Today’s Research, Tomorrow’s Care.
Creating clinical academic nurse, midwife and allied health professional leaders for Wessex
What is a clinical academic nurse, midwife or allied health professional?

Clinical academic nurses, midwives or allied health professionals (NMAHPs) are skilled clinicians embedded in practice whose training equips them to be outstanding clinicians, researchers and teachers. They apply their analytical skills to improve patient care through leadership and educating future healthcare professionals.

Typically, they work in the NHS as clinicians while in parallel researching new ways of delivering better outcomes for patients. Being clinically active, their research is grounded in the day-to-day clinical issues they face. A researcher immersed in a clinical role is well placed to understand what research questions matter to the service and the patient, to make those questions applicable to clinical practice and interpret research findings in the context of their work. They are curious, critical and creative leaders. They drive quality improvement programmes, use analytical and research skills to question, investigate, research, innovate and build cultures of evidence-based practice to accelerate improved clinical care. They are teachers and role models for future healthcare professionals.
Why we need clinical academics?

The role of Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals (NMAHPs) in delivering and leading high quality healthcare has never been more important. The last two decades have seen major changes in healthcare needs, provoked by changes in life expectancy and the growing burden of chronic ill health. The rapid pace of scientific discovery and technological innovation has been unprecedented. Clinical academics are crucial to the discovery, implementation and evaluation of new initiatives to improve patient outcomes.

We need clinical leaders who have the intellect, drive and skills to find improved ways of providing effective and efficient care and who can find answers to everyday clinical practice questions. We need clinical leaders who can analyse problems, find creative solutions, lead system-wide change, inspire their team, know how to test and change practice and who can bring about a culture of constant enquiry. We need clinical leaders who are experts in understanding the application of biological and human sciences and who can act as educators, mentors and role models.

Nurse, midwife and AHP clinical academics are central to advancing the science and art of healthcare, assessing the practical application of new evidence, and the teaching, training, and mentoring of colleagues. They are senior leaders helping to shape the policy and commissioning agenda.

What does the clinical academic role include?

Research: Clinical academics are responsible for generating research to improve healthcare. They question and critically appraise established knowledge, and without this healthcare delivery would stagnate. They enhance opportunities for patients and the public to be involved in research and contribute to recruitment into clinical research.

Education and training: Whilst all health professionals have a responsibility to contribute to the education and training of others, clinical academics, particularly in their capacity as educators and clinical teachers develop, deliver and manage teaching and quality improvement programmes that relate to their area of clinical expertise.

Leadership and management: Leadership is central to the role of clinical academics in research and innovation, education and training, care delivery and service development. They drive efficiencies through quality improvement; influence the shape of care in their chosen speciality and, in the context of a multidisciplinary team, strive to deliver the best care possible.

In their everyday roles nurses, midwives and AHPs must manage complexity and risk. The assimilation of scientific knowledge and evidence, manipulation of data and the recognition of changing circumstances require them to exercise good judgement, beyond the scope of protocols and guidelines. It is this that identifies the real and unique value clinical academics contribute in leading patient care and health services.

Clinical academics are also central to the development and delivery of the curricula needed to impart the knowledge and skills required by health professionals.

Clinical academic posts are often joint appointments between the NHS and a Higher Education Institution, with one organisation typically holding the substantive contract of employment with an honorary appointment in the other to facilitate working across the organisations.

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We need clinical leaders who have the intellect, drive and skills to find improved ways of providing effective and efficient care and who can find answers to everyday clinical practice questions.
From very early in the clinical academic career pathway we create opportunities for individuals to work with established research teams through secondments, placements, mentorship, and enabling schemes such as pre-fellowship awards in a flexible and tailored way.

What is our Wessex clinical academic programme?

Our Wessex Clinical Academic Training programme has been developed between Health Sciences at the University of Southampton and the Wessex NHS partners, with the support of Health Education Wessex. Our aim is to unite science with clinical care and build clinical academic capacity for the benefit of patients, health professionals, providers and commissioners.

Set within a flexible career pathway, our programme, hosted by the Centre for Innovation & Leadership in the Faculty of Health Sciences, integrates clinical practice with research development from the outset and provides a structured framework from pre-Masters to Professorial level.

- **Pre Masters internships**: a funded opportunity to work with an established research team to gain research experience
- **MRes**: full or part-time training in clinical research methods over 1-2 years
- **Pre Doctoral Internship**: a funded opportunity to develop a research proposal and gain further research training
- **Wessex Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship**: a PhD combining clinical activity and development with research training over 4 years or a Health Education England/National Institute of Health Research Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship
- **Clinical Post-Doctoral Development Award**: an opportunity to disseminate findings from a PhD and work towards developing an application for a career development award such as a clinical lectureship or post doctoral fellowship
- **Clinical Lectureship**: individuals are supported to work towards making an application to the NIHR or other relevant funding scheme
- **Senior Clinical Lectureship**: individuals are supported to work towards making an application to the NIHR or other relevant funding scheme
- **Clinical Chair**: personalised mentoring and support to work towards promotion or application for a clinical chair

From very early in the clinical academic career pathway we create opportunities for individuals to work with established research teams through secondments, placements, mentorship, and enabling schemes such as pre-fellowship awards in a flexible and tailored way. Support occurs both during and between periods of formal academic training in order to develop and enhance research and clinical practice skills and experience. As skills and expertise advance, individualised and tailored development plans help individuals gain career development awards and to become independent investigators, leading a research programme whilst embedded in a clinical service.

