UKCRF NETWORK

CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

August 2026

Contents

Thank you!

Bringing together over 590 clinical research staff from across the UK and Ireland, this year's conference celebrated collaboration, innovation and excellence across our network and clinical research infrastructure.

In this newsletter, you'll find reflections from speakers, poster award winners, a look back at some of our favourite moments, and links to conference resources.

Celebrating the Success of the UK & Ireland CRF Conference:

Reflections from Professor Martina Hennessy
Director at Wellcome HRB Clinical Research Facility
at St James's Hospital, Dublin.

"The recent UKCRF Conference hosted by the Irish CRFs included the title Two Islands, Many Voices, UK and Ireland Clinical Research Facility Annual Conference 2026. I am confident that over the two days, many voices were heard. The conference covered a wide range of topics from Advanced Therapies, Critical Care, Medical Devices, Smart Wearables, Biomarkers and the future of regulation. The topics knitted very well together to provide a comprehensive overview of the clinical research landscape. Insights from all the sessions were instrumental in integrating critical messages across the two days.

We are also receiving feedback that great fun was had at the same time – always a bonus."

Reflections from Paul Brown UKCRF Network Director & Deputy Director of Research & Innovation at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

"I want to express my sincere gratitude to our excellent hosts from across Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Our MC for the two days, Professor Martina Hennessy, led the way, and I am thankful as always to my colleagues on the SMT, Jeremy Towns and Sophie Black, along with a large cast, for their organisation, and to Lucy Sanger as our representative in the Hall.

The event provided a first-rate opportunity to network with colleagues from the CRFs of the UK and Ireland. More importantly, it showcased:

- The tremendous journey of our CRFs over the past 12 months, particularly as part of the NIHR Industry Hub and the speed and efficiency in new trial facilitation (thanks to Tanya Turgoose);
- The remarkable journey of the Irish CRFs collectively and the high quality and impact of the case studies presented;
- The collegiate, collaborative, and enjoyable nature of this Network.

Thank you to everyone for bringing the sunshine and making it a fantastic two days."

Highlights from Social Media

It's always rewarding to see the impact of the conference reflected in delegates' own words. This year, we've received many positive comments, reflections, and photos shared across LinkedIn and X, showcasing what our delegates felt were the biggest successes of the UK & Ireland CRF Conference.

Below, we've highlighted just a selection of the wonderful feedback shared by attendees, speakers and organisors.

If you'd like to see more, simply search #CRFConf26 on LinkedIn or X

St James's Hospital Dublin + Follow ···
56,183 followers
6d • Edited •

The UK Clinical Research Facility (UKCRF) Network Conference 2026 brought together researchers, clinicians and research professionals from across Ireland and the UK to share learning, showcase innovation and explore the future of clinical research.

This year's event took place in Dublin and focused on the theme "Two Islands, Many Voices: Futurescaping Trans-National Clinical Research" and highlighted the value of collaboration in advancing healthcare research.

We were delighted to see the hospital represented throughout the programme, with colleagues sharing their expertise and contributing to discussions on topics ranging from trial delivery and digital transformation to patient involvement and cross-border collaboration.

The conference served as a reminder of the vital role research plays in improving patient care. Research-active healthcare organisations are better equipped to drive innovation, generate evidence and provide patients with access to new treatments and technologies. Clinical Research Facilities are a key part of this ecosystem, providing the infrastructure, expertise and support needed to translate research into real-world health benefits.

A sincere thank you to the organisers, speakers and delegates who made the event such a success. The conversations, connections and ideas shared over the two days will help shape the future of clinical research and, ultimately, improve outcomes for patients.

