UCLPartners



Impact report
2021/22

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Foreword

Foreword by Dr Chris Laing, CEO and Richard Murley, Chair





This report showcases our work in 2021/22, a challenging year for our NHS and university partners and a transitional year for the country as we adapt to the fact that COVID is here to stay, and we must learn to live alongside it.

As a partnership organisation, we have been supporting our healthcare system to adapt to this 'new normal', working across organisational boundaries to harness research and innovation to drive improvements in health and care and reduce health inequalities.

This year, we have taken stock of the insights gathered throughout the pandemic response, evaluating the impact of choices made and showcasing lessons learnt. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, our partners have worked together to drive system transformation through innovation, embedding meaningful change for patients and communities.

Two examples where we believe COVID-derived insights will have a lasting positive impact are the roll-out of our frameworks to support cardiovascular disease management and our work on young people's mental health.

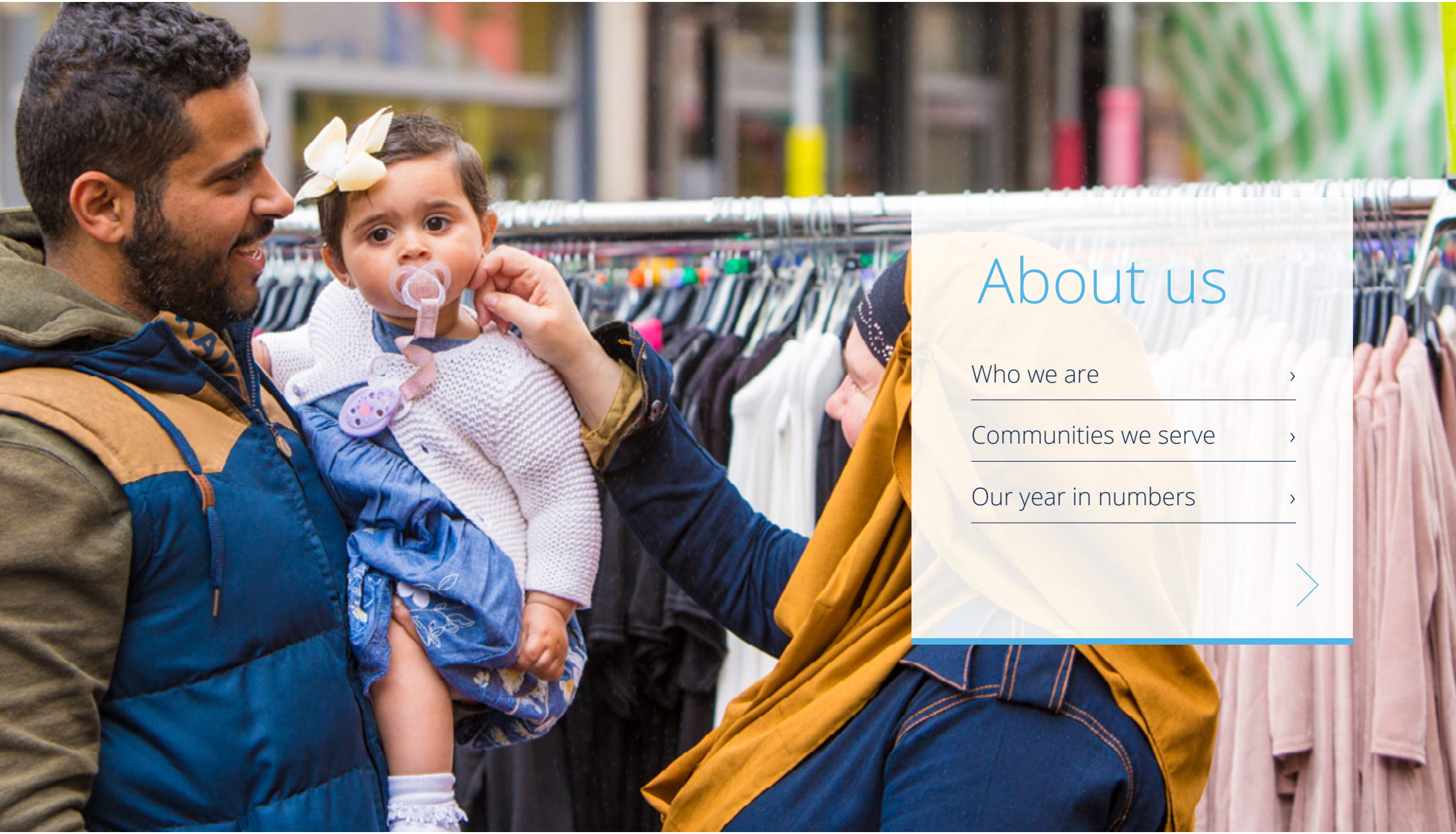
Early evaluation of our Proactive Care Frameworks, which were developed to address COVID pressures by enabling primary care teams to identify, prioritise, and manage patients living with long-term conditions, has been extremely positive. Use of the Frameworks has now extended beyond our local region to reach 13 integrated care systems across the country. Additionally, All 15 Academic Health Science Networks are now supporting implementation of the hypertension Framework as part of the National Blood Pressure Optimisation Programme. Service disruption from COVID-19 means 1.8 million fewer patients had their blood pressure monitored. Adopting the hypertension framework could support a reduction of up to 27,284 extra heart attacks and strokes from occurring in the next three years.

