

# Using systems thinking to explore research capacity building in AHPs

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## Aim

The Allied Health Professions' (AHP) Research and Innovation Strategy for England gives us bold, clearly stated strategic aims and objectives for the acceleration of AHP-led research and innovation. As part of a year-long, HEE SE funded, Clinical Education Improvement Fellowship, this project aims to use a systems lens to identify how these strategic aims can be implemented.

Over the course of the year, the project will:

- Explore current methods of research capacity building.
- Find out what 'good' looks like to individuals and organisations.
- Investigate the mutual benefits of partnerships between higher education and integrated care systems.
- Identify what factors increase the likelihood of success and under which circumstances.

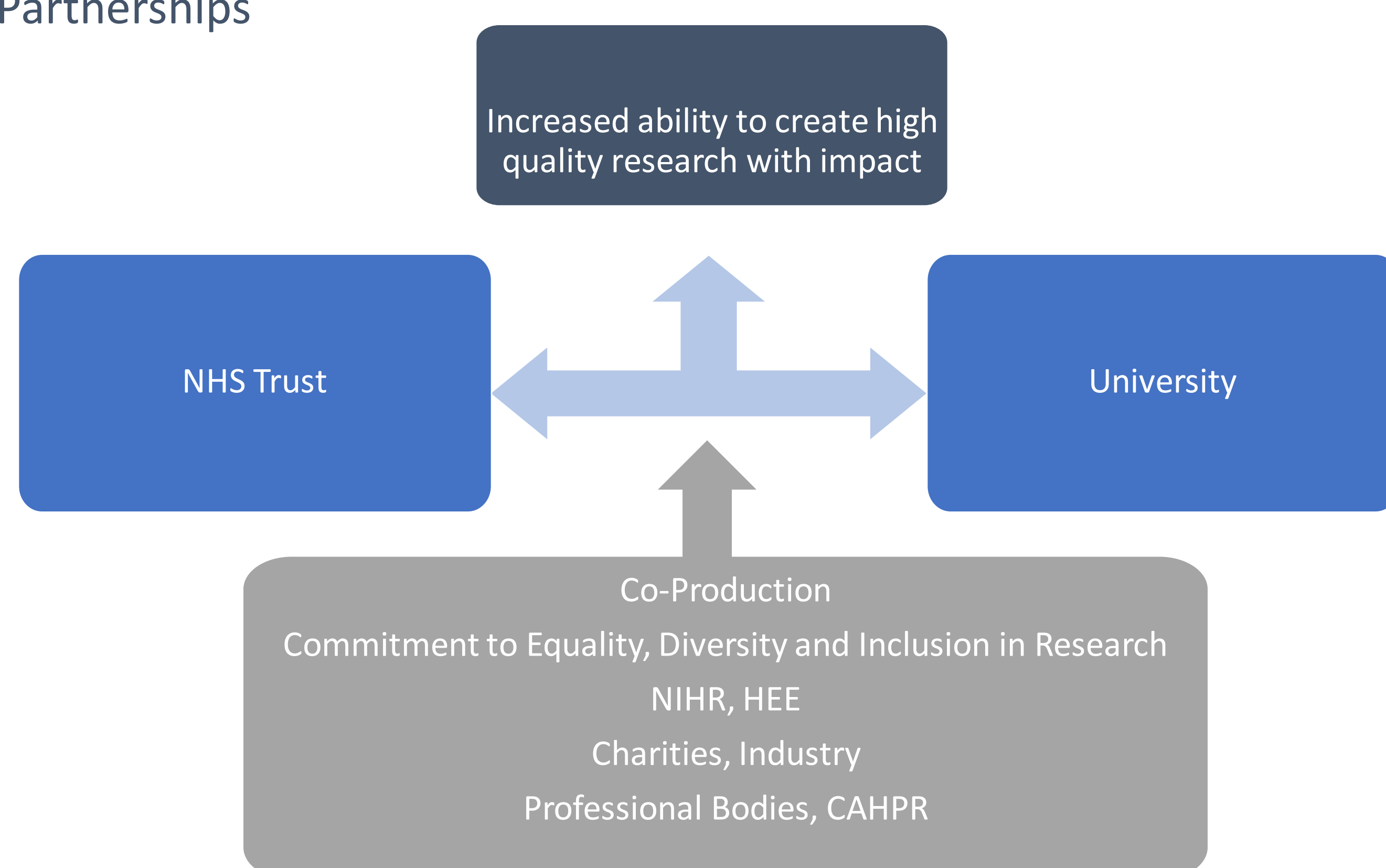
## Methodology

The project utilises systems thinking to establish what works, for whom and under which circumstances. To do this I will need to identify stakeholders, gain differing perspectives and map the system as a whole.