Well done to all the team from Wellcome HRB Clinical Research Facility @ St James's Hospital Martina Hennessy, Gerry Hughes, Cormac Kennedy, Jeremy Towns Derval Reidy Edel O' Dea, Keelan McManus Kishor Santhosh Sarah Meehan CATHERINE LUDDEN Louise Conway Lauren Ellis Caitríona Ryan

#TeamSJH #HealthcareExcellence #HealthcareInnovaiton

Check out more posts on social media by searching #CRFConf26

Caroline McMahon • 2nd
Patient and Public Involvement, Inclusion and Comms Lead, NIHR Cambridge Clini...
1w •

Behind all the protocols and science, this is why we work in research NIHR (National Institute for Health and Care Research) UK Clinical Research Facility (UKCRF) Network Neeta Patel

Vicky Hills • 3rd+
Research Recruitment Manager | NIHR BioResource | IBHO & D-CYPHR Program...
1w • Edited •

That might have been my most favourite session of the conference thank you to the PPIE and Governance team Barts Health NHS Trust for bringing us Anna's story at UK Clinical Research Facility (UKCRF) Network it has left me moved and with my mind buzzing with what is possible!

NIHR BioResource
#CRFconf26

Jason Domingo • 3rd+
Senior Clinical Research Charge Nurse / Advanced Therapy Research Lead Nurse / ...
1w •

What an inspiring few days at the 2026 UKCRF Conference in Dublin, Ireland: Two Islands, Many Voices - Futurescaping Trans-National Clinical Research.

It was a privilege to chair the AT(I)MPs parallel session for the second time. Thank you to everyone who attended, contributed to the discussions, and shared such positive feedback. It was wonderful to connect with colleagues who are passionate about advancing this rapidly evolving field. I especially enjoyed learning from and alongside outstanding experts including Prof Ben Parker, Amelia Te, Rebekah Taylor, Siobhan Costello, and Eve Watson, as well as sharing insights on the participant journey - from recruitment through to reflection.

One message resonated throughout the session: AT(I)MP delivery is like an orchestra. No single musician performs the whole piece, and no single instrument defines the performance. Every discipline brings unique expertise, but only by working together can we deliver the best possible outcomes for our patients. As the therapeutic landscape continues to evolve, our shared purpose remains the same: providing the highest quality care and the best possible experience for every participant.

As Advanced Therapy Research Lead Nurse at the NIHR Clinical Research Facility: Cambridge and Co-Chair of the UKCRF AT(I)MPs Working Group, I am honoured to play my part in connecting and strengthening the AT(I)MP community. Collaboration, shared learning, and supporting one another are what will continue to drive innovation forward.

I was also delighted to showcase two posters highlighting:
- Collaborative delivery of a high-risk immunotherapy trial
- Breaking barriers in experimental medicine vaccine studies

Congratulations to my Cambridge CRF colleagues on winning the Best Poster awards in two categories. I am incredibly proud to be part of the team.

It was also a pleasure to reconnect with my fellow Filipino colleagues from different NHS Trusts, who continue to make valuable contributions to clinical research across the UK. I am incredibly proud to see our community making such a positive impact.

Thank you to everyone I met throughout the conference for the insightful conversations, new connections, and shared commitment to advancing clinical

Aisling Geraghty, Ph.D • 3rd+
Clinical Research Centre Operations Manager at Children's Health Ireland (CHI)
1w •

Some of the Children's Health Ireland (CHI) clinical trials team at the fantastic UK Clinical Research Facility (UKCRF) Network 2026 Conference 🎉

It was fantastic to have the conference in Dublin this year and to have so many of our colleagues involved! We were so proud to share our experience of delivering high quality paediatric clinical research, showcasing the innovative work taking place across CHI, and the unique opportunities and challenges of conducting clinical trials with children and young people.

Looking forward to next year in Liverpool! ✨

HRB Clinical Research Facility Galway - University of Galway
1,558 followers
1w • Edited •

"Different Perspectives, Shared Learning, Better Outcomes."

This phrase from the CRDC UK Network slides perfectly captured the spirit of #CRFconf26.

The depth of knowledge, the openness in sharing both successes and challenges, the collegiality among attendees from across both islands, and the shared commitment to keeping patients at the heart of everything we do were evident throughout.

A thought-provoking, inspiring, and genuinely collaborative conference that reinforced the value of learning from one another, challenging our thinking, and working together to drive better outcomes for patients.

Grateful to everyone who shared their expertise, experiences, and insights.