The mental health of young people has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through our mental health and behaviour change programme, we have created, tested and supported roll-out of a number of innovative solutions during the pandemic, including a computer-based tool that improves the diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) for children and a new mental health triaging tool for students to help make it easier to access mental health support and services.

Alongside the transitions and adaptations within our healthcare system, it has been a year of leadership changes for UCLPartners, with both of us joining the organisation in the last year. We would like to thank everyone working at UCLPartners for their continued effort and extend our warmest thanks to Prof Steve Thornton for stepping in as Interim Managing Director for the latter half of 2021, stewarding UCLPartners through the first part of the development of a new strategy that will be launched later this year.

The challenges of COVID recovery have underlined the importance of being able to innovate and implement at pace to meet patient needs. Doing this well demands effective collaborative working across multiple organisations and levels of the system. Our unique role as a strategic alliance of NHS and academic organisations allows us to draw upon the expertise across our partnership to address our biggest health challenges through research and innovation. By working together in this way, we become greater than the sum of our parts.

"The challenges of COVID recovery have underlined the importance of being able to innovate and implement at pace to meet patient needs."



About us

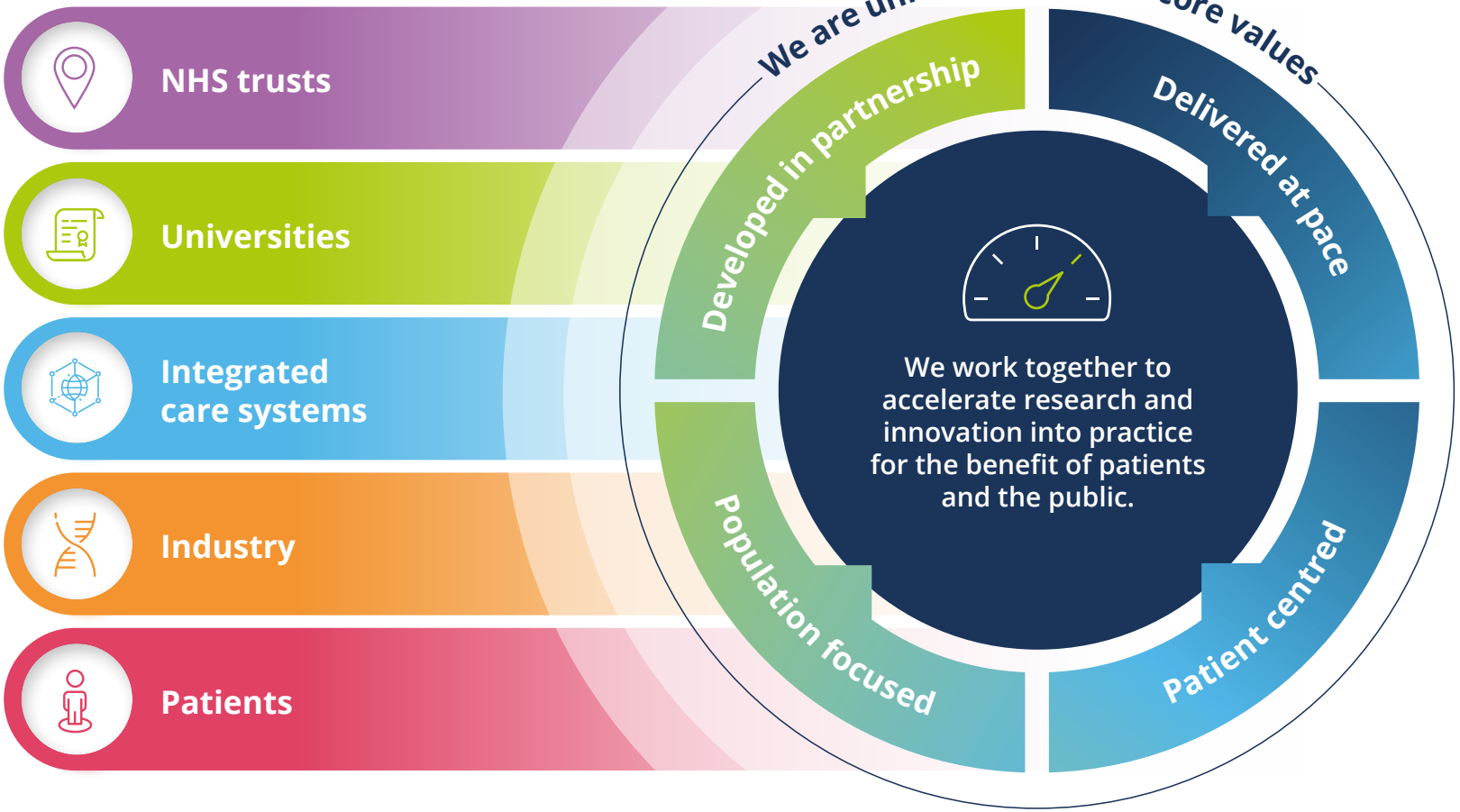
Who we are ›

Communities we serve ›

Our year in numbers ›

Who we are

We are a strategic alliance of:



Communities we serve

We work in partnership across North East and North Central London, and Mid and South Essex. Our work reflects the diverse needs of the communities we serve.

