

UCLPartners: An Academic Health Science Network in development

Introduction

This paper refers to the call by the Department of Health to establish Academic Health Science Networks, and summarises the local response to this call, which is led by UCLPartners. A brief summary of UCLPartners is also provided.

The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- comment on the proposal to create an local Academic Health Science Network
- comment on the early priorities
- consider supporting UCLPartners AHSN and encouraging Local Authorities in the area to become members.

Academic Health Science Networks

In June 2012, the Department of Health launched a call for the establishment of Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) across the country¹.

Each AHSN is expected to bring together a broad range of organisations to work collaboratively for the benefit of a population of approximately 3 – 5 million. Members of an AHSN are expected to include: the local NHS and providers of NHS funded care (e.g., independent and third sector), the local authority, higher education and research institutions, industry, and patient and carer organisations.

The functions of an AHSN include but are not limited to:

- driving service improvement and the use of proven innovations
- facilitating better education and training for the current and future workforce
- sharing information with patients and with different parts of the health and social care system
- promoting involvement in research
- embedding research discoveries and learning into practice
- working with industry to develop, test and commercialise new ideas for economic benefit

The national designation process for AHSNs involves the submission of an Expression of Interest by 20th July 2012 and a full Prospectus by 30th September 2012. Panel interviews will take place during October/ November 2012. Designation announcements for AHSNs will be made at the end of November 2012.

UCLPartners

UCLPartners was designated as an Academic Health Science Centre (AHSC) by the Department of Health in April 2009. AHSCs have related functions to AHSNs but AHSCs are of a smaller scale (in terms of geography and number of organisations) and they focus more on new discoveries rather than embedding research findings and proven innovations in to practice.

UCLPartners (UCLP) is currently a partnership of 16 NHS provider Trusts and 3 Universities serving 3.5m people across north central and north east London. Its purpose is to deliver measurable health gain for patients and populations – in London, across the UK, and globally – through innovation in healthcare delivery, new discoveries through research, and improved education and training.

¹ <http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/files/2012/06/Academic-Health-Science-Networks-21062012-gw-17626-PDF-229K.pdf>

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In response to the call for the establishment of AHSNs, UCLP began a process of co-producing an Academic Health Science Network which will serve a population of 5.5million across north central and north east London, south and west Hertfordshire, south Bedfordshire, and south and west Essex. This geography reflects historical patient and trainee flows between providers in the different counties.

UCLP will continue to develop our culture of collaborative partnership working by building upon our currently stated UCLP values:

- Patient-led, organising care around patients' needs and preferences
- Population-focused, taking a system-wide view to drive improved health outcomes at speed and scale
- Drawing on academic expertise across disciplines in biomedicine and beyond
- Working across boundaries, spanning primary, secondary and tertiary health care, social care, public health, industry and third sector organisations

The principal strategic goals will be to:

- Support and facilitate **measurable improvements** in health and wellbeing of our population, recognising the importance of reducing health inequalities
- Enhance **economic gain** for the population through better health, innovation and its implementation into practice

The early priorities for UCLP AHSN will be aligned the most pressing needs of the population and the system:

- **Early diagnosis and prevention** of the causes of premature death in our population, most notably cancer and cardiovascular disease which together contribute to two-thirds of premature deaths
- **Long-term conditions** which affect an increasing number of lives and accounts for 70% of health care spend. The initial focus will be people living with multiple chronic conditions, and with mental illness.

UCLP submitted a successful Expression of Interest² and is now consulting with its members to submit a full Prospectus by 30th September 2012.

² http://www.uclpartners.com/lotus/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/UCLP_AHSN_EOI.pdf