Sittana A. • 3rd+
Alzheimer's Society UK Dementia Trials Network Lead Research Nurse
1w •

A fantastic two days at the UK Clinical Research Facility (UKCRF) Network Conference in Dublin. I had the opportunity to support and present during the End of Study, Not End of Care session and learned so much from my fellow presenters, as well as from the invaluable perspective shared by the study participant and patient representative.

Thank you to everyone who made it such an inspiring few days. Looking forward to taking new ideas and connections back into practice.

Lawrence Tallon • 3rd+
Chief Executive Officer at the MHRA (the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products ...
1w •

A day of collaboration in Dublin, beginning with colleagues at the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) and ending with discussions on the future of regulatory science at the UK Clinical Research Facility (UKCRF) Network Conference.

It was a pleasure to meet with Finnuala Lonsdale and Ronan Donelan at the HPRA to discuss our shared priorities and the opportunities to strengthen cooperation even further.

Later, speaking at the UK Clinical Research Facility (UKCRF) Network Conference, I reflected on the past, present and promising future of clinical trials. I discussed the enormous opportunity of increased clinical trial participation to improve patient outcomes, clinicians' morale and driving inward investment.

However, this is a fiercely competitive global landscape, in which we need to work hard to grow market share across the UK and Ireland. We are particularly focusing on therapeutic areas where we can differentiate ourselves in the global system, for example in advanced therapy medicinal products.

This was a call to arms to put patient recruitment in clinical trials at the centre of our efforts to improve our health systems and life sciences.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to today's discussions. Working together is how we'll continue to support research, encourage innovation and improve outcomes for patients.

2026 Poster Winners!

The annual conference poster competition continues to showcase outstanding work taking place across clinical research facilities throughout the UK and Ireland.

Thank you to everyone who submitted a poster for this year's conference.

This year, a panel of judges carefully reviewed all entries and selected winners in five categories: Outstanding Leadership, Collaborative Research, Science, Technology & Data, Breaking Down the Barriers, and Innovation & Impact, before choosing an overall winner from the category champions.

We are delighted to celebrate this year's winners and recognise the exceptional contributions they make to clinical research.

Overall Winner & Winner for Outstanding Leadership

Poster 1.15

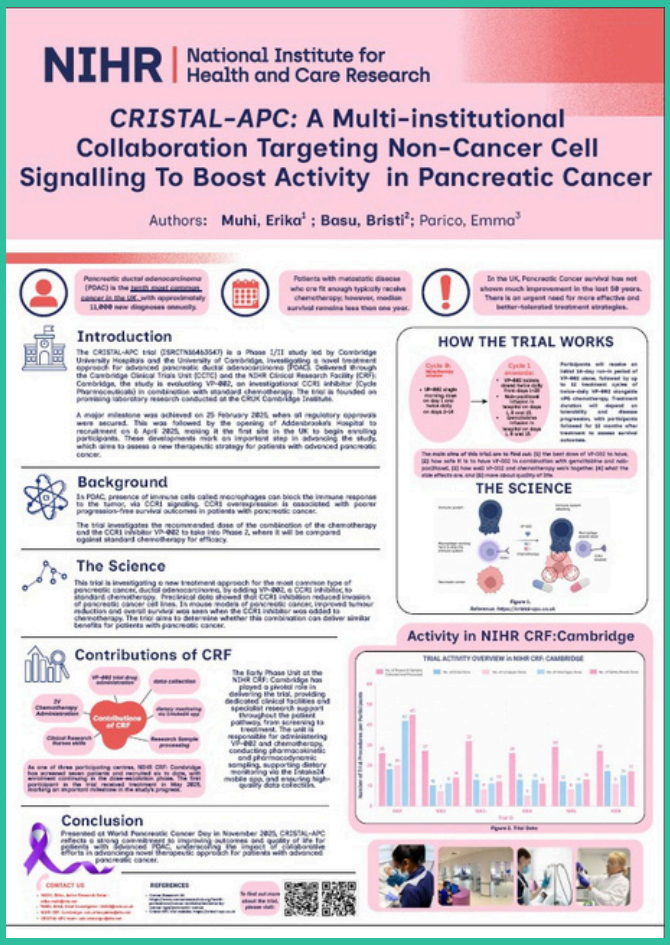
Bite-Sized, High Impact: A Microlearning Model for Clinical & Research Workforce Development in Early Phase Trials

