Established in 1998, the Academy of Medical Sciences is celebrating its 25th year as the independent, expert voice of biomedical and health research in the UK. Our vision is ‘Good health for all supported by the best research and evidence’ and our mission is to help create an open and progressive research sector to improve the health of people everywhere.

How your support is helping to make medical science work for everyone

Impact report 2022-2023
Our heartfelt thanks

Your support allows us to champion science to improve lives. While support from government underpins much of our work, donations from individuals, including our Fellows, companies, trusts and foundations allow us to be truly independent. This support enables us to focus on developing an open, progressive and diverse medical research community. Independent funding allows us to remain agile and responsive in identifying and tackling some of the most pressing health issues, both at home and on the global stage.

We are immensely grateful to all our supporters but would like to highlight the contribution of some of our most long-standing and committed benefactors.


We would also like to thank our government funders: the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), Department of Health and Social Care and the National Institute for Health and Care Research; and those that have joined our consortia to fund our grants schemes as well as our career development programmes, including: the Health Foundation, the British Heart Foundation, Versus Arthritis, the Medical Research Council, Diabetes UK, British Thoracic Society, the Association of Physicians of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the British Academy, Royal Society and Royal Academy of Engineering.

“The Academy was pivotal in my career and now that I’m in a position to help others I want to give back to support the next generation. Through membership of the Helix Group, I can support the work of the Academy and help give other researchers the same opportunities I had.”

Dr Elspeth Whitby, Clinical Senior Lecturer, University of Sheffield

Our Helix Group members are recognised on the back of this report.
During 2023 we will be celebrating ‘25 and up: the Academy for the next generation’, which will include identifying and highlighting the needs and priorities of emerging research leaders and the role we have to play in helping them realise their potential, as well as celebrating the importance of partnership to the Academy’s many achievements over the last 25 years.

What drives all our work is ‘Our vision of good health for all supported by the best research and evidence’. This year we have connected with more patients and carers than ever before to involve them in informing and defining our work. Our vision is rooted in the fact that scientific research that translates into treatments that positively impact patients and the public gives hope to millions of people and their families around the world. And no more so than at this continued time of pressure on the NHS and the health impact of the pandemic, climate change and growing health inequalities.

We are grateful for your generosity this year in supporting our work and hope we can count on your help in the future to enable us to achieve our ambitions.

Simon Denegri OBE, Executive Director

“While our 25th anniversary is an opportunity to take stock of the impact and achievements of the Academy and our community, it is also an important moment to look to our future and how we can influence the development of a research sector to improve the health of people everywhere. It is vital that we fully engage with the next generation of researchers to identify the challenges and how we as an Academy could work to foster the capability of future research leaders and help them realise their ambitions.”

Professor Dame Anne Johnson, AMS President
A spotlight on impacts

Improve lives

Through our prior work with partners across the life sciences sector, we secured amendments to the Health and Care Act 2022, to ensure that leaders in the NHS in England facilitate and promote research.

Our work to influence UK policy and practice covered themes ranging from environmental sustainability of biomedical research, public health and the future of UK health research, to pharmacogenomics, antimicrobial resistance and AI in healthcare, which were addressed in over 16 events (including lectures, workshops and roundtables), more than 20 policy publications (including responses to consultations from Government and Parliament) and by engaging with over 600 stakeholders and experts across the UK and other countries.

Support researchers

Continuing our support for talented and aspiring researchers, we awarded over £8.8 million of funding, including over £8.2 million to 119 new grantees.

Responding to the increasing demand for places, we doubled our SUSTAIN programme, supporting women in their first independent research position, to reach two cohorts of 24 participants each year.

Key findings of an independent review of our Clinical Scientist Fellowship scheme, which supports future Clinical Academic leaders, showed that for every £1 awarded to fellows, over £19 was secured in follow on funding.

Strengthen research

We led a cross-funder statement signed by 27 research funders who have committed to acknowledge the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on future grant applicants’ work.

As part of our commitment to meaningfully engage patients and the public in our work, 14 public and patient representatives took part in our FORUM events, ensuring a patient voice across the entire programme.

Strengthening the voice of medical science in the media, we trained, coached and linked scientists with journalists for expert comment, receiving 85 media enquiries leading to widespread media coverage, and 1.6 million views across our social media.

Work globally

We extended our international engagement including renewing a new five-year Memorandum of Understanding with the US National Academy of Medicine at a ceremony that coincided with a joint hybrid meeting on climate change and health held in Washington DC and London.

