, The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, ²Medical Day Unit, Chelsea, The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, ³Connect DHR, Great Ormond Street Hospital For Children NHS Foundation Trust, ⁴Research and Development, The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust



Conference Resources

Follow the arrows below to conference resources on the UKCRF Network Portal



Posters



Presentations



Photos

These folders are open to all delegates and Network members until the 30/09/2025.

After this date, to gain access to all of our Conference resources, you will need to request access to the UKCRF Network Portal.

NHS/HSE research staff across the infrastructure can request access.

UKCRF
NETWORK
P O R T A L

- A decade of Conference resources!
- Training materials and guides
- Study intensity tool
- Laboratory tools
- Job descriptions and more

[Click Here For More Information!](#)



TWO ISLANDS – MANY VOICES

UKCRF NETWORK

Joint Conference | July 2026 | Dublin

Congratulations to Ireland for winning the bid to hold the next UKCRF Network Conference.

CRFs from across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland will work together to host in Dublin, July 2026.

We hope to see you there!



Acknowledgements

A massive thank you goes to the NIHR Birmingham CRF and NIHR Birmingham BRC planning committee (pictured below) and volunteers for delivering a hugely successful Conference.



Thank you to Birmingham ICC, Fran Knight from PinPoint Events, Simon Turner Photography, QAV GLOBAL and Eventscase.

Thank you to our sponsors:

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