Congratulations to Authors: Dr Fellisha Marwein, Arun Vamadevan, Dr Gregory Schey, Dr Robert Downey, Anwar Mundakundil, Rebecca Lyon, Yathish Balachander, Prof Lauren Walker and Prof Richard Fitzgerald from NIHR CRF: Liverpool

Winner for Collaborative Research

Poster 2.24
CRISTAL-APC: A Multi-institutional Collaboration Targeting Non-Cancer Cell Signalling To Boost Activity in Pancreatic Cancer

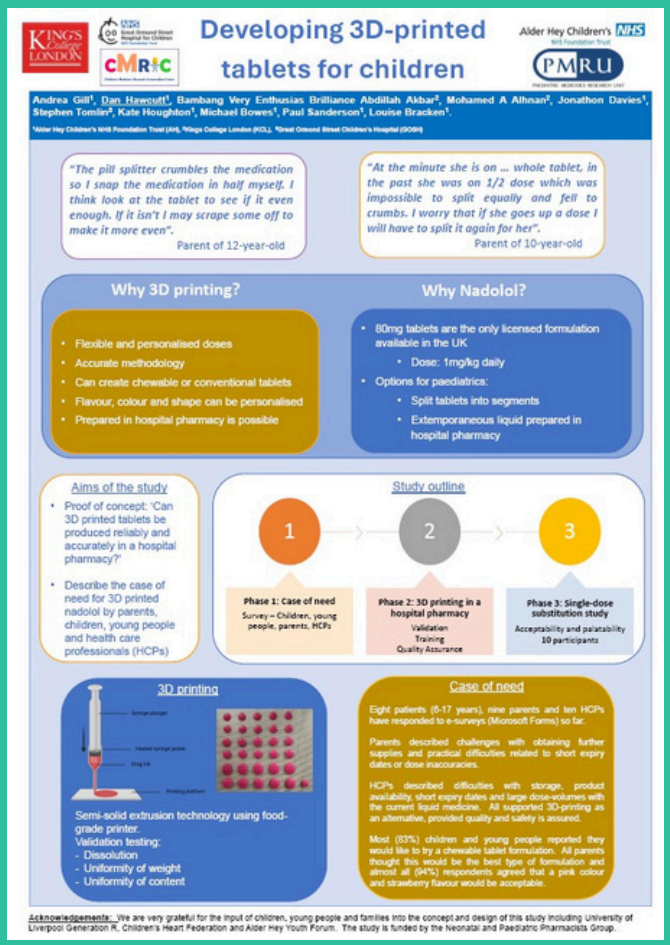
Congratulations to Authors:
Erika Muhi, Bristi Basu, Emma Parico from NIHR CRF: Cambridge



Winner for Science, Technology & Data

Poster 3.07
Developing 3D-printed tablets for children

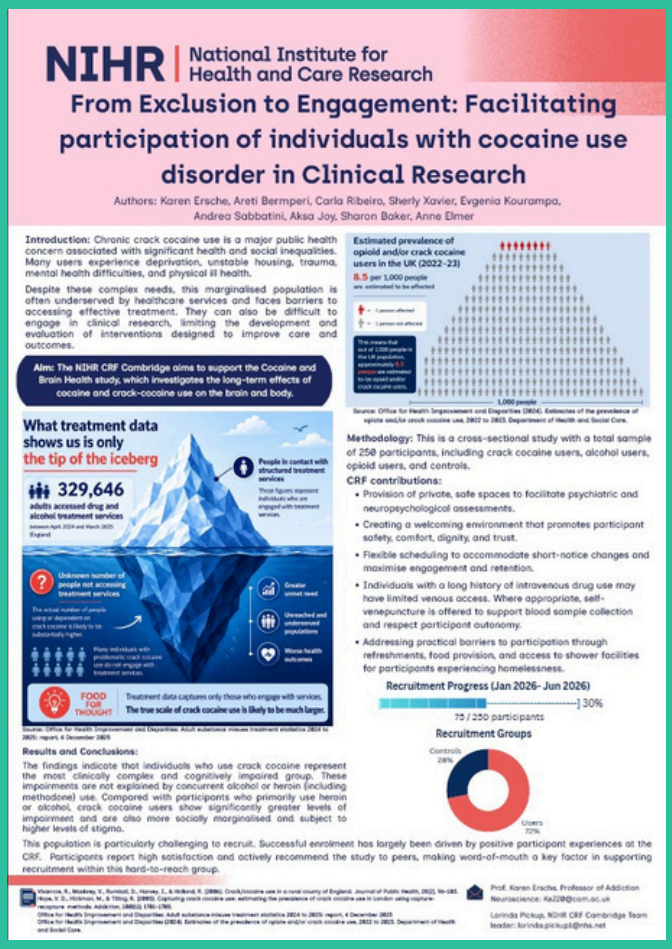
Congratulations to Authors:
Andrea Gill, Dan Hawcutt, Bambang Very Enthusias Brilliance Abdillah Akbar, Mohamed A Alhnan, Jonathon Davies, Stephen Tomlin, Kate Houghton, Michael Bowes, Paul Sanderson, Louise Bracken from NIHR CRF: Alder Hey