We increased our impact on global health, co-hosting policy events in the USA, South Africa, Kenya, Brazil and the Netherlands, as well as engaging with partners in Portugal, Germany, and Switzerland, covering themes ranging from the microbiome, climate change and health, to mental health and ‘one health’.

We worked in partnership with the Council for At-Risk Academics and the other UK National Academies to establish a Researchers at Risk Fellowship Programme, supporting 177 Ukrainian-based researchers and their dependents to relocate to the UK so they can continue their research in safety.

Build resources

In January, we launched our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to inform work across the Academy, reflecting our strategic priority to foster a research community that is trusted, open, diverse, collaborative and inclusive.

Funding was pledged from The Wolfson Foundation to support the development of facilities at our headquarters at 41 Portland Place in London and we began refitting the 4th floor to provide additional workspace for staff.

We enhanced our regional programme, returning to in-person events with key activities taking place across the UK, including in all the devolved nations.

1. The One Health High-Level Expert Panel defines ‘One Health’ as an integrative and systemic approach to health, grounded on the understanding that human health is closely linked to the healthiness of food, animals, and the environment and the healthy balance of their impact on the ecosystems they share, everywhere in the world.
Helping science to change the face of healthcare

Your support is giving us the independence, flexibility and agility to help change the face of healthcare and make biomedical science work for everyone. By supporting the next generation of research and research leaders, enabling us to engage with patients and their families, and helping us to shape policy to create a more diverse and sustainable research landscape, your generosity is making a real difference, as highlighted in the following case studies from the past year.

YOUR IMPACT ON GLOBAL HEALTH

Global health inequalities: research for a fairer future

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the most vulnerable groups of disadvantaged and marginalised people around the world were the most severely affected, facing increased chances of becoming ill and dying. This was largely due to unequal access to health services and interventions, which became increasingly evident during the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted key research gaps that need to be addressed to ensure that policy solutions are inclusive and reflect the needs of vulnerable and traditionally overlooked groups across society.

Between March and June 2022, we worked with the InterAcademy Partnership\(^2\) (IAP) to deliver a series of workshops that brought together 60 participants from 25 countries to explore global health inequalities through the lens of access to healthcare. We set out to identify how research could help map a pathway to more equitable health outcomes as the world recovers from the acute phase of the pandemic, and support efforts in the event of a future health emergency.

Following the series of workshops and input from several international funders, we captured the main themes and discussions in a report that was released in September 2022. We also issued a joint statement with the IAP highlighting that the research community has a critical role to play in generating evidence to shape the path to recovery and a future where good health is more equitably shared.

The statement provides a framework for international comparisons and collaborations, sharing of experience and evidence to jointly address health inequality, and outlines the role of research in supporting access to quality and robust health services in a post-pandemic world.

“We are pleased by the initial response by the UK and global research community to the messages from this framework, and the Academy of Medical Sciences and the InterAcademy Partnership are prepared to continue working together and with stakeholders that are tackling health inequalities. The Academy of Medical Sciences’ 10-year strategy 2022-32 highlights health inequalities as a strategy priority, and we will endeavour to draw upon this work to inform our future activities on cross-cutting issues, both in the UK and globally.”

From statement by the IAP Steering Committee

Thanks to the generous support of funders and partners, the Academy is able to work across borders and in partnership with the global research community to promote the best possible medical research and so improve global patient health.

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2. The Academy of Medical Sciences is a member of the InterAcademy Partnership, a global network of over 140 science, engineering & medical academies working together to provide independent expert advice on scientific, technological and health issues.
Improving lives through action on rare disease research

Around 3.5 million people in the UK are affected by a rare disease at some point in their lifetime and the rarity of these conditions presents challenges in developing medicines for treatments, particularly due to difficulties around the design, execution and evaluation of clinical trials.

In Spring 2022, the Academy held a workshop on ‘clinical trials for rare and ultra rare diseases’ as part of its FORUM programme, hosted in partnership with the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Medicine. Through the workshop, we brought participants together to explore where innovations in clinical trials could be applied to rare diseases and what criteria for acceptability these innovations have amongst trial participants, trial sites, trial sponsors, regulators and health technology assessors.