If you would like to see some health information about a specific region please click on a region name in the list below

North Central London

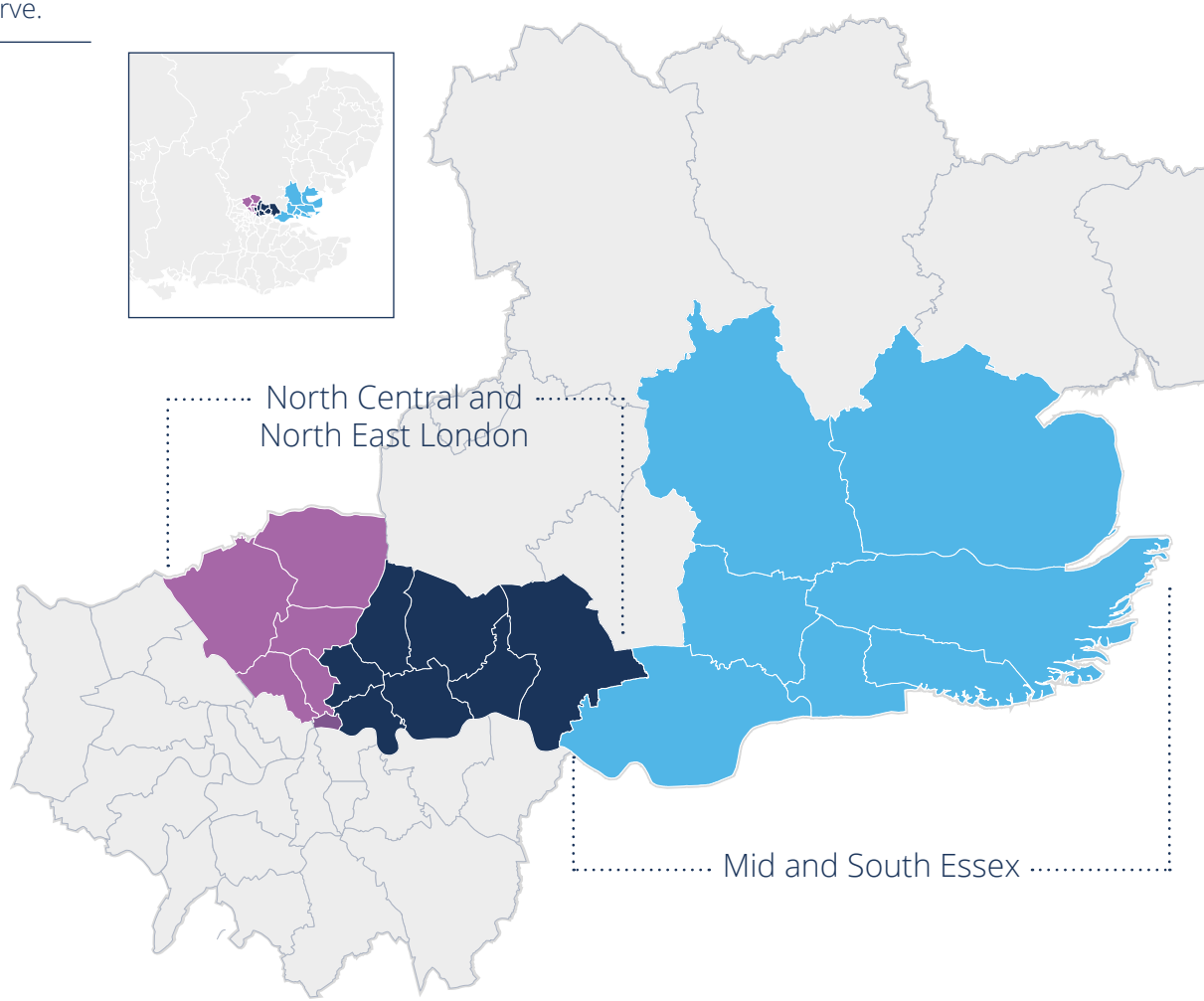
- Islington
- Camden
- Haringey
- Barnet
- Enfield
- City of London and Westminster

North East London

- Tower Hamlets
- Newham
- Hackney
- Waltham Forest
- Redbridge
- Barking & Dagenham
- Havering

Mid and South Essex

- Thurrock
- Southend-on-Sea
- Rochford
- Maldon
- Castle Point
- City of Chelmsford
- Basildon