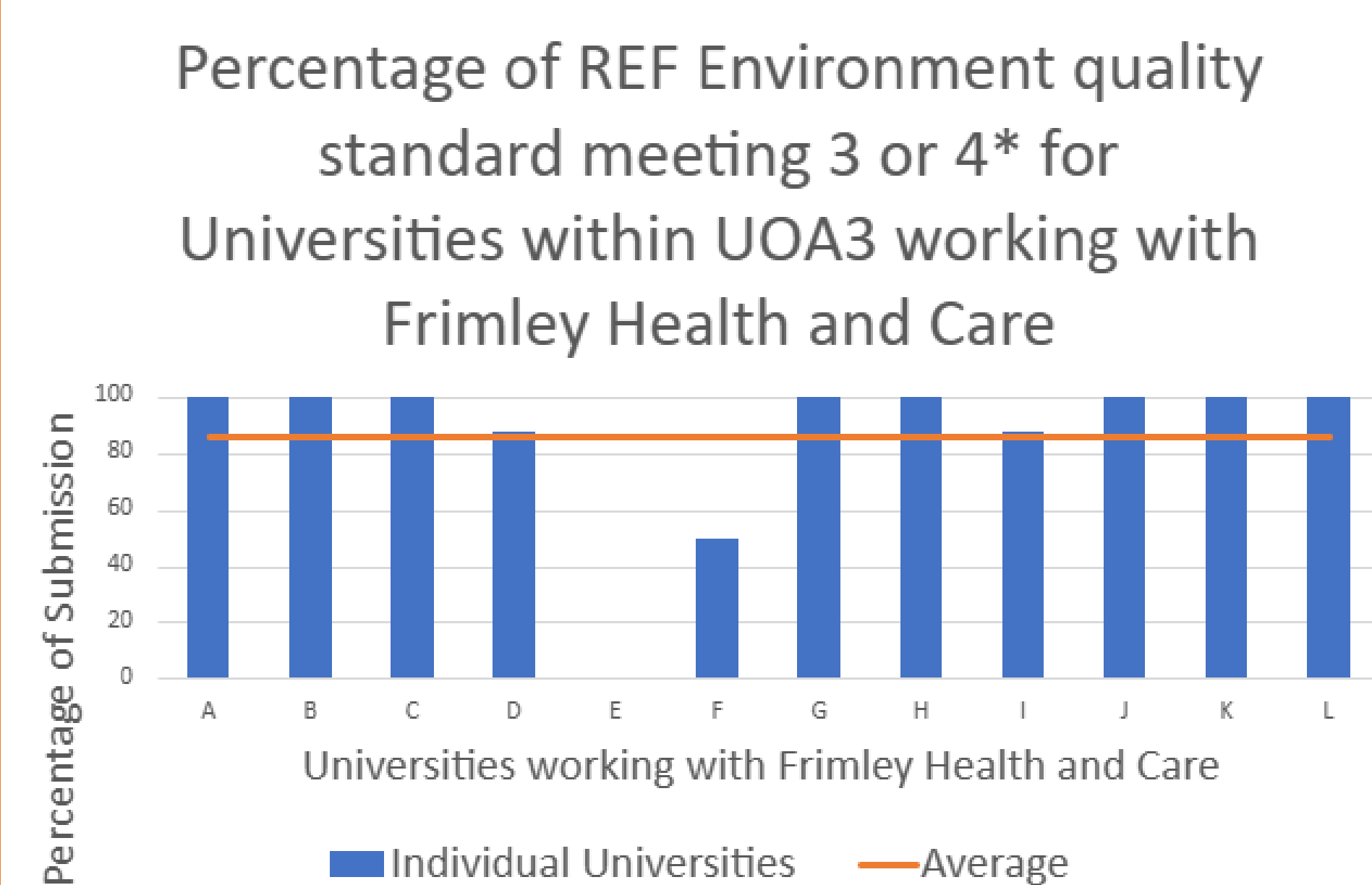
In seeking a rich picture, I will collate information from a mixture of literature, published guidelines, case studies, in-formal interviews and social media.

## Results so far

### The Importance of Partnerships



### The involvement of clinical partnerships in REF environment statements



Using the Research Excellence Framework (REF) Unit 3 results and environment statements, these themes emerged in relation to clinical partnerships in those who had scored a higher percentage of 3 and 4\* results.

- Formal partnerships with NHS trusts and social care with shared strategy and research priorities.
- Dynamic approach to development of clinical academics with co-funding and established support structure.
- Supportive structure and co-funding for doctoral and post-doctoral students.
- Honorary and joint-funded appointments for NHS staff.
- Combined NHS and University research centres.

These themes emerge as part of a whole view of the environment, involving those factors not related to clinical partnerships and should not be viewed in isolation.

### Components of a 'good' AHP research capacity building programme, identified by those who have experienced success.



*The therapy manager now puts innovation and research in as an item agenda on any of the therapy leads and staff meetings that she chairs. R&I is the positive aspect of the staff meeting, being able to talk about what they have going on and talk about the amazing opportunities that their patients have. Therapy research and innovation lead, External Trust*

*It's not just about delivering NIHR, it's about answering your own questions and developing skills within your own organization to write about those projects. Practice Education Facilitator for Research, External Trust*

*Each institution to try and actually promote research from within the institution rather than it coming from outside. Professor Emerita*

## Next steps

- Analysis of results
- Triangulate with other sources of data
- Interviews with University research leaders and leaders within ICS
- Benchmarking current practice within our ICS and ICB. How is research measured and how is quality determined?
- Produce a set of recommendations

If you would like to discuss my project further or have ideas which may be useful, please contact me:

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## References

Allied Health Professions' Research and Innovation Strategy for England (2022). Health Education England. Available at: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/enable-workforce/allied-health-professions%E2%80%99-research-innovation-strategy-england> (Accessed: November 16, 2022).

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## Abbreviations

- REF- Research Excellence Framework
- QI- Quality Improvement
- CCU- Canterbury Christchurch University
- CEI- Clinical Education Improvement
- NIHR- National Institute for Health Research
- CAHPR- Council for Allied Health Professionals in Research
- ICS- Integrated Care System
- ICB- Integrated Care Board