The resulting report identified three key areas of opportunity to improve clinical research delivery: improving recruitment of trial participants, reducing the burden of trial participation, and making the best use of trial data, including real-world data. The next steps proposed by workshop participants were fed through to those working on rare diseases policies in all four UK nations, which has helped to shape the England Rare Diseases Action Plan 2023, published in February 2023. Thanks to the impact of the workshop, the plan commits to continuing to explore the next steps proposed in the workshop to determine what more can be done to make it easier for people living with both genetic and non-genetic rare conditions to participate in clinical research where they wish to do so.

“As a parent of a child with a rare disease that is both life limiting and without a cure, that diagnosis makes one feel powerless. This workshop has brought back a little piece of that power in terms of actively being involved in potentially making a change to the future of clinical trials for rare disease and therefore the future of people with rare diseases.”

Parent of child with a rare disease

“This workshop has uncovered many barriers that hinder trials in rare diseases and identified solutions that will help us run more successful trials. The message is clear: we can’t carry on as normal, we need to learn from experience, to think differently and change our approach.”

Professor Alan Boyd FMedSci, Pharmaceutical Physician, CEO of Boyds Consultants Ltd

The Academy’s FORUM programme provides a neutral and independent platform for networking and discussions that impact scientific opportunities, technology trends and associated healthcare strategies. Through a programme of events, we bring together individuals from across academia, industry, the NHS, Government, and the charity, regulatory and wider healthcare sector to help influence policy and practice to improve the lives of patients, the public and communities.

Thank you to our FORUM supporters

Astex
AstraZeneca
Birmingham Health Partners
Bristol Medical School
Bristol Myers Squibb Pharmaceuticals Ltd
British Heart Foundation
British Pharmacological Society
British Society for Immunology
Cancer Research UK
Dunhill Medical Trust
Encephalitis Society
Faculty of Pharmaceutical Medicine
GlaxoSmithKline
GW4
IQVIA
Janssen
Kings Health Partners
Leeda Academic Health Partners
Life Sciences Hub Wales
LifeArc
Liverpool Health Partners
Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency
Merck
National Institute for Health & Care Excellence
Newcastle University
Pfizer
Royal Society of Chemistry
UCB
UKRI - MRC
University College London
University of Dundee
University of Edinburgh
University of Glasgow
University of Oxford
University of Southampton
Versus Arthritis
Vertex Pharmaceuticals
Warwick Medical School

During the past year, we’ve hosted workshops on Enhancing cross-sector mobility, Accelerating safe and effective adoption of artificial intelligence in the healthcare system: learning by doing, and Enabling the environmental sustainability of biomedical research. Our thanks go to all the organisations who continue to support the Academy’s work through FORUM.
Building networks through our Cross-Sector Programme

One of the key challenges in addressing the major healthcare issues we face today is ensuring that researchers, health professionals, regulators, policymakers, patients and the public are able to work together creatively on developing solutions. In September 2022, we launched our new Cross-Sector Programme, which brings together innovators, researchers, health professionals and policymakers from across the life sciences through networking events and a collaborative funding scheme to promote health innovation.

The programme aims to address key challenges faced when trying to work across sectors, such as difficulties in connecting with the right people and organisations, cultural gaps, limited incentives for career movement and a lack of resource to engage across sectors. It will boost connections in health research priority areas, including data analytics and artificial intelligence for genomics, pathology, drug development, medical imaging and cell and gene therapy.

By tackling these issues, this programme is at the heart of our new 10-year strategy, aiming to strengthen research by bringing together researchers across sectors to work collaboratively on the biggest health challenges.

In the first phase of the Cross-Sector Programme, we are establishing local networking hubs in the devolved nations and regions of the UK, in collaboration with local organisations. We launched the first phase on 17 November 2022 in Cardiff with a networking hub, held in partnership with Life Sciences Hub Wales. This was followed by our second event on 20 April 2023, which brought together innovators and researchers across careers and sectors to discuss the effective adoption of digital applications and how to bring care closer to home, while driving forward innovation. The collaborative nature of the event is captured in the post-event visual artwork shown below.

“Our impact on strengthening research

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“Life Sciences Hub Wales is delighted to be working in partnership with the Academy of Medical Sciences on this pilot programme that will provide meaningful opportunities for researchers, people working in industry and clinicians in Wales to network, access funding support and above all, collaborate.”

Cari-Anne Quinn, Chief Executive of Life Sciences Hub Wales

“Having a strong and robust network is very important for any individual, but it can often favour people who are more extroverted and willing to put themselves out there. We want to enable people from all backgrounds to connect to new and existing networks and help address barriers to participation. One of the key differentiating features of this scheme is that we will be carrying out a lot of regional activities working with hubs to tap into the real strength of expertise across the UK.”