Our year in numbers





COVID insights and evaluation

Understanding and improving vaccine uptake ›

Impact on paediatric services ›

Learning from successful research recruitment ›

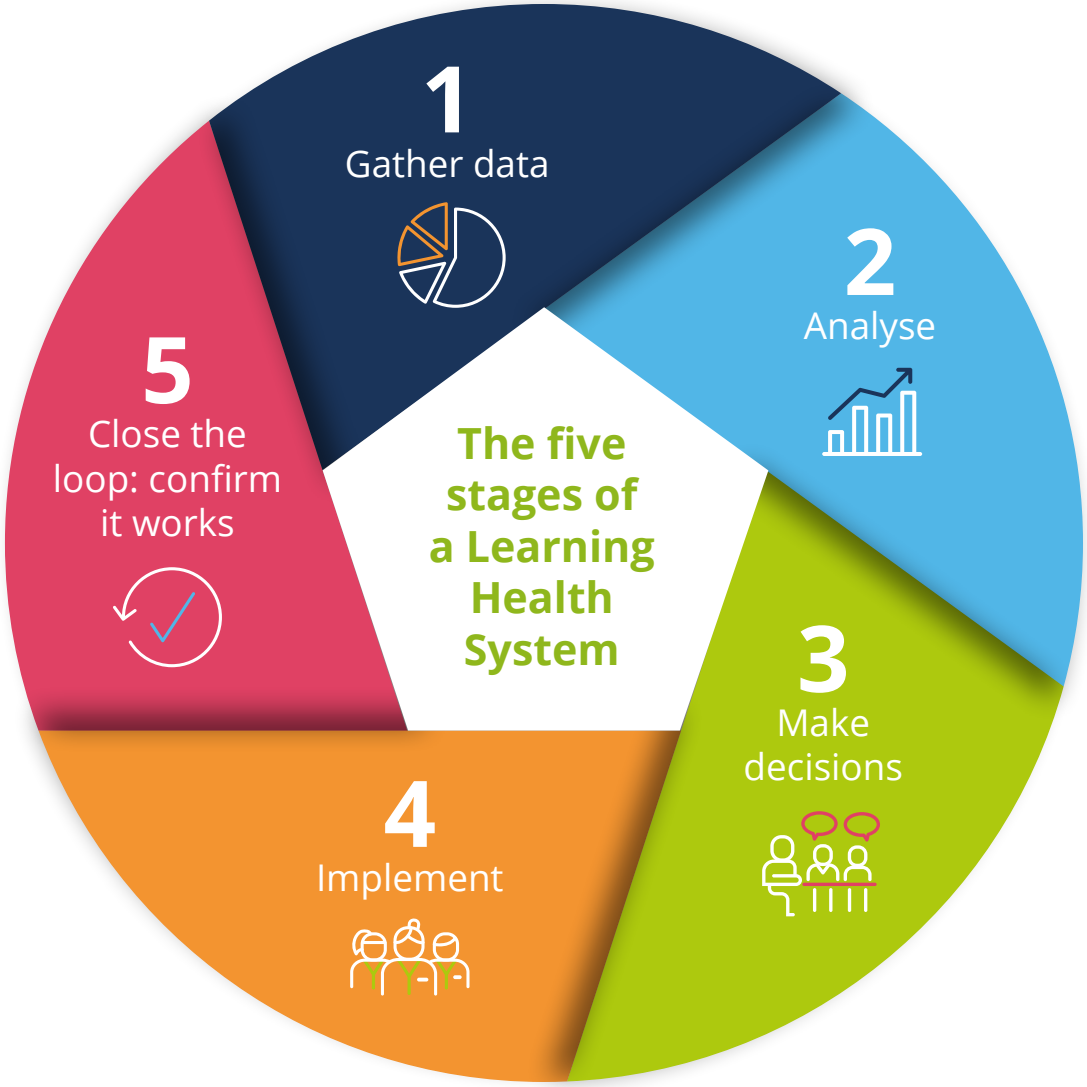
Evaluation

Evaluation is a key component of our work to accelerate research and innovation into practice. It can take a variety of forms, such as rapid insight generation, evidence synthesis and service evaluation.

We support health and care teams across our region to understand the impact of introducing innovations on patients, health and care professionals, and the wider system.

This year we have strengthened our **evaluation function** to help ensure health and care teams get access to the right information. This has helped them to implement changes more effectively and informs future decisions about the commissioning or sustainability of services.

Read more →



Understanding and improving vaccine uptake

We supported the London COVID-19 vaccination programme to identify barriers to vaccination and solutions to improve uptake. Working in close partnership with NHS England and Improvement London, Public Health England London, and NIHR ARC North Thames **we gathered and analysed essential insights** from across the spectrum of organisations involved in delivering the COVID-19 vaccine programme, including vaccination centres, GP practices, local authorities, and integrated care systems.

Our agile approach to gathering and sharing insights as they emerged throughout the programme enabled decisions to be made and actions to be implemented within the rapidly changing COVID-19 environment.

We found low COVID vaccine uptake in London was often due to deep embedded mistrust, inequalities in access, and top-down approaches that did not involve the community. Hyperlocal, community-led approaches, which cross organisational boundaries, were found to be vital to tackling these barriers.

Read more →



> "From early on we had an understanding that no single organisation can deliver something like this – it relies on collaboration, in this case across four agencies and at multiple other levels."
>
> **Regional interviewee**

Impact on paediatric services

In anticipation of a second wave of COVID infections over the autumn and winter of 2020/21, North Central London (NCL) made significant temporary changes to their paediatric services. The healthcare leaders involved were committed to carrying out an evaluation to ensure that any learning could be taken into the future. We produced an evaluation report in collaboration with North London Partners, exploring the impact of these changes through the assessment of service resilience, staff experience and any perceived alterations to the quality of care provided during this time.

