

Overview of the Research & Development Directorate

Quarter 1 (Apr - Jun) 2025-26

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Executive summary

- In July 2025, the Trust had a Human Tissue Authority (HTA) Inspection for its research licence – further information is provided on the next slide.
- Research Governance performance has continued to improve
- We have appointed Research Champions across the Trust. These are voluntary link roles between R&D and other areas across the Trust.
- The Department held an Away Day in June 2025 to look at our staff survey results and identify areas of improvement, followed by some team bonding activities.
- Round 5 of the Innovation Fund was launched in April. 17 applications have been received, and peer review is underway. The review meeting for shortlisted applications will be held on the 16th October.



HTA Inspection (Slide 1 of 2)

On 17th July 2025 we hosted a virtual HTA Inspection for our research licence for storage of relevant material which has come from a human body for a scheduled purpose.

Only two minor shortfalls were identified:

- 1) *At the time of the assessment, the Royal Papworth research tissue bank did not allocate a unique code to each of the products associated with a donation.*

This shortfall relates to the issue we have with our current database which is very old (designed in 2004) and although each donation has a unique number (e.g. vial of blood, block of tissue), the derivatives are only unique due to the place in the freezer (e.g. Freezer 1, position A4). Although this works and ensures we are compliant, it is very time consuming and can be prone to user input error.

In addition, the database is supplied by a single trader company (with the owner due to retire in the next few years) and it is Access based and if the database gets corrupted it will be very difficult to rebuild. It is therefore imperative we find a replacement as soon as possible.

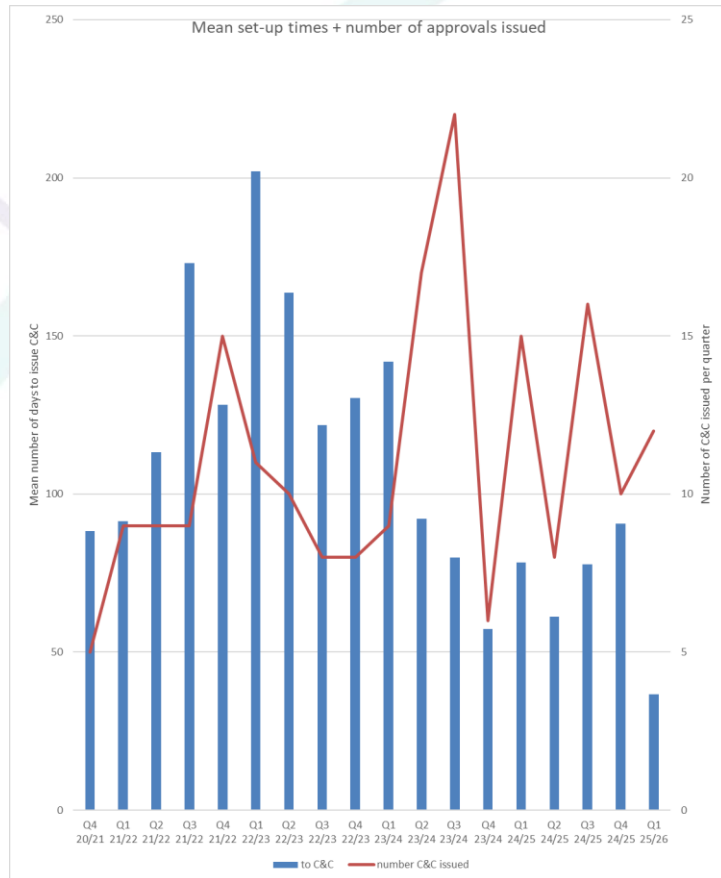
- 2) *At the time of the assessment, not all practices within the Mesobank research tissue bank aligned with the documented policies and procedures. Examples included, but were not limited to, document control (DN001), sampling handling (SOP124) and consent (SOP103).*

The 2 Tissue Banks work independently and have had separate consent and sampling handling SOPs. These will be merged to ensure consistency.

Research Governance



Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust



The mean number of days to studies getting Trust C&C in Q1 2025/26 was 39 days (down from a maximum of 202 days at the beginning of 2022/23).

In the Fit for the future – 10 year health plan for England published by the government in July 2025, they have set a target of commercial study set-up of 150 days. This comprises: 60 days for the sponsor to gain HRA (regulatory) Approval, 60 days for Trust to issue C&C, and a further 30 days for first patient recruited.

There are ongoing discussions at a national level about the use of the HRA Approval date rather than the current receipt of the local information pack.

Pros of this approach are that it is a completely level playing field for all Trust (as there is some discretion about when you can choose to accept the LIP)

Cons are that if you are not one of the first wave of sites to be approached the associated delay will not be taken into consideration.

Grant Applications



Royal Papworth Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

The Clinical Trials Unit continues to support investigators (both RPH and external) with grant applications.

We currently have 12 grants in various stages of work-up and 5 which have been submitted, where the outcome is awaited. We run monthly Grant and Protocol Development workshops to support investigators in developing their idea, with project managers, statisticians, health economists and data managers present.

Two of our large multi-centre studies have finished recently:

QUACS – Quality of Life after Cardiac Surgery (CI Mr S Nashef) and NOTACS – Nasal Oxygen Therapy After Cardiac Surgery (CI Dr A Klein). Both held dissemination events open to participants and sites and are finalising publications.

The Trials Unit have been active in supporting investigators interested in applying for the RPH Innovation Fund. They held protocol development workshops for 10 investigators and supported 8 of these with applications, providing literature reviews, statistical support and grant writing support.

RPH Innovation Fund

The RPH Innovation fund has been running since 2021 funded by Royal Papworth Charity and managed and run by the R&D Department.

The latest round in 2025 has just closed to applicants and 17 people have applied for funding. Of these 7 are non-medics (31%) and the bids come to over £600K with £200K to allocate.

Year	Number applied	Total number funded	Number of non-medics funded	Funding allocated
2021	11	5	1	£230,928
2022	4	2	0	£93,691
2023	7	3	1	£32,093
2024	22	7	5	£176,393
2025	17			