Professor Jackie Hunter CBE FMedSci, Chair of the reference group overseeing the programme development

Thanks to our partnership with funders, further events are planned during 2023 and we will be launching the second phase of the programme, which will provide collaborative funding to support longer term movement of people between sectors.
YOUR IMPACT ON SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION

Innovative support for research careers

Researchers are critical to our healthcare, driving groundbreaking health discoveries and providing answers to healthcare challenges.

The Academy provides innovative career funding and support enabling biomedical and health researchers in the UK and globally to advance medical science and translate developments into benefits for patients and wider society.

Here we outline the range of support we provide for researchers at different career stages and highlight some of the ways in which we are helping the next generation to realise their ambitions.

Career development support and opportunities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>PRE-DOCTORAL TRAINING</th>
<th>POST-DOCTORAL TRAINING</th>
<th>INDEPENDENCE</th>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
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<td>CLINICAL RESEARCHERS</td>
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<td>BASIC SCIENTISTS</td>
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<td>INTERNATIONAL (BASIC &amp; CLINICAL RESEARCHERS)</td>
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<td>INSPIRE</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>AMR Professorships</td>
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<td>engages undergraduates with the benefits of a career in research</td>
<td>provides career support for post-doctoral and independent researchers through an Academy Fellow mentor</td>
<td>support collaboration between researchers in the field of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the UK and India</td>
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<td>Daniel Turnberg Travel Fellowships</td>
<td>Newton International Fellowships</td>
<td>Newton Advanced Fellowships</td>
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<td>support short-term exchange visits between the UK and the Middle East</td>
<td>support early career international researchers</td>
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<td>Global Challenge Research Fund Networking Grants</td>
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<td>support collaborations between developing countries and the UK aimed at addressing global challenges</td>
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<td>Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers</td>
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More information on all our grants and career development support can be found at www.acmedsci.ac.uk/grants-and-schemes
Supporting women in independent research

Our SUSTAIN career development programme supports women in their first independent research position. Thanks to additional funding, capacity has doubled this year to 48 participants. This unique programme was created in response to mounting evidence that not enough female researchers in science secure senior leadership positions in the UK. Due to the success of the programme, this year we published a toolkit on SUSTAIN’s key elements and are supporting other institutions to run similar programmes, including the Universities of Birmingham and Cardiff.

“I am looking forward to learning from, and contributing to, discussions about the intricacies of academic research with this amazing group of women.”

Dr Adjanie Patabendige, Senior Lecturer in Biomedical Science, Edge Hill University

Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers

Supporting the pursuit of clinical research

Funding of over £1.3 million has been awarded in starter grants to 48 Clinical Lecturers across 24 different institutions this year, providing up to £30,000 for research costs to help strengthen research careers alongside clinical commitments.

To date, for every £1 in funding awarded, almost £13 has been leveraged in further grants, demonstrating the importance of support at this key stage in career development.

“The flexibility of the scheme was a huge advantage and allowed me to chase down new ideas as data arose. I have secured several further external grants since, which were heavily supported by pilot data that I could not have obtained without the Starter Grant. I am now pursuing an independent clinical-scientist research fellowship.”

Dr Andrew Lewis, Cardiology (including Paediatric Cardiology), University of Oxford

AMS Professorships

Supporting international talent

As part of our support for international talent, two researchers who are relocating to the UK have been awarded an Academy of Medical Sciences Professorship this year. This scheme provides up to £500,000 in flexible support to researchers during their initial years of a Professorship.

“This award will fund critical new research on the prediction and prevention of mental illness in childhood and adolescence. It will help me set up a team that will harness Scotland’s world-leading healthcare registers to drive innovation in youth mental health research. We’ll also use the funding to identify new approaches to improving the mental health of young people in the UK and internationally.”

Professor Ian Kelleher, Chair of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Edinburgh

Springboard

Supporting the move to independent researcher

Over the year we awarded more than 40 Springboard Awards totalling £4.2 million across 32 institutions to support research in areas as varied as seizures, obesity and influenza.

Springboard offers a bespoke package to biomedical and health researchers in their first independent post to help launch their careers. It includes funding of up to £125,000 over two years and access to the Academy’s acclaimed mentoring and career development programme.

