

The strategy sets out plans to enhance clinical research across Scotland with development of existing NHS/University collaborations and associated expertise as one of the key elements. Within Chapter 1 of the Strategy the strategic collaborations supporting clinical trials is highlighted as a benefit for Scotland and yet there is no direct support for clinical trial units (CTUs) from CSO. This is in complete contrast to the situation in England where registered CTUs are supported through NIHR and also in Wales where a new Government initiative is to provide a multi-million pound investment in their three CTUs over the next three years. There are strong CTUs within each of the four nodes working between the University / NHS and providing services to local, national and international collaborators both from academia and industry. If Scotland hopes to maintain and build on its reputation as a base for conducting clinical trials direct support for these CTUs should be addressed which could be based around trial activity.

Paragraphs 1.18 and 1.19 outline initiatives aimed at improving recruitment to trials with no mention again of investment in strong CTUs who could provide support and methodological expertise to help facilitate this.

Q9 - Identification of trial participants through EHR?

There have been a number of attempts to develop similar systems to this in the past and Scotland has some expertise in this area spread across the Universities with medical schools. Two of these Universities are currently involved in a large EU funded study EHR4CR which aims to do precisely this although the focus is more on the hospital setting. Building on this existing expertise which would also have the benefit of close working with NHS colleagues would seem to be a more appropriate use of new resource in this field.

Q17 - Are the current CSO personal award schemes targeted to meet our future needs? If not, should CSO conduct a wider review of its capacity building schemes?

Recent years has seen the withdrawal of support for non-clinical personal awards. Many of our research units are staffed by non-clinical health researchers and if Scotland is to develop and build its research base it is important these staff are given opportunities to progress their careers alongside their clinical colleagues.