The key findings of our evaluation were organised under five overarching themes:

1. The resilience of services over winter 2020/21 and the second COVID wave
2. Experience of care at the Southern Hub
3. Pathways of care for children with mental health needs
4. Staff experiences of the changes
5. Planning, implementing and communicating the change.

Read more →



"It is really important that, as a system, we are open and learn from change; giving ourselves the opportunity to step back, listen and reflect. This work highlighted important themes for us to reflect on both in terms of any future emergency response and how we approach longer term system change."

Dr Emma Whicher, Medical Director at North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust

Learning from successful research recruitment

Learning from successful recruitment into research studies to inform future practice is vitally important as we strive towards better, evidence-based health and care for our population.

This year, we worked with the NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) North Thames to understand how the recruitment of patients into COVID-19 research was achieved at unprecedented scale at Barnet and Newham hospital sites during the first two COVID-19 surges. Both were active sites for the RECOVERY trial (Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy).

Through this work, we were able to better understand the activities and behaviours that drove high recruitment and have shared this learning across our local research community.

Read more →



"This piece of work clearly illustrates the strength of some of our smaller sites to contribute to clinical research and is something we will continue to support. This is now a theme when discussing research strategies with our R&D colleagues across the region."

Sharon Barrett, Chief Operating Officer at CRN North Thames



COVID recovery and system transformation

Capturing frontline insights ›

Long COVID rehabilitation ›

Reducing cardiovascular disease risk in primary care ›

Supporting good mental health in young people ›

Capturing frontline insights

The **Bedside Learning Coordinator** role was originally created at the NHS Nightingale Hospital London. The role was designed to capture staff insights into what was and was not working, and rapidly feed these insights to leadership teams to review and agree how to respond, implementing required actions where appropriate.

We have supported several hospitals across the NHS in England to adopt the role across different settings, capturing frontline insights to improve patient care, efficiency, and staff wellbeing. In response to an appetite to share experiences and learn from others, we also established the Bedside Learning Coordinator Community of Practice, a collaborative peer support network of organisations implementing the role. Through the Community of Practice, we bring staff together regularly to share learning and problem-solve challenges around implementation, as well as co-produce resources to showcase best practice and lessons learnt.

Watch our webinar on the Bedside Learning Coordinator role.





"This role has relevance beyond COVID and has the potential to benefit both staff experience and patient care across hospitals."

Dr Andrew Wragg, consultant cardiologist at the Barts Heart Centre

Long COVID rehabilitation

Living With COVID Recovery is an innovative digital rehabilitation programme that treats the long-lasting symptoms of COVID-19 infection.

The programme was developed by an interdisciplinary team of UCL health researchers and computer scientists in collaboration with UCLPartners, Barts Health NHS Trust, NIHR Applied Research Collaborations (NIHR ARC Wessex and NIHR ARC North Thames), University of Southampton and University of Exeter.

The app and dashboard were developed by Living With, a digital health company that delivers a range of remote condition management products across the NHS. The programme combines evidence-based methods from physiotherapists, psychologists, dieticians and respiratory physicians to create bespoke treatment plans for each patient.

We began working with the team in March 2021, supporting adoption and spread through engagement, communications, information governance and data and evaluation. To date, the programme has been adopted by 30 NHS trusts and is supporting 5,500 patients.

It helps NHS staff support more patients than would normally be possible in a timely and cost-effective way. The programme makes it simple to monitor patients using the information they put into the app, to recognise their triggers and patterns around their symptoms. This in turn has meant signs of deterioration are recognised earlier and relapses prevented before they occur.



Reducing cardiovascular disease risk in primary care

The COVID pandemic caused disruption in care for people living with long-term conditions, such as Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and atrial fibrillation. There was a risk this would exacerbate people's ill health and lead to an increased demand for access to primary and emergency care.

To help primary care tackle this challenge and ensure those patients with the highest need are identified, we developed **a series of Proactive Care Frameworks**, which aim to restore routine care by enabling healthcare professionals to prioritise their patients at highest risk of deterioration.

A recent City University evaluation report showcased positive feedback from GPs and the wider primary care workforce. There have been more than 8,000 downloads of the tools and locally, North Central London and North East London have implemented the Frameworks. Nationally, these Frameworks have been adopted into NHS Proactive Care @Home, involving 13 Integrated Care Systems. Work to adopt them in Mid and South Essex began in June 2022.

Our Proactive Care Frameworks are also a core part of the new National Blood Pressure Optimisation Programme, meaning all 15 Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) across England are now supporting the rollout of the Frameworks across their regions. This will assist in the delivery of objectives set out in the NHS long-term plan.

Read more →



Watch staff at a GP surgery in Newham describe how using the Frameworks have benefited them and their patients.