What is our Wessex clinical academic programme?

Our Wessex Clinical Academic Training Programme complements and extends opportunities available through the Health Education England (HEE) and National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Integrated Clinical Academic (ICA) Programme (http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/nihr-hee-cat-programme.htm). Studies conducted as part of a Wessex award are eligible for inclusion on the NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) portfolio of studies. The national ICA programme provides personal research training awards for healthcare professional who wish to develop careers that combine clinical research and research leadership with continued clinical practice and clinical development.

Our Wessex Clinical Academic Training Pathway

- **Internship**
- **Masters in Clinical Research Studentship**
- **Wessex Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship or Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship**
- **Clinical Post-Doctoral Development Award**
- **Wessex Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship or Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship**
- **Clinical Lectureship**
- **Senior Clinical Lectureship**
- **Clinical Professor**

*Offered as part of the HEE/NIHR ICA programme
Our partnership with Wessex NHS organisations has developed a model that underpins our work together to build clinical academic capacity across healthcare and the higher education sector to achieve our shared vision and goals. This has 5 key features:

### Our Wessex Partnership model

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<th>Feature</th>
<th>What is involved</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Focuses on practice relevant research agendas for patient benefit that is close to practice</td>
<td>Including clinicians, managers and researchers in mutually agreeing topics in priority areas. Planning to generate knowledge relevant to patients and healthcare organisations. Co-ordinating research programmes between NHS organisations and the HEI.</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong> Creates powerful and sustainable partnerships and collaborations</td>
<td>A named Clinical Academic Co-ordinator responsible for developing partnerships between HEI and NHS organisations. Creating linkages between clinical and research teams, and novice and experienced researchers. Creating mechanisms by which research skills and practice knowledge are exchanged, developed and enhanced in pursuit of service improvement. Establishing joint appointments. Enabling new collaborations between clinicians, teams, networks and organisations.</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong> Makes investments in infrastructure to develop strategy, co-ordinate activities and overcome barriers</td>
<td>Establishing strategic Steering group and operational delivery group with representation from HE Wessex, NHS organisations and the University of Southampton. Developing and implementing key strategic and operational elements of programme on behalf of organisations. Securing engagement from named senior individuals from HEI and NHS organisations to input to strategic and operational developments. Making provision for space dedicated to housing clinical academic staff.</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong> Incremental approach to developing research, education, clinical and leadership expertise across a pathway</td>
<td>Agreeing a career pathway and capability framework that describes progressive skill and knowledge development. Providing training schemes, mentorship and supervision opportunities. Provision of clinical, leadership and quality improvement skills development.</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong> Translates findings and innovates and educates to improve healthcare and health outcomes</td>
<td>Supporting the development of critical thinking which can be applied to practice decision making. Developing leadership skills to work with clinical teams, services and departments in order to generate improvements to care pathways and local services. Working to achieve innovation, knowledge translation (implementing products, technologies and services) and knowledge mobilisation (use of research evidence). Contributing to training future generations of health professionals.</td>
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Our programme has been built on developing relationships, infrastructure and mechanisms to ensure sustainability and growth.
Who are our clinical academics and what has been their impact?

Case 1

Who is Marjolein Woodhouse?
I’m a nurse caring for adults in my local community and in my fourth year as a Clinical Doctoral Research Fellow.

What is your clinical role?
I have worked and trained at Solent NHS Trust on the South Coast of England, based in the community as part of the tissue viability and clinical advisory team. I have been part of the frontline care team, gaining in experience and confidence as a specialist nurse looking at wound care and pressure ulcers (commonly called bed sores). Recently I led a programme of wound care and pressure ulcer training for community nurses and Allied Health Professionals (AHPs).

What is your research?
My research focuses on how to prevent pressure ulcers, particularly the risk of patients developing them and finding the best ways of preventing them forming, by repositioning a patient. The research consists of reviewing the latest prevention studies and a series of laboratory studies.

What else do you do?
I have also been involved in a national study looking at better support surfaces for pressure ulcer prevention and I am the principal investigator for pressure ulcer trials at the Trust. I am at the end of this doctoral programme now and have just secured a full-time clinical post with Solent NHS Trust, working as the regional project lead (in partnership with Fareham and Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), social care and local NHS Trusts) on an initiative to improve care for people at risk of developing pressure ulcers. I am continuing to work two days in an academic role so that I can finish my doctorate and develop a post-doctoral fellowship application. Doing research has really opened my eyes to finding ways to improve care for patients.

