NHS
Health Research Authority

The Health Research Authority

This is both an exciting and a challenging time for health and social care research in the UK. With strong Government support for the life sciences sector, research is playing an increasingly important role in the nation's health and wellbeing and in our economy.

We want to ensure that the UK boosts its reputation as one of the best places in the world for science and innovation. The HRA is the body which co-ordinates across the UK ethical review of all health and social care research studies involving people and their data.

Patients and the public are central to what we do as an organisation. They play a central role on our Research Ethics Committees, as valued members of our 1000-strong volunteer network. They also influence and review our policies, services, and our recruitment to senior roles. The core remit for the HRA is to protect and promote the interests of patients and the public in health and social care research.

About the HRA

Our vision is for high-quality health and social care research that improves people's health and wellbeing, and our core purpose is to protect and promote the interests of patients and the public in health and social care research.

To achieve our vision, we have three strategic objectives:

- make sure that research is ethically reviewed and approved
- promote transparency in research
- oversee a range of committees and services
- coordinate and standardise research regulatory practice and
- provide independent recommendations on the processing of identifiable patient information where it is not always practical to obtain consent, for research and non-research projects.

Find out more about the HRA on our website.

What we do

Our vision is for high-quality health and social care research that improves people's health and wellbeing, and our core purpose is to protect and promote the interests of patients and the public in health and social care research. We do this by reviewing research proposals to provide approvals for the research to be done, and

assurances about how it will be done. We review about 4000 new studies ranging from observational studies to large multi-centre clinical trials of new medicines. We review proposals to establish research tissue banks, and research databases. We also receive notifications of around 7000 modifications to approved research proposals

Reviews involve Research Ethics Committees, of which we appoint 64 in England ; expert staff on behalf of NHS organisation; the Confidentiality Advisory Group; and Technical Assurances for studies involving ionising radiation and/or Pharmacy. We also promote good practice in health and social care research, within England and across the UK. We do this by providing expert advice and guidance to researchers and research sponsors on matters including research transparency, public involvement, research design and management. The HRA also works with equivalent bodies in other nations of the UK on the standardisation of matters relating to the regulation of research. On behalf of UK partners we develop and manage the national digital platform for health and care research applications, currently the subject of a major national programme. As well as a streamlined process for research applications, this also means we have platforms for review activities and information sharing. Our digital work also gives us access to invaluable data to assess regulatory performance, and to work with others who have an interest in research on research regulation.

Where we are

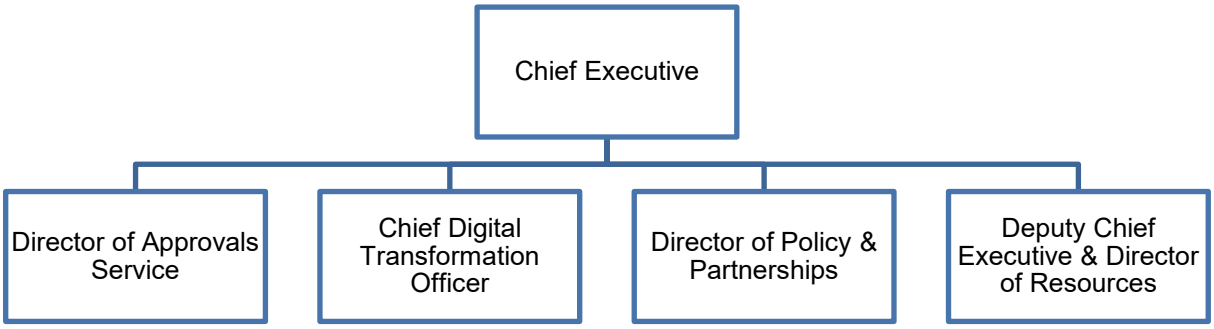
The HRA has approximately 280 staff. There are HRA offices in London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Nottingham but the majority of our staff are based at home.

As a flexible working friendly organisation, we want to be sure that you can work in a way that is best for us and the work we do, and for you. When applying to work here, speak to us about how we might be able to accommodate a flexible working arrangement – which could include part time, job share, flexible work patterns, home based working etc.

Our Structure

The Chief Executive reports to the Chair of the Board and manages Executive Committee.

Our Board is made up of the Chair, four non-executive directors, the Chief Executive and two of the directors. Find out more about our Board on our website.


Chief Executive
Director of Approvals Service
Chief Digital Transformation Officer
Director of Policy & Partnerships
Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Resources