

Key themes and the way forward for the Institute of Health Sciences

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Overview

- Some reflections on today's conference
- Emerging themes:
 - Boundary spanning and collaboration
 - Capacity and capability in the health sciences
 - New structures and ways of working in the future
- The future agenda for the IHS

Reflections on today

- First time we've done something like this
- Major investment of time and effort – but probably worth it periodically
- Rapid pace of change – both externally and internally – makes events like this more necessary
- About more than just the content – networking, face to face contact, new connections...

Boundary spanning and collaboration

- Manchester's critical mass is a strength but also a weakness – problems of scale and complexity
- The organisational/institutional structure is often a barrier to collaborative endeavour
- Organisational change and restructuring probably make this harder
- Boundary spanning is more difficult for those in peripheral settings, with roles that don't require it, and in less senior positions
- NHS/university boundaries remain problematic

Capacity and capability

- Getting both internal and external recognition of the strength and power of the health sciences community at Manchester
- Interdependence of different disciplines and areas
- Identifying and tackling areas of shortage, weakness or other constraints
- Providing a collective voice for health sciences

New structures and ways of working

- National landscape – shift toward NIHR and, post-Darzi, a new focus on innovation
- MAHSC, CLARHC, NTAC, MIMIT, HIEC and others
- Increasing focus on the “end to end” pathway, not the separate bits – need for interdisciplinarity and integration
- Growing attention to implementation and demonstrated impact – health and wealth benefits of research

The future agenda for the IHS

- Mission unchanged – how it's done might be different
- Main value lies in lateral connection and interaction, the demand for boundary spanning, and the opportunity for collective voice
- Top down and bottom up approach to problem solving
- Focus on added value – tackling issues and problems not addressed by others, doing practical things to help/support health sciences

Seminars with key funding programmes

- 8 May – NIHR service delivery and organisation programme
- 11 May – NIHR research for patient benefit programme
- 28 May – NIHR efficacy and mechanism evaluation programme
- 18 June – NIHR health technology assessment programme

Sharing learning about funding programmes

- Identifying and using UoM staff who are panel members, board members and have intelligence to share
- Using successful grantholders and successful grant applications to improve future applications
- Offering proactive peer review and support to applicants who want/need it
- Gathering and using/sharing feedback from funders

IHS networks

- Groupings around topics or themes which are multidisciplinary and require collaboration
- Review of existing networks almost complete
- Role of the IHS is catalytic – getting networks started and enabling them to become self-supporting over time
- Need for horizon scanning – spotting and encouraging future network opportunities

Conclusions

- Strength, scale and international profile of the health sciences research community in Manchester
- Risks – like complexity, pace of change, and wider economic climate
- IHS contribution can bring significant added value
- Next steps for IHS and its board – planning and setting out a programme of activities for 09/10 – ideas and proposals welcomed