Case 2

Who is Charlotte Brooks?
I am an Occupational Therapist and in my fourth year as a Clinical Doctoral Research Fellow.

What is your clinical role?
I work two days a week as an occupational therapist with Solent NHS Trust with a focus on improving the health knowledge (or health literacy) of older people and improving the way information is provided in healthcare settings. Low health literacy has been associated with higher rates of mortality in older people.

What is your research?
My research focuses on promoting greater awareness of the need for health literacy, and improving the way health literacy is shared in practice in the NHS.

What else do you do?
I have given seminars and workshops on health literacy to undergraduate allied health professional students and clinical colleagues and presented at research conferences. I have also provided health literacy advice and feedback to colleagues in the development of: questionnaires, decision aids and written patient materials. I have published a health literacy opinion piece in the journal “Nursing Older People” to raise awareness of health literacy for nurses.

Case 3

Who is Kieran Hand?
I am a third year post-doctoral clinical academic pharmacist, and I am funded by a development award from Health Education Wessex.

What is your clinical role?
I’m a Consultant Pharmacist specialising in preventing infection at University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust.

What is your research?
My main research interest is the use of antibiotics. It focuses on the promotion of the responsible use of antibiotics by individual prescribers through education and guidelines, and within my organisation measuring, reporting and monitoring antibiotic consumption and resistance. This is called Antibiotic Stewardship.

What else do you do?
I have carried out and published two national surveys of healthcare professionals and research into the impact of multi-disciplinary (infection) ward rounds and on prescribing behaviour and its clinical outcomes. I am a co-applicant on a successful National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Programme Grant to research interventions promoting reviews of antibiotic prescriptions after 48 hours, which is due to start in 2016. I am also developing applications to fund a study to evaluate the impact of MicroGuide, a smartphone application for antibiotic treatment guidelines. MicroGuide was developed in Southampton and has been adopted by over 50 NHS Trusts.
Who makes it happen?

Clinical leaders in Wessex NHS organisations and academics in the Faculty Graduate School, at the Centre for Innovation and Leadership in Health Sciences at the University of Southampton, work in partnership to co-produce the programme, secure and sustain the resources and infrastructure needed for delivery, overcome barriers to implementation and agree priorities for strategic development. Our Clinical Academic Co-ordinator manages the partnership between the University and our NHS partners.

Our NHS Partners include:
- Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust
- University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust
- Solent NHS Trust
- Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Bournemouth NHS Trust
- Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust
- Health Education Wessex

As well as our NHS partners and CLAHRG Wessex we are collaborating with industry and charities Wessex to co-fund our programme. We would welcome enquiries from organisations interested in working with the partnership to support our programme.

List of resources and papers describing roles and pathways developed by our Wessex Partnership Programme


How to find out more

For further information about the Wessex partnership and those interested in becoming a partner please contact our Clinical Academic co-ordinator:
Dr Greta Westwood
Email: greta.westwood@porthosp.nhs.uk

For organisations interested in more details in how the partnership and programmes work please contact:
Dr Greta Westwood
Email: greta.westwood@porthosp.nhs.uk

Further information for individuals wishing to pursue a clinical academic training and development opportunity can be found on our website:
www.southampton.ac.uk/clinicalacademic
Our Wessex Clinical Academic Training Programme.

By numbers.

2008
The year we first offered Clinical Doctoral Research and Post Doctoral Fellowships with funds from South Central Strategic Health Authority

2011
The year we launched our new NHS Clinical Doctoral Partnership Scheme

7/10
NHS acute and community Trusts in Wessex involved

2
purpose built facilities to house our clinical academic faculty

7
individuals in receipt of an NIHR-related clinical academic award at doctoral, clinical lecturership and senior clinical lecturership levels

It takes
4 years
to complete the Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship programme

25
Clinical Doctoral Fellows have commenced a PhD programme as part of our NHS partnership scheme

3
Post Doctoral Research Fellows are supported annually by a Health Education Wessex Development Award

1st
University to appoint a Clinical Academic Coordinator to manage the programme on behalf of our Wessex NHS partnership scheme

10
NIHR supported MRes places offered annually

So far over £1m invested by NHS Trusts in our 36 Clinical Doctoral Research Fellows

Awarded 83 NIHR MRes studentships since 2009

8
new Clinical Doctoral Research Fellows to be supported from October 2015

Up to 10 individuals have been supported by a Health Education Wessex Post-Doctoral Award

Our Clinical Doctoral Research Fellows are in clinical practice for 40% of their week and 60% undertaking their PhD

Our Wessex Clinical Academic Training Programme.