<table>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>NIHR Clinical Research Network [CRN]: Thames Valley and South Midlands Annual Plan 2015-16</th>
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<td>Status</td>
<td>For approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>The NIHR CRN is required to report its Annual Plan to the OUH Trust, as host of the network</td>
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<td>Board Lead(s)</td>
<td>Dr Tony Berendt, Medical Director</td>
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<td>Key purpose</td>
<td>Strategy</td>
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Executive Summary

1. This paper introduces the National Institute for Health Research [NIHR] Clinical Research Network [CRN]: Thames Valley and South Midlands Annual Plan 2015-16, for approval of the Board of the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, as host of the network.

2. The NIHR CRN Performance and Operating Framework 2015-16 sets out specific governance requirements, key elements of which are summarised in sections C to G of the paper in respect of:
   - Key accountable staff
   - Scheme of delegation
   - Host Board controls and assurances
   - Assurance framework and risk management system
   - Escalation process
   - Partnership Board

3. The Annual Plan for the financial year 2015-16 is attached at Appendix 1.

   The Annual Plan comprises both a Narrative Plan and a Financial Plan. The Narrative Plan is based around a number of Tables and Appendices which detail the key actions the LCRN will take locally in support of the nationally-set objectives for 2015-16.

   The High level Objectives in **Table 1** summarise the CRN’s national High Level Objectives and includes:
   - a local recruitment target to Portfolio studies of 40,000 participants for the region
   - the actions the LCRN intends to take to meet the ‘time to target measures’ for study delivery
   - activities to increase commercial Portfolio activity within the region (currently below average when compared with other regions)
   - a local target of 1,600 participants into Dementias and Neurodegeneration (DeNDRoN) studies on the Portfolio (set as a national priority)

   **Table 2** contains specific actions to increase engagement and recruitment within each of the 30 Specialty areas covered by the LCRN. Key points include:
   - overall performance within the LCRN is strong, particularly in Reproductive Health, DeNDRoN, Diabetes and Cardiovascular research
   - specific actions have been identified to grow both Cancer and Primary Care activities since the LCRN lags behind other regions in these specialties

   **Tables 3,4,5 and 6** provide an update on the LCRN’s governance arrangements and plans for key programmes of work including PPI, Workforce Development and Continuous Improvement.
The detailed Financial Plan is submitted to the CRN via an online finance tool. An explanation of the process adopted for determining financial allocations for each Partner organisation has been included at the end of the Narrative Plan together with a summary of the allocations for each trust. In summary-  

- the network received £13.5m for 2015-16 which represents flat funding year on year  
- all Partner organisations were asked to submit detailed narratives regarding funding requests and their plans for growth  
- allocations were agreed based on a robust analytical review of current and pipeline activities in all trusts/specialties and across primary care  

Both the Narrative Plan and the Financial Plan have been submitted to the CRN co-ordinating centre subject to approval by the Trust Board and the LCRN Partnership Group. The LCRN Partnership Group subsequently approved both plans on 28th April 2015.

**Recommendation**

The Trust Board is asked  
- to note and approve the governance arrangements set out in this report; and  
- to approve the NIHR Clinical Research Network: Thames Valley and South Midlands Annual Plan for 2015-16.
NIHR Clinical Research Network: Thames Valley and South Midlands (LCRN)

A. Introduction

1. The NIHR Clinical Research Network is the clinical research delivery arm of the NHS. The network structures have recently been reorganised and now operate nationally across England through a national coordinating centre and 15 local branches (LCRNs) delivering research in the NHS across all disease areas. The local LCRN delivers clinical research across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire through 6 Divisions within the network, covering a total of 30 disease-specific Specialty Groups.

2. Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust was appointed to host the local branch (Clinical Research Network: Thames Valley and South Midlands) for a fixed term period of 5 years from 1st April 2014 until 31st March 2019.

