

Strategy summary 2021–2025

Health research –
making an impact

Introduction

Every advance in health or healthcare depends on high-quality research. Research provides hope.

The HRB Strategy 2021-2025, *Health research - making an impact*, sets out how we will advance health research, data and evidence to benefit Ireland's people, society and economy. We are committed to ensuring that research and evidence are translated into important breakthroughs that improve people's health, deliver new treatments and inform health policy and practice.

This strategy is a result of extensive engagement with stakeholders and input from an International Expert Advisory Panel. We would like to acknowledge everyone's time and commitment.






**Every advance in health
or healthcare depends on
high-quality research.
Research provides hope.**

Our values




Leadership

We are **leaders** in supporting and raising the standard of health and social care research, evidence and data nationally.




Independence

We are an **independent** and **trusted voice** for research evidence in health and social care.




Accountability

We are **accountable** and take ownership for ensuring the best possible standards in the research that we fund, the research we do and the data that we manage.




Quality

We uphold the **highest quality standards** and levels of professionalism in all aspects of the HRB's work.




Responsiveness

We are agile and innovative in how **we respond to the research needs** of society and the health system.




Collaboration

We **collaborate** nationally and internationally and work with a broad range of stakeholders across all HRB activities.



Inclusiveness

We **aim to include** and engage with a diverse range of people in the work we do, treating everyone fairly and **equitably**.



Vision, mission and strategic objectives

Our vision is for better health through excellent research, data and evidence. Our mission is to support research that improves people’s health, promotes evidence-informed care and creates solutions to societal challenges.

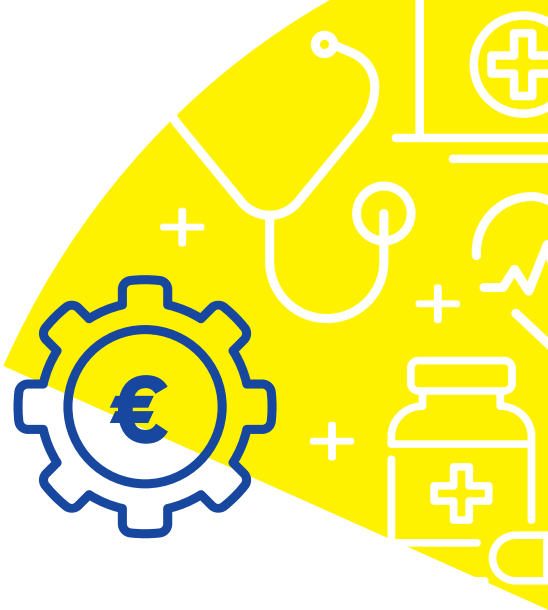
Led by our values as an organisation, we are committed to ensuring that people remain at the very heart of everything we do.

To deliver on our vision and mission over the next five years, we have identified six strategic objectives across our activities:



Strategic objective 1

Invest in research that delivers value for health, the health system, society, and the economy



Research that makes a difference

Research enables advances in health and social care that make a real difference to people’s lives. The HRB is committed to investing in research that delivers value for health, the health system, society and the economy.

We will do this through a strategic, well-balanced funding portfolio that responds to real-world needs – collaborating with partners to address challenges and drive innovation in our health system, and supporting meaningful involvement of the public, patients and carers in research. This will ensure that HRB-funded research is applied in practice and contributes to better outcomes for Ireland and its people.

Key HRB actions

1.1 Engage with partners in the health and social care system and with other funders to facilitate dialogue on key issues and agendas in order to ensure stronger

collaboration, coordination and prioritisation.

1.2 Invest in research that informs the decisions and actions of knowledge users in the Irish health and social care system.

1.3 Continue to support high-quality, investigator-led research to create new knowledge that, over time, will help to address major health challenges in society and have an impact on tomorrow’s healthcare.

1.4 Involve the public, patients and carers in HRB-funded research in order to ensure that it is relevant and usable and can catalyse cultural change in the research system.

1.5 Drive excellence in health research practices by overseeing and promoting high standards of research management and governance.

1.6 Measure, monitor and evaluate the HRB funding portfolio on a regular basis to assess effectiveness, relevance, outcomes, impact and return on investment.

Strategic objective 2

Be an independent, credible voice for research and evidence, and a trusted thought leader



An independent voice

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We aim to be an independent, credible voice for research and evidence, and a trusted thought leader. We will seek to enhance coordination between those involved in evidence synthesis nationally and internationally. And we will strive to earn and maintain people’s trust in the evidence produced, while facilitating dialogue on emerging health research topics.

The HRB evidence centre will continue to support the generation of independent, credible evidence to inform decisions of policymakers, practitioners and the public.

Key HRB actions

2.1 Provide a high-quality and responsive evidence service to support policy, practice and evaluation for the Department of Health and other stakeholders in health and social care.

2.2 Promote and support national and international evidence review and synthesis activities in order to build capacity, address knowledge gaps, inform guidelines and provide guidance to policy-makers and practitioners.

