



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



PARTNER AGREEMENT

Academy of Medical Sciences and the Shelford Group

A shared five-year commitment to strengthen research careers and accelerate the translation of discovery into patient benefit across the NHS.

1. Purpose

The Academy of Medical Sciences (the Academy) and the Shelford Group share a commitment to strengthening medical science, improving research careers and accelerating the translation of discovery into practice across the NHS. This agreement sets out a shared intention to work together to improve the environment for research, support practical system improvement and create the conditions for faster adoption of innovation for patient benefit.

2. Shared ambition

The partnership will focus on practical, scalable action in service of a wider ambition: to improve outcomes for patients and population health by ensuring that the NHS draws more effectively on the best of UK science and contributes actively to discovery and innovation. Together, the Academy and the Shelford Group bring scientific leadership, clinical infrastructure and institutional reach that can help shift what the NHS is able to do for patients, not only by adopting innovation more quickly but by shaping, testing and embedding it within the health system.

Over time, the parties want to help create an NHS research environment in which researchers are well supported, careers are attractive and flexible, and translation from bench to bedside is faster and more consistent. Clinical academics are central to this ambition: they connect science and patient care, help turn discovery into better outcomes, and embody the role of the NHS as an active partner in the research and innovation ecosystem rather than simply a recipient of its outputs.

3. Term

This partnership is intended to run for an initial period of five years, with priorities for the first twelve-months agreed at the outset and reviewed regularly.

4. Scope of collaboration

The partnership will combine the Academy's policy, analysis, expertise, and convening power with the Shelford Group's commitment to research and innovation, and institutional strengths. The parties will work together to understand barriers, identify practical levers for improvement and develop approaches that can be demonstrated locally and scaled where appropriate with the aim of:

- Improving the experience and visibility of research careers, including for clinical academics. Within this use evidence and data to define the current baseline and identify what good looks like.
- Supporting medical scientists across the Shelford Group to speed up research delivery and patient access to innovation
- Identifying opportunities for action within mutual policy priorities each year.

5. Initial priorities for the first twelve months

5.1 Research careers and clinical academics

Shelford trusts will work with the Academy to strengthen research careers for clinical academics and other medical scientists through active institutional commitment.

Together we will:

- Work together to deliver on commitments to reverse the decline in the number of clinical academics, such as the Academy's Clinical Academic Summit statement that Shelford are a signatory of.
- Use our shared experience to shape the development of the wider system, including policy thinking.
- Develop tools to support Shelford members to improve their clinical academic pipeline.

Progress will be assessed against a shared baseline and a practical set of indicators, which will be co-developed by AMS and the Shelford Group. We will use these baseline metrics to identify areas for joint focus and to measure progress over time. The baseline measures may include:

- protected research time for clinical academics;
- the number of new combined clinical academic posts created, or existing posts converted to arrangements with formally protected research time;
- the proportion of clinical academics with ring-fenced research time, tracked year on year;
- entry rates into clinical academic training grades across Shelford trusts;
- approaches to reward and recognition for clinical academic careers;
- retention rates, including movement into purely clinical roles or out of the NHS;
- seniority distribution and progression into leadership roles;
- board-level oversight and championing for research careers;
- clinical academic representation at board level or through relevant strategy or workforce committees.

The Academy will support the development of these measures, help identify practical improvements and use the learning with Shelford to inform wider system change.

The Academy will actively look for ways to promote its grants and programmes offer to medical scientists across the Shelford Group to support and develop their careers.

5.2 Translation and operational improvement

Play an active role in supporting the Translational Catalyst Programme that the Academy is working to introduce. Including realising opportunities to enable clinical development (i.e. clinical trials/investigations) in the UK where there is opportunity to do so. Participating in open engagement with cross-sector partners to provide insights for NHS system preparedness with a focus on identifying and overcoming service readiness barriers at an early stage to shorten the route from bench to bedside. This may include reducing administrative barriers, tackling duplication across trusts, and exploring alternative approaches such as passporting or shared assurance where feasible.

Over the longer term, the partnership will explore opportunities to make more significant improvements in the translation of discovery into practice.

6. Programme partnership, ways of working, outputs and governance

The Shelford Group and the Academy will work together as active partners. The partnership will remain flexible and work on the basis of a standing arrangement to engage, rather than fresh negotiation on each occasion.

This partnership aims to support research across Shelford trusts, refine practical approaches with those closest to delivery, and build the evidence and influence needed to drive change at system level. Both parties will work in partnership to share evidence, data and practical insight, support relevant convenings and consultations, and, where possible, contribute to piloting and evaluating approaches that can improve practice and inform wider national change.

Both parties will nominate senior leads, agree priorities for the first year and review progress regularly.

The parties agree in principle that each organisation will meet its own costs of participation in the partnership, unless otherwise agreed. Any specific projects, pilots or activities with additional resource implications, including external funding contributions or commissioned work, will be subject to separate discussion and agreement.

7. Nature of this agreement

This document is a statement of shared intent and does not create legal obligations between the parties. Any specific projects, commitments or resource implications will be agreed separately.

For the Academy of Medical Sciences

Signature:



Rosalind Campion
Chief Executive,
Academy of Medical Sciences

Date: 6.10.26

For The Shelford Group

Signature:



Jonathan Brotherton
Chair, Shelford Group
Chief Executive, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS
Foundation Trust

Date: 6.10.26