Supporting good mental health in young people

A **recent survey** found 17.4% of children aged 6-16 years in the UK had a probable mental disorder in 2021, up from 11.6% in 2017. At UCLPartners, we are working to boost diagnosis and speed up access to treatment, while also focusing on how we can stop young people from developing such disorders. We are working on various prevention-focused initiatives, all of which seek to offer innovative solutions. Highlights of this year's work include:

- **The roll-out of QbTest**, a computer-based tool that improves the diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children. This year, 600 children have received a test within our five mental health trusts.
- **Launching of Mind Your Mood**, a new mental health triaging tool for students at UCL to help make it easier to access support and services.
- **FREED**, a new way of working in eating disorder services that supports mental health teams to accelerate diagnosis and treatment in people aged 16 to 25 years.



"Young people's mental wellbeing is one of the top five health priorities of the decade – unequivocally so since the pandemic. We must take full advantage of the significant increases in scientific understanding of the causation of mental disorders and consider how we can reduce prevalence through a universal, indicated and targeted prevention offer. Reshaping adolescent mental health services in this way is one of our strategic goals."

Professor Peter Fonagy,
Programme Director for Mental Health and Behaviour Change



Catalysing innovation

Developing health innovation solutions ›

A new type of relationship with industry ›

NHS Innovation Accelerator ›

Developing health innovation solutions

This year we launched a new Innovation Fellowship; a 12-month programme to support NHS staff working in our partner organisations in London and Essex to develop health innovation solutions.

The Fellowship was developed to foster local innovation and meet NHS priorities. The programme supports each Fellow to build knowledge and take action around key business areas including evidence generation, pitching for investment, building a business case, and implementation.

The Fellowship builds on the previous support we have provided to those working in our local region to spread and adopt innovation through our **Workforce Innovation Adoption Fund.**

Read more →

Meet the 'Fellows'



Dr Pratheep Sunatharamoorthy

GP Partner, AbbaMoor Surgery, North East London, and CareIQ innovator, a digital health platform that aims to improve the management of patients with chronic health conditions.



Dr Naveen Keerthi

Dr Naveen Keerthi Locum Registrar, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust, and creator of the Doc2uk innovation that streamlines and accelerates employment of overseas doctors and nurses into the NHS.



Lola Adegunle

Senior Human Resources Business Partner at Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust, and 'Note and Nip It' innovator, an app that allows employees to raise concerns and support NHS organisations implement interventions to support and retain staff.



Dr Dilshan Arawwawala

Senior Consultant in Anaesthesia and Chief Clinical Information Officer, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust, and 'Shift Partner' innovator, addressing NHS staffing challenges through smart, skills-based allocation and e-rostering.

A new type of relationship with industry

We work to bridge the gap between commercial technology and adoption by the NHS. We do this by supporting innovators and our NHS partners. This year we have worked with 254 companies.

By helping our partners to develop new relationships with industry, we are helping patients access the latest evidence-based care to receive the best outcomes. This work also helps to improve efficiency and reduce costs for our partners.

This year, we have worked closely with Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust, supporting the Trust to develop a novel partnership with Medtronic to demonstrate the value of its implantable device for the treatment of Gastroparesis, an extremely hard-to-manage condition, with poor patient outcomes and high costs to the system.

Our work has helped the Trust to address the challenges of accessing funding for high-cost technologies such as this. Through working together, we have been able to show the benefits of assessing treatments based on their therapeutic value and cost reductions to the system.



Watch our interview about why innovation in the NHS matters with Jacqui Rock, Chief Commercial officer at NHS England and NHS Improvement.

NHS Innovation Accelerator

The NHS Innovation Accelerator (NIA) is a national programme hosted by UCLPartners that supports exceptional individuals to scale promising innovations across England's NHS for greater patient, population and staff benefit. The programme is delivered in partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement and England's 15 Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs). It is chaired by Professor Stephen Powis, National Medical Director for NHS England and NHS Improvement.

In 2021/22, the NIA supported 33 individuals ('Fellows') to scale their innovations. Of these, 10 originated from within the UCLPartners patch and saw great success in 2020/21.

For example:

- **Skin Analytics**, an AI platform that helps clinicians assess skin lesions, was awarded a Phase 4 Health and Care Award by NHSX.
- **PEP Health**, a machine-learning platform that performs real-time analysis of patients' experiences of care to provide actionable insights, published its second **What Patients Think Report** depicting trends and variation in patient experience across England's hospital trusts.
- **HN**, AI-guided proactive health coaching, was awarded more than £936k by SBRI Healthcare to progress the innovation's capabilities in urgent and emergency care.

Visit the **NHS Innovator website** for more information about the NIA and the Fellows and innovations it supports.

Supported **33 Fellows**, 10 from the UCLPartners region.

Meet the 2022 Fellows



Top row:
Arden Tomison, Carey McClellan, Chris Young, Ghalib Khan

Middle row:
Lorin, Gresser, Maddie Julian, Tamsin Holland Brown, Tom White

Bottom row:
Umar Naeem Ahmad, Zoe Wright

"Being part of the NHS Innovation Accelerator supported me to better understand how to successfully scale Skin Analytics within the NHS. One of this year's highlights was joining UCLPartners to meet with key NHS England and NHS Improvement stakeholders where we were able to share our insights on spreading AI within the NHS."