2.3 Play a leading role in stimulating dialogue with stakeholders, including the public, to respond to emerging developments in research, health and society.

2.4 Position the HRB as a trusted objective source for health research and evidence to guide policy, inform decision-making and influence behaviour.

Strategic objective 3

Promote and enable the use of data to shape health policy, enhance healthcare delivery, and drive broader research and innovation initiatives

Trusted data

Health and social care data, along with research and statistical data, has the potential to transform healthcare delivery and how we manage our own health. The HRB is already playing a leading role in enabling this transformation.

We are committed to promoting and enabling the use of data to shape health policy, enhance healthcare delivery and drive broader research and innovation initiatives. Moreover, we will work to increase public understanding of the importance of facilitating secure access to health and social care data for research, policy and planning. And we will support adoption of best practice in data management, governance and re-use by data producers and researchers.

Key HRB actions

3.1 Play a leading role with other stakeholders to promote and enable the infrastructure and environment for the optimal use of health and

social care data and statistical data for research.

3.2 Grow and develop the HRB's national health information systems to provide quality, timely and relevant data to policy-makers, service providers and researchers.

3.3 Work with partners to optimise the use of data from the HRB's national health information systems for research purposes, with a particular focus on alcohol and drug use, disabilities and mental health.

3.4 Use commissioned primary research and secondary data analysis to support drug and alcohol strategies at a national and European level.

3.5 Support the regulatory work of the Health Research Consent Declaration Committee (HRCDC) in contributing to health data being used in a transparent, trusted and safeguarded manner, and in the public interest.

3.6 Take a national leadership role in driving the FAIR* data and open research agendas. (*findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable)



Strategic objective 4

Build a strong and supportive environment for health research in Ireland



Thriving research environment

Health research that delivers value needs an enabling environment to thrive – from skilled researchers and access to infrastructure, to policies that support and enhance good research practice.

The HRB will help build this strong, supportive environment for health research in Ireland, fostering connections between the academic and healthcare systems in the process. In partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, we will work to ensure that funding for researchers and infrastructure is delivered effectively, that the highest standards of governance, quality and ethics are met, and that innovative practices are developed and taken up here in Ireland.

Key HRB actions

4.1 Invest strategically in research leadership and build the capacity of academic researchers and health and social care practitioners to respond to current and emerging health research needs.

4.2 Working with partners, invest in a coordinated clinical trials infrastructure to deliver benefits for patients and the innovation agenda, and with enhanced integration into the health system.

4.3 Take a leading role to convene stakeholders to progress the design, development and implementation of national shared, high-cost research infrastructures, including in the areas of biobanking and genomic research.

4.4 Lead the transformation of the national research ethics system in Ireland to deliver a robust, efficient and transparent review framework that engenders the trust of key stakeholders, including the public.

4.5 Together with national, EU and international partners, develop and shape health research-related policies, regulations and procedures, and support their implementation in Ireland.

Strategic objective 5

Foster and enhance European and international coordination, collaboration and engagement



Productive international partnerships

From pandemics to climate change, many of the greatest health challenges we face are global and can only be addressed through international partnership.

To meet these challenges, we are committed to fostering and enhancing European and international coordination, collaboration and engagement in health research. We will help Ireland’s research community compete for EU and international funding, and work with policy stakeholders to identify opportunities to engage in initiatives that can advance health and broader government objectives.

5.2 Drive transformative agendas in national health research by informing strategic choices and maintaining an expert understanding of the evolving European research landscape.

5.3 Strengthen, develop and invest in co-funding collaborations with other EU and international agencies and organisations in targeted areas of health research.

5.4 Support the Irish health research community, policy-makers and service delivery counterparts to compete directly in EU funding programmes.

Key HRB actions

5.1 Forge strategic alliances with European and international partners to tackle global health challenges and complex societal issues and strengthen Ireland’s profile as a knowledge economy.

Strategic objective 6

Develop the HRB as a progressive place to work, where our people are supported to be innovative and responsive



Organisational excellence

As a leading agency for health and social care research, evidence and data, HRB’s goal as an organisation is to be the best.

We will further develop the HRB as a progressive place to work, where our people are supported to be innovative and responsive. We will maintain our culture of organisational excellence based on shared values that attracts the best talent, embraces change and delivers solutions. Our governance structures will support informed and accountable decision-making, and we will communicate with impact to strengthen our reputation across stakeholders.

Key HRB actions

6.1 Promote a positive organisational culture and provide our people with the skills, processes and capabilities needed to continuously develop, improve and adapt to changing needs.

6.2 Operate and adhere to the highest standards of corporate governance supported by a high-performing Board and its committees.

6.3 Deliver value for money and optimise financial operations in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that timely, accurate and meaningful financial information is available to inform decision-making.

6.4 Ensure that the HRB’s ICT systems are reliable, resilient, cyber secure and focused on digital innovation.

6.5 Deliver on ambitious sustainability and climate action goals.

6.6 Enhance communications capability across the organisation to communicate with impact.

Download and view
the full Strategy at
www.hrb.ie/strategy-2025

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