B. Responsibilities

3. The Trust, as Host organisation, together with the LCRN Leadership Team, is responsible for developing and maintaining governance structures, systems, terms of reference and local working practices for the working of the LCRN. Full details are included in the latest Performance and Operating Framework 2015-16. In particular, these include specific governance requirements in respect of-

- Key accountable staff
- Scheme of delegation
- Host Board controls and assurances
- Assurance framework and risk management system
- Escalation process
- Partnership Board

4. These governance arrangements need to be formally signed off by both the Trust Board and by the national CRN Coordinating Centre. The Board is therefore requested to note and approve the following arrangements for the operation of the NIHR Clinical Research Network: Thames Valley and South Midlands-

C. Key Accountable staff

5. The Accountable Officer for the contract is the Chief Executive of OUH Trust

6. The nominated Executive Director is the Medical Director of OUH Trust

7. The LCRN Leadership Team comprises-

- Clinical Director of the LCRN, reporting to the Medical Director of OUH Trust
- LCRN Co-Director
- LCRN Chief Operating Officer, reporting to Clinical Director of the LCRN
D. Scheme of delegation and Host Board controls and assurance

8. The Board of the OUH Trust will be responsible for-

i. Receiving an LCRN Annual Plan, from the Medical Director, for approval. The draft annual plan for the financial year 2015-16 is included in Appendix 2;

ii. Receiving an LCRN Annual Report, from the Medical Director, for approval. It is proposed that the Annual Report be submitted for the consideration of the Trust Board at its meeting on 8 July 2015;

iii. Submitting the Annual Plan and Annual Report to the national CRN Coordinating Centre for approval;

iv. Providing the approved Annual Plan and Annual Report to all members of the LCRN Partnership Group;

E. Assurance framework and risk management system

9. The activities of the LCRN are incorporated into the Trust’s assurance framework and risk management system, which will be scrutinised by the LCRN Leadership Team at their regular meetings, and shared with the LCRN Partners;

10. The Trust has ensured that robust local business continuity arrangements are in place for the LCRN, to ensure continuity of service in the event of an emergency;

11. In the event that the Department of Health requests expedited urgent public health research, which may be in a pandemic situation, the Trust will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support the delivery of urgent public health research, as required by the national CRN Coordinating Centre;

12. Annually, the Host organisation must review its role in discharging the Department of Health contract for hosting the LCRN and provide a report on this within the LCRN Annual Report. This report will be shared with the LCRN Partnership Group;

13. LCRN activity has been included in the Trust’s local internal audit programme of work. There was a requirement to undertake an internal audit in 2014-15 (which has just been completed) and thereafter at least once every 3 years.

F. Escalation process

14. An escalation process for LCRN matters will apply as follows:

i. Issues and concerns that are not resolved by the operational teams will be escalated by Partner organisations to the LCRN Clinical Director in the first instance;

ii. If they are not then addressed to the parties’ satisfaction within a period of 15 working days, they will be escalated to the Medical Director of OUH Trust;

iii. If they are not then addressed to the parties’ satisfaction within a further period of 10 working days, they will be escalated to the Chief Executive of OUH Trust;
iv. Should the Trust’s Chief Executive be unable to resolve the matter within a further 10 working day period, the Partner organisation concerned should escalate the matter to the Chief Operating Officer of the Clinical Research Networks.

G. The Partnership Group

15. OUH Trust has constituted a formal forum for LCRN Partners, known as the LCRN Partnership Group, which includes the Trust, as Host organisation, as a recipient of funding to support clinical research. This also includes representation from those commissioning organisations that have contracts with such providers of NHS services. This forum is formed of delegates with authorisation to represent and make decisions on behalf of their organisation (mainly Medical Directors). The Partnership Group includes lay representation.

16. The Terms of Reference of the Partnership Group include:

i. Reviewing and agreeing LCRN business plans and reports, including annual financial and business plans, development plans and the annual report;

ii. Informed by financial and activity data, active oversight and constructive mutual challenge of LCRN activity and performance, including delivery performance compared to funding allocated, in order to raise ambition and improve performance in each Partner organisation (or group of organisations, for less research-active Partners); and

iii. Monitoring of any compliances required of Partner organisations

H. Recommendation

17. The Trust Board is asked to note and approve the governance arrangements set down in this report and to approve the NIHR Clinical Research Network: Thames Valley and South Midlands Annual Plan for 2015-16.

Dr Tony Berendt  
Medical Director  
May 2015

Report prepared by:  
Val Woods  
Chief Operating Officer, NIHR Clinical Research Network: Thames Valley and South Midlands (LCRN)

Appendix 1  
NIHR CRN Performance & Operating Framework 2015-16  
Appendix 2  
NIHR Clinical Research Network: Thames Valley and South Midlands Annual Plan for 2015-16