Sarah Blank, Director of Business Development for Skin Analytics and NHS Innovation Accelerator Fellow



Driving research

A world-class hub for cancer biotherapeutics ›

Using artificial intelligence to detect heart disease ›

Increasing mental health research capacity ›

Academic Health Science Centre (AHSC) status is awarded by NHS England and NHS Improvement and the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to institutions that demonstrate excellence in health research, health education and patient care.

Our ASHC is working to drive the translation of innovative research into patient benefit. We do this by connecting eight world-class universities and NHS trusts, aligning their objectives, infrastructure and resources to unite them with shared ambitions.

A world-class hub for cancer biotherapeutics

The Cancer Research UK City of London Cancer Centre – the cancer partnership between University College London, Barts/ Queen Mary University of London, King's Health Partners, and the Francis Crick Institute – was awarded £25 million in funding over five years. The award underpins innovation in biological therapies and complementary modalities alongside early detection and prevention of disease, and a deeper understanding of cancer evolution.



Using artificial intelligence to detect heart disease

The tool, developed by the UCL Institute of Cardiovascular Science and Barts Heart Centre at St Bartholomew's Hospital and being rolled out at University College London Hospital, Barts Heart Centre at St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Royal Free Hospital, analyses heart MRI scans in just 20 seconds whilst the patient is in the scanner. This compares to the 13 minutes or more it would take for a doctor to manually analyse the images after the MRI scan has been performed.

The technology will improve diagnosis and treatment for heart conditions and help doctors to see how patients with heart conditions are responding to their treatment, so any necessary adjustments can be made.

Read more →



Increasing mental health research capacity

People living within our region, particularly in parts of East London and Essex, experience higher rates of mental health conditions, serious mental illness and suicide compared to the rest of the country. However, they are less likely to use mental health services, have poorer access to high-quality care, and are under-represented in mental health research.

To help tackle these inequalities, we came together with NIHR ARC North Thames, University College London, City University of London and health and care trusts across our region to propose a programme of work to the Department of Health and Social Care and the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR). The programme aims to understand and overcome barriers to mental health and care research participation for under-served staff and communities living with mental health conditions in these areas.

In February 2022, funding of £750,000 was awarded to take this work forward. The funding will be used to deliver 'Mental Health Research for All' (MH-All), a three year-long programme.

Read more →



"This important work is led by a clear evidence base, focusing on where resources and additional support are most needed. At its core is a total commitment to diversity and inclusivity, both within communities and across staff working in all areas of mental health research."

Karen Williams, ARC North Thames public contributor for mental health



Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Our partnership serves one of the most diverse populations in the country. We aim for all our work to improve the health and care of our population and reduce inequalities. We are incorporating the principles set out in the **AHSN Network Diversity Pledges** and those presented in the **London Workforce Race Strategy** into all our work.

We are monitoring the diversity profile of our staff and implementing actions to help us move closer to representing our population over time, at all levels of the organisation.

This year, we have:

- Ensured that all job descriptions are peer reviewed before recruitment to remove any language or specifications that may exclude people or groups from applying
- Welcomed two talented individuals into our data hub team as part of the Health Data Research UK **black interns programme**
- Led a staff awareness campaign for Black History Month and LGBTQ+ History month
- Supported NIA Fellows to undergo Equality Impact Assessments of their innovations
- Shared our approach to encouraging staff conversations around diversity and inclusion in a candid yet sensitive way through a **privilege walk exercise** and through delivering a session to NHS England's Cancer Alliance Leads.



Hear from our staff about our approach to **equality**, **diversity** and **inclusion**.



Patients, carers and communities

Involving patients, carers and communities

Patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) is an essential part of our work, providing opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds and experiences to share their insights and views to actively shape health and care research and innovation to better meet their needs.

This year we have worked with patient partners to **develop a PPIE strategy** to guide our work. It sets out our vision that all research and innovation activities happening across our partnership are informed and enriched by involvement and engagement that is proactive, responsive, and designed and delivered with our diverse population. **Read how patients shaped our strategy.**

As part of our work towards the strategy, we are establishing a UCLPartners Patient, Carer and Public Advisory Group and have published a new transparent payment policy for patients, carers and members of the public that contributes to our work.

Examples of our ongoing work with patients over the year has included:

- Establishing a group of people with lived experiences to inform work to improve care for patients in acute mental health inpatient settings.
- Including patients on recruitment panels for senior posts and on the decision-making panel for our Innovation Fellowship.
- Involving people with lived experiences of homelessness and mental health issues in our evaluation of the Rough Sleeping and Mental Health Programme (RAMHP). This programme aims to support increased access to mental health services for people sleeping rough. The involvement of 'peer researchers' ensures that our research methods and the questions we ask are meaningful and accessible to those who use the service, making our evaluation more reflective of people's experiences.



"I've been very much impressed by the way in which all UCLPartners colleagues have related to us, respected us, listened to us – and then followed it up by showing us they've actually done something with what we said: We said – they did!"

