



Research. Evidence. Action.

HRB Strategy Summary
2016-2020

Our mission: to improve people's health and to enhance healthcare delivery

Health research saves lives. It is central to improving people's health and key to delivering many objectives of the health system.

The Health Research Board leads and supports excellent research. We generate new knowledge and evidence. And most importantly, we promote the use of new research, information and evidence in policy and practice for the benefit of people's health and patient care.

Our core principles

The HRB operates to a number of core principles that guide all our activities:

Integrity

Independence and objectivity

Quality and professionalism

Transparency, fairness and accountability

Collaboration and cooperation

Focus on outcomes and impact

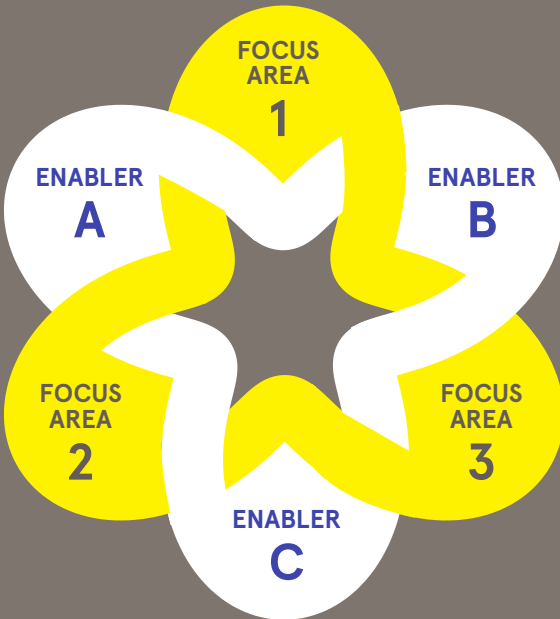
Value for money



Our vision: healthy people
through excellent research
and applied knowledge

Focus areas and enabling themes

Our three focus areas and enablers are complementary and interdependent, and we will pursue them simultaneously throughout the period of the strategy.



FOCUS AREA 1

Address major health challenges

FOCUS AREA 2

Support healthcare interventions

FOCUS AREA 3

Address the research needs of the Irish health and social care system

ENABLER A

Support exceptional researchers and leaders

ENABLER B

Build a strong enabling environment

ENABLER C

Enhance organisational performance

FOCUS AREA 1

Address major health challenges

Innovative, investigator-led and internationally competitive research to address major health challenges in society

In this focus area, we aim to create new knowledge that, over time, will help to address the major health challenges in society and have an impact on tomorrow's healthcare. This research will be innovative and investigator-led. It may be in any area within the HRB's remit but must be internationally competitive, with excellence being the key driver. In this focus area, we will be flexible in considering support for a broader array of topics and issues than those prioritised by the national system and policymakers, so as to encourage the development and refinement of fresh ideas, new techniques and methodologies.

This research represents a long term investment in our future, providing the seed-corn of intellectual and human capital that will be needed for future generations.

FOCUS AREA 2

Support healthcare interventions

The design, conduct and evaluation of healthcare intervention studies to improve health outcomes and health service delivery

This focus area will support the design, conduct and evaluation of healthcare intervention studies to improve health outcomes and health service delivery. The HRB's investment in infrastructure over the past decade means that it is now possible for researchers in Ireland to conduct high quality intervention studies and trials. The focus of this area is on the practical translation of research discoveries and knowledge into new ways of treating patients, delivering care or changing behaviour. Healthcare interventions, including trials, are an essential step in translating research discoveries into improvements in health and health services. Intervention studies may be hospital or community based, and may include medicinal products, procedures, devices, behavioural treatments, preventive care or service change.

Where appropriate, intervention studies supported by the HRB will incorporate cost analysis and data on implementation.

FOCUS AREA 3

Address the research needs of the Irish health and social care system

Partnership-driven research, information and evidence that meet the needs of the Irish health and social care system

The third focus area will concentrate explicitly on the research and evidence needs of the Irish health and social care system. Activities in this focus area will have both a shorter term and a more applied perspective than activities supported in Focus Area 1. In addition, work in this focus area will be designed and delivered in a way that considers the needs of stakeholders in the health system. Partnership-driven research, information and evidence generation will address short- to medium-term evidence gaps and health system needs. Research and information users in the health services will play a key role in defining and prioritising questions and topics, as well as in the conduct of the research and dissemination of the results.

Research projects funded in this focus area are likely to be of shorter duration than those funded in Focus Area 1, and will take into account the context for implementation and adoption including, where appropriate, analyses of cost, workforce and acceptability. Although research must be of a high quality, the main driver in this focus area will be the needs of the health system today, rather than the generation of new knowledge for tomorrow.

ENABLER A

Support exceptional researchers and leaders

Support the exceptional researchers, talent and leadership we need to undertake high-quality health research and generate evidence

Key to the successful delivery of each of the HRB's objectives is a highly skilled research workforce. Health research requires the talent, expertise and ingenuity of a wide range of people – clinicians, health professionals, scientists, social scientists, epidemiologists, health economists, statisticians, and many others. As well as generating ideas and undertaking research, a highly skilled workforce will ensure that research and evidence are integrated into policy and practice, thus improving decision-making and, ultimately, health outcomes.

Between now and 2020, we will continue to invest in excellent Ph.D. training programmes, so as to attract the best people into health research. We will provide opportunities for postdoctoral researchers and new investigators to continue their research. We will support leaders who can promote research in the health system, and we will encourage our research community to develop international links. In recognition of the fact that responsibility for training and career development is shared and requires input from many stakeholders, we will work with the higher education system in Ireland, as well as with the Health Service Executive and professional training bodies, to develop a coordinated approach to building capacity in health research in Ireland.

ENABLER B

Build a strong enabling environment

Build a strong enabling environment for health research in Ireland

Effective translation of health research into societal and economic benefits needs a positive enabling environment. The characteristics of this should include good coordination between the healthcare system and industry; excellent facilities and infrastructure; appropriate systems for data management; regulatory and policy support; a coordinated and credible approach to establishing research priorities; and a culture that recognises patients and the public as partners in the health research process. Moreover, an increased focus on synergies between European and national agencies makes it increasingly important that the HRB aligns and coordinates its activities with those of its European partners.

Between now and 2020, the HRB will provide the strategic leadership required to shape the national health research agenda. We will continue to invest in the research infrastructure in order to promote excellence, critical mass and coordination across the system. At international level, we will continue to support and encourage our research community to participate in Horizon 2020 and other European research programmes, and we will continue to play our part in European initiatives that influence the environment for health research.

ENABLER C

Enhance organisational performance

Achieve and sustain outstanding levels of organisational performance

To deliver our strategy in a manner that maximises its impact and benefits, the HRB will build on its strengths to align its people, structures, skills and processes with our strategic objectives.


It is not simply about what we do, but how we can do it better. We will continuously improve how we work – through strong teamwork, innovative problem-solving and responsive leadership.

By addressing this priority effectively, we will create and maintain simple but effective processes, engage appropriately with stakeholders, take innovative approaches to planning and service delivery, and ensure decisions are made on the best available information. We will enhance and implement appropriate mechanisms to review and monitor what we do and how we do it. Achieving organisational excellence will ensure that the HRB is recognised as the leader in health research in Ireland and that Irish people develop an understanding of the impact that health research has on people's lives and the delivery of healthcare.

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