“I am delighted to receive this prestigious award to investigate how protective brain defences are disrupted in people with an irregular heart rhythm. The funds will support my research group to study the blood-brain barrier using a new model developed using patient data. It will mimic abnormal blood flow in the brain and show at a cellular and molecular level how this may contribute to people developing stroke and dementia.”

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FLIER

Supporting future leaders

This year we launched the third cohort of our highly competitive Future Leaders in Innovation, Enterprise and Research (FLIER) programme, bringing participants to date to 54. This two-year immersive, cross-sector learning experience is for individuals working in the life sciences sector undertaking interdisciplinary work. It brings together a cohort drawn from across academia, industry, the NHS and government/policy organisations to help individuals develop the knowledge, skills and networks required to be leaders and effect innovative organisational change.

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Total income for the Academy in 2022-2023 was £19.1 million and total expenditure was £16.3 million. Increases in activity and programmes as we came out of COVID-19 restrictions resulted in a growth in income of 7.8%, while the 12.9% overall rise in expenditure reflected the increase in programme resources, more in-person events, improvements to our headquarters at 41 Portland Place, London, and costs associated with the rise of inflation.

The majority of income received was in support of the Academy’s widespread activities to develop talented researchers, with £16.7 million received in restricted income to support specific grants and career development projects. The majority of expenditure related to increased activities under our strategic priority influence policy and practice to improve the lives of patients, the public and communities, highlights of which are shared throughout this report.

Unrestricted income for the year was £2.1 million composed of income generated by the hire of space at 41 Portland Place, along with generous support from our other partners with activities such as FORUM and the support of our Fellowship.

Philanthropic donations, particularly those that are not restricted to a specific area of the Academy’s work, support our ability to remain independent and to champion science by allowing us to be agile and innovative in responding to the most pressing health challenges as they arise.

Further financial detail can be found in the Academy’s annual report and financial statements.
AN ACADEMY FOR THE FUTURE

A snapshot of the year ahead

Research sustainability report
Launching of our major policy study report ‘Future-proofing UK health research: a people-centred, coordinated approach’ in May 2023, which follows extensive evidence gathering from Fellows, established and emerging research leaders, patients, carers and representatives from the public, private and charitable sectors, details key threats to UK health research and the steps needed to protect it.

Patient and public contributor support
Developing our Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers to support the involvement of patients and public contributors, with pilot scheme due to launch later in the year.

Open space summit
Holding an ‘open space’ meeting in Birmingham as part of our 25th anniversary programme, to hear first-hand the priorities and aspirations of the next generation of researchers and how we can better help support their needs.

Cross-Sector Programme
Expanding our regional cross-sector hubs by launching a second hub in Scotland, bringing together researchers across the life sciences sectors through events, resources, relevant opportunities and when established, linking to other hubs as part of the wider Cross-Sector Programme. Also implementing the second phase of the programme, which will enable us to provide collaborative funding to support longer term movement of people between sectors.

Child health
Developing a project on child health to examine the impact of improving health in the early years on the long-term mental and physical health of children, as well as on the wider health of the population and economic prosperity of the nation.

FORUM
Hosting our flagship annual FORUM Sir Colin Dollery Lecture, this year on the topic of How to innovate in healthcare: applying implementation sciences, in addition to holding cross-sectoral workshops on Understanding pregnancy: baby steps to developing drugs for pregnancy-specific conditions and Early detection and diagnosis of neurodegenerative diseases.

Working towards net zero
Developing our net zero plan to be published in 2024, including clear targets covering our operations, and building on work done this year to prepare our first Carbon Reduction strategy, Baseline Greenhouse Gas Footprint report and an energy usage report.

Horizon Europe
Continuing to advocate for biomedical and health research funding through association with Horizon Europe, while maintaining our crucial work with the Government and other National Academies to develop and plan for the launch of alternative schemes to replace Horizon Europe should association not be possible.

CATAC in Cambridge
Bringing together clinical and aspiring clinical academics from across the medicine and health sector to meet one another, present their work, and network with senior researchers at our Clinical Academics in Training Annual Conference (CATAC), which takes place in Cambridge this year as part of our regional activities.

25th anniversary
Marking this milestone with a programme of activities entitled, ‘25 and up: the Academy for the next generation’, which highlight the needs and priorities of emerging research leaders and the role we play in helping them realise their potential.
Our Helix Group brings together individual donors who give £250 or more each year to support our work to deliver independent policy advice and provide crucial support for early career researchers.