

UCL PARTNERS

Europe's largest academic health science partnership created in London

Five of Britain's world renowned medical research centres and hospitals are coming together to create what will be Europe's leading health research powerhouse. The intention is to deliver real improvements in health for patients in London, and around the world.

Based in the capital, the new academic health science partnership – to be known as UCL Partners – will support over 3,500 scientists, senior researchers and consultants, with a combined annual turnover of around two billion.

By pooling resources and expertise, UCL Partners, which together treat over 1.5 million patients every year, will be able to produce more world-class research in key areas, including cancer and heart disease, and deliver the benefits more rapidly to patients.

UCL Partners will comprise:

- UCL (University College London), which is one of the world's top 10 universities, and rated the best UK university for health research;
- Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust (GOSH), the world-class children's research hospital, which has the broadest range of paediatric specialists under one roof anywhere in the UK;
- Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, which, together with the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology, is one of the world's leading partnerships for eye health;
- the Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust, whose clinical transplant unit is one of the most diverse in Europe and
- University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which together with UCL forms one of the largest partnerships for biomedical research in Europe.

UCL Partners, which becomes operational from September onwards, will focus initially on ten areas of research, each of which poses a major health challenge: the nervous system, children's health, heart disease, transplantation, immunology, ophthalmology, deafness and hearing impairment, dental and oral disease, cancer and women's health.

Great Ormond Street 
Hospital for Children
NHS Trust

Moorfields Eye Hospital 
NHS Foundation Trust

Royal Free Hampstead 
NHS Trust

University College London Hospitals 
NHS Foundation Trust



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Malcolm Grant, President and Provost of UCL, one of the partners in the scheme, said:

“The creation of this partnership is a landmark in the history of medical research in the UK, and particularly relevant in the 60th anniversary year of the NHS. The combined skill, expertise and knowledge of our five organisations promise to deliver to patients the benefits of cutting edge research at its best as quickly as possible.

“We have chosen to concentrate on these areas of research because in all of them we are already leading the way in the UK or Europe. Our goal is to build on that reputation and become genuinely world-class in as many of those areas as possible.

“The unrivalled treatment and care provided by our partner hospitals will help preserve the UK’s position as a global leader in medical research in the face of growing international competition. The power of UCL Partners will help us to attract new sources of research funding. This is a great step forward for the NHS, for London and for medical research in this country.”

Speaking on behalf of the NHS partners involved, **Professor Sir Cyril Chantler**, Chairman of Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust, said:

“Academic Health Science Centres bring together research, education and teaching and the delivery of healthcare. Worldwide they have been shown to improve the transfer of innovation into practice, in order to improve people’s health and healthcare. London needs to strive to lead in health, a world class city should settle for nothing less. UCL Partners has the capacity and potential to work together to make this happen.”

UCL Partners will build on existing strong links between member organisations, which have already led to medical breakthroughs or improved access to treatment. For example:

- UCL is linked to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust through the UCL Institute of Child Health – the largest paediatric and research partnership outside North America and Britain’s leading partnership for gene therapy. Researchers here developed a cure for two diseases – ada-SCID and x-SCID – which cause children to be born without an immune system.
- Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has a partnership with the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology. It is the oldest and largest for ophthalmic treatment, teaching and research in Europe and America. Researchers here are developing a revolutionary gene therapy treatment for a type of inherited blindness and have led improvements to community and primary care ophthalmology services provided in a hospital setting.
- the Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust’s Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital, has a partnership with the UCL Ear Institute. Together, they constitute the largest single grouping of basic and clinical scientists interested in hearing and deafness in the UK.

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The strategic development, funding and delivery of UCL Partners' services and associated research programmes will be driven by a board of directors who will oversee and coordinate these activities. Members of the board will comprise representatives of the partner organisations.

For further information, please visit the UCL Partners website at www.uclpartners.com or contact **Neil Goodwin**, Project Director, UCL Partners, on **+44 (0)7831 886 834** or at neil.goodwin@uclh.nhs.uk

Notes for Editors:

1. The establishment of Academic Health Science Centres was one of the major reforms recommended in Health Minister Professor Lord Darzi's review, 'Healthcare for London: a framework for action', published in July 2007 by NHS London. It sets out how London needs to change in order to meet Londoners' health needs over the next ten years. More recently, Lord Darzi reaffirmed the importance of Academic Health Science Centres as a central plank of NHS reform in his 'NHS Next Stage Review Final Report – High Quality Care for All', published on 30 June 2008. The report recognises that *"the potential of AHSCs to deliver research excellence and improve patient care and professional education is tremendous."*
2. In the US, where the academic health science partnership model is already well established, the top 16 ranked hospitals in 2005 were all academic health science centres¹.
3. As measured by citations in academic publications monitored by the independent ISI Essential Science Indicators service, UCL and its partners are world-class in a number of fields:
 - Neuroscience – top in Europe and 2nd in the world
 - Clinical Medicine – top in Europe
 - Immunology – second in Europe

UCL is the most highly cited University in the UK overall.

4. UCL Partners is the only Academic Health Science Centre with three National Institute for Health Research Biomedical Research Centres, an important component of Academic Health Science Centres. The three Biomedical Research Centres are:
 - the UCLH/UCL Comprehensive Biomedical Research Centre;
 - Moorfields Eye Hospital/UCL Institute of Ophthalmology Biomedical Research Centre and
 - the GOSH/UCL Institute of Child Health Biomedical Research Centre.

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¹ US News & World Report Best US Hospital 2005 Ranking, also cited in Professor Lord Darzi's review, Healthcare for London: a framework for action, (July, 2007).