

CACH Strategy 2019-2024

Centre Overview: The Centre for Academic Child Health (CACH) was established in 2003. It is a joint venture between the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE). CACH has a long tradition of collaborative multidisciplinary research aimed at improving the health of children and young people in the UK and overseas.

Key areas of strength: We have an international reputation for conducting complex epidemiological studies and treatment trials, which influence policy and change the way we care for infants, children and adolescents. This includes studies which investigate modifiable risk factors and transgenerational effects on children and adolescents with a range of conditions and outcomes (fatigue, obesity, infection, continence problems, mental health problems, visual disorders, autism, injury and mortality). We have an internationally recognised programme of research into the biology of respiratory tract microbial carriage and person-to-person transmission of potentially pathogenic commensal bacteria. We evaluate both prevention and treatment efficacy in randomised controlled trials, experimental and observational studies in healthy and ill babies and children. We have a national reputation for developing novel trial methodology to deal with complex conditions including recruitment methods, randomisation, collecting patient reported outcome measures, assessing and dealing with treatment preference, integrating laboratory methods (e.g. vaccine efficacy) into trials.

Our programme of work has attracted over £51 million in research funding in the last 4 years from a wide range of funders. The Centre for Academic Child Health is committed to training the next generation of academics and clinical academics. In November 2019, CACH hosted: one senior fellowship holder, 13 PhD students, one Knowledge Mobilisation Research Fellowship holder, one Academic Clinical fellow, and three Academic Foundation trainees.

Vision: Our vision is to improve the health of children and young people through excellent translational research.

Strategic aims

1. *Consolidate and strengthen the management structure and leadership of CACH*
2. *Increase the number of staff, and improve skill mix and levels of satisfaction in CACH*
3. *Increase grant income and develop expertise*
4. *Increase income generated through teaching*
5. *Improve REF submissions for both UoB and UWE*
6. *Increase our reach through collaboration nationally and internationally.*

Objectives, outcomes and actions:

1. *Consolidate and strengthen the management structure and leadership of CACH*

One year (end November 2020)- management group established, new website. Improved search engine optimisation (doubling of hits in one year). Accurate systems to capture income and papers.

Three years (end November 2022)– successful move to new building.

Five years (end November 2024) – succession planning completed for CACH leadership.

Actions:

- Test monthly capture of papers and grants using university online systems (PURE at University of Bristol, Research repository at UWE)
- Annual process of re-writing website text with frequent links to improve engine optimisation

2. *Increase the number of staff, and improve skill mix of the team and levels of wellbeing in CACH*

One year: increase staff reviews completed to 100%. Ensure that every member of staff receives advice on progression and promotion and that this is documented.

Three years: (i) increase funded doctoral placements in CACH to 2 a year (ii) increase in fellowships awarded in CACH to 1 every two years (iii) Leadership training completed for three non-professorial staff.

Five years: succession plan in place. Successful promotion of CACH staff ensuring two further professors in post. Three more senior lecturers/senior research fellows. Increased opportunities for collaboration with Allied Health Professionals, Nurses and Midwives.

Actions:

- To improve the quality and completion rate of staff reviews we will discuss the importance of staff reviews at the departmental meeting, provide clear guidance on the timelines, invite those running the process to attend a departmental meeting and discuss how to ensure relevant documentation is completed as well as produce guidance for CACH Members on completing the staff review documentation.
- To support wellbeing we will set up a wellbeing sub-group who will organise a mixture of events to improve wellbeing including walks, exercise, group activities, mindfulness, as well as encouraging staff to look after themselves, take regular breaks, have lunch breaks, use their annual leave etc.
- To increase the number of successful fellowship applications, we will disseminate information about those with experience of fellowships, provide mentorship and interview practice, signpost potential applicants to those on funding boards.

3. *Increase grant income and develop expertise*

Overall aim to increase grant income which is fully economically costed. (See list of research areas and plan for grants in paragraph below).

One year: submit one infrastructure research grant to improve paediatric research.

Three years: At least one programme grant awarded to staff members. One staff member on grant giving body.

Five years: Programme grants awarded in global, epidemiology and trials. Rolling three year grant average (PI and co-app) increase by 10% a year or more.

Actions:

- Develop lunch time seminar series to disseminate local CACH expertise with different funding bodies, ask outside speakers about talking to CACH about funding, disseminate seminars and talks organised by RED about funding.

4. *Increase income generated through teaching*

One year: portfolio of research opportunities available for clinicians and those in training.

Three years: iBSc for Academic Child health opens to recruiting new students.

Five years: established paediatric teaching fellows (pathway 3 for UoB).

Actions:

- Develop iBSc for Child Health Research Methodology. Once iBSc has been running, develop a business case to increase the paediatric teaching fellows for iBScs and SSCs and paediatric training in the department.
- Improve the offering for MB21 Student Choice Placements with development and maintenance of a portfolio of projects and provision of a structured list of core competencies for self-directed completion.

5. *Improve REF submissions for both UoB and UWE*

Overall aim to improve the number of 3* and 4* and impact studies

Five years: two 4* impact case studies to be submitted for the REF after REF2021

Actions:

- Support staff to understand the REF process by signposting to university resources (University of Bristol and UWE)
- Invite REF leads to deliver presentation to staff on the REF
- Offer seminars on how to prepare an impact case study.

6. *Increase our reach through collaboration nationally and internationally.*

Overall aim to increase number and interdisciplinarity of research collaborations.

One year: one additional major national partnership.

Three years: two additional international partnerships.

Five years: one international commission / guideline group. One study involving cross-country research.

Actions:

- Document existing national and international collaborations to provide a baseline
- Use the funding generated through teaching to support meetings designed to create national and international partnerships.