Winner for Breaking Down the Barriers

Poster 4.16
From Exclusion to Engagement: Facilitating participation of individuals with cocaine use disorder in Clinical Research

Congratulations to Authors:
Karen Ersche, Areti Bermperi, Carla Ribeiro, Sherly Xavier, Evgenia Kourampa, Andrea Sabbatini, Aksa Joy, Sharon Baker and Anne Elmer from NIHR CRF: Cambridge



Winner for Innovation & Impact

Poster 5.39
Using Generative AI to Accelerate Source Data Prompt Document Creation

Congratulations to Author:
James Stephens from NIHR CRF: Manchester

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 30/09/2026.

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 PORTAL

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

and more

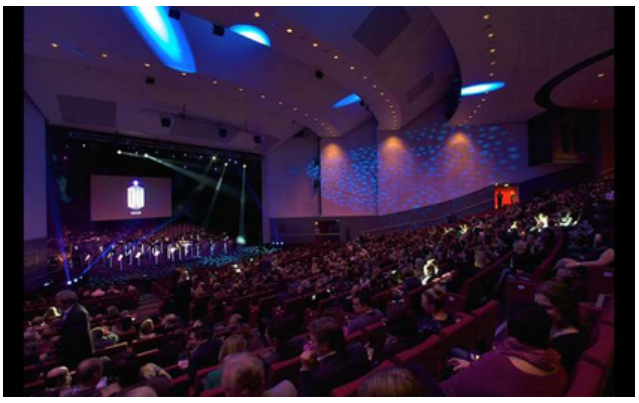
Click Here For More Information!

UKCRF Network Conference 2027

Theme: The Life Cycle
Date: 8-9 July 2027
Venue: LEX Liverpool
Co-hosts: The North-West CRF Alliance - Alder Hey, Lancashire, Liverpool and Manchester.

Registration prices and information on advance payment are now available on the conference website.

Get involved in Conference 2027
Interested in leading a parallel session or presenting at Conference 2027? Expressions of interest will open in late autumn 2026, with colleagues invited to propose topics and share their expertise.



Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to our colleagues across Ireland and Northern Ireland who helped plan and host this year's conference.

- Wellcome HRB CRF at St James's Hospital, Dublin
- Northern Ireland CRF
- RCSI CRC, RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences
- UCD CRC, Dublin
- HRB CRF at University Hospital Galway/UoG
- HRB CRF at Cork University Hospital
- HRB CRC at Children's Health Ireland
- University of Limerick Clinical Research Support Unit.

Thank you to all our plenary and parallel session speakers, our venue Trinity Business School at Trinity College Dublin, our photographer Renata Guimarães, and the event management company Conference Partners International (pictured right).

Thank you also to our sponsors:

- National Institute for Health and Care Research
- Novartis Ireland
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- ATTC Network
- Department of Health, Ireland
- EDGE
- HRB Diabetes Collaborative Clinical Trial Network
- Icon Clinical Research Ltd
- IQVIA Laboratories
- The Institute for Clinical Trials, University of Galway