Dr Cynthia White, Patient Contributor to UCLPartners

Future vision

by Dr Chris Laing

There is no denying that these past two years have been some of the toughest our population and the healthcare system have had to endure. COVID has deepened cracks in our care pathways and shone a light on how some communities and individuals in our society have been marginalised and overlooked.

As a partnership organisation, we have **set out our commitments to involving patients and communities** in our work, we have listened to our partners about what they need and have examined what the data shows us about the health inequalities that most urgently need addressing in our region. All these insights will feed into decisions about where we see our future contributions being most impactful.

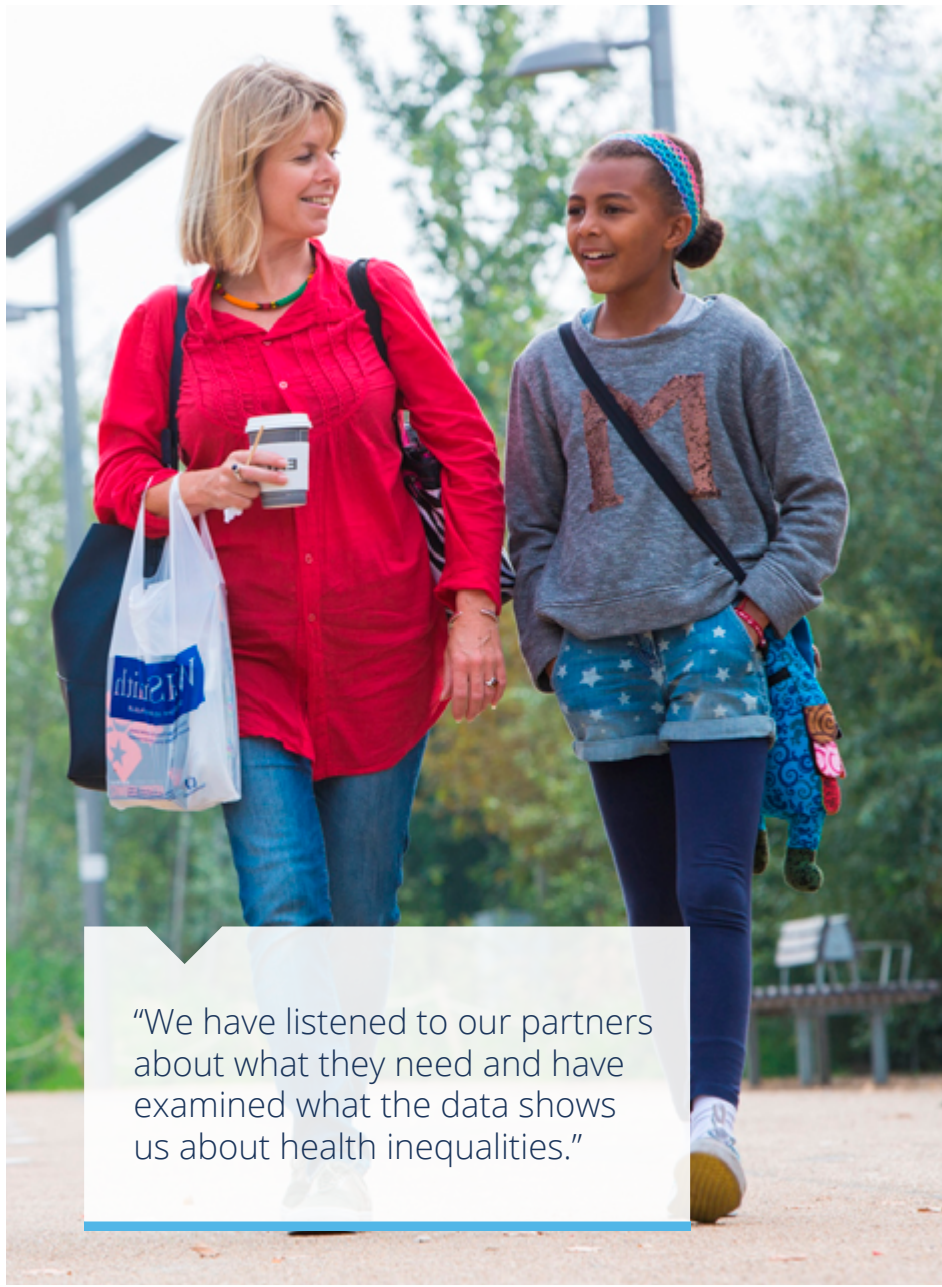
We have a chance to heed the lessons COVID has taught us, to learn from the innovation and partnership working that emerged in response to the pandemic, and to apply this knowledge and these new ways of working to embed long-term change.

Next year, UCLPartners will embark on a new strategic direction that will seek to reduce health inequalities by transforming outcomes in priority disease areas through research and innovation.

If we get this right, I believe we will be able to take on whatever challenges lie ahead, whether that be increased demand for mental health support, transforming early cancer diagnosis, or using innovation to achieve net zero in the NHS. Working together, we can build an inclusive health innovation system that will have local, national and global impact.



Dr Chris Laing took on the role of UCLPartners CEO in February 2022



"We have listened to our partners about what they need and have examined what the data shows us about health inequalities."

UCLPartners

For further information about
our work, visit **www.uclpartners.com**

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