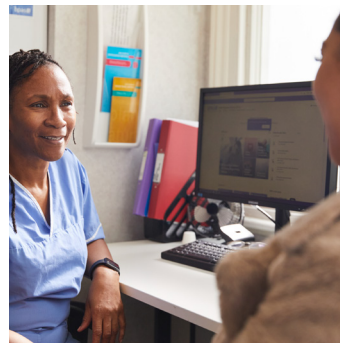
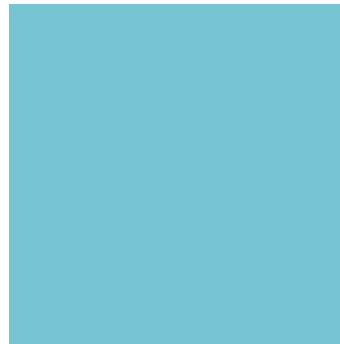
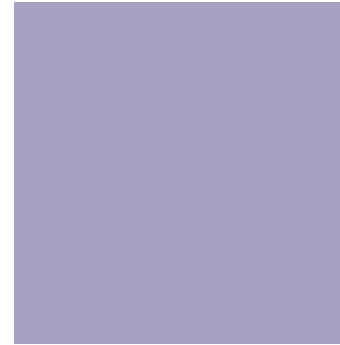




Centre for Reproductive
Research & Communication

Integrated Research and Innovation Strategy 2025-2030



Integrated Research and Innovation Strategy 2025-2030

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Foreword from the Chair and Chief Executive

As the Chief Executive and Chair of the Board of Trustees of BPAS, we are delighted to introduce our 2025–2030 Integrated Research and Innovation Strategy. This document marks a significant step in our commitment to improving reproductive healthcare and safeguarding choice through rigorous research, partnership, and forward-thinking solutions.

BPAS has a proud history of championing accessible, high-quality, evidence-based care. This strategy strengthens our resolve to meet the evolving needs of those we serve by embedding research at the core of our services and advocacy. It provides a clear pathway to advance care and influence policy and practice.

Built on the principles of inclusivity and collaboration, this strategy reflects the insights and expertise of our patients, staff, and partners. Together, we will drive meaningful change, ensuring our work remains responsive, impactful, and grounded in the lived experiences of those who rely on us. With this vision, we aim to build a future where reproductive healthcare is equitable, innovative, and accessible to all.



DR LUCY MOORE
Chair of the Board of Trustees



HEIDI STEWART
Chief Executive

Our Context

The British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) is a leading independent healthcare charity with over 55 years of experience providing non-judgmental, patient-centred, safe abortion care. Alongside abortion services, we offer pre- and post-abortion counselling, pregnancy testing, contraception, vasectomy, and screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. We are the leading voice on advocacy for abortion care in the UK and the only independent sector abortion provider that has a dedicated research and innovation function. Our campaigning voice has resulted in decriminalisation in Northern Ireland, telemedicine being written into law, and new laws on safe access zones in England and Scotland.

Each year, BPAS conducts approximately 120,000 consultations and provides over 100,000 medical and surgical abortions. Our care is delivered through 48 clinics and 5 telemedicine hubs. Ninety-nine percent of all our services are NHS-funded under 41 contracts and 14 provisional arrangements across the UK and British Isles.

As a registered charity (No. 289145) and company limited by guarantee (No. 01803160), BPAS is committed to full accountability, with oversight from the Care Quality Commission in England and the Healthcare Inspectorate in Wales.

Research at BPAS



DR PATRICIA LOHR

Director of Research and Innovation

Our Vision

BPAS will be an organisation where everyone can engage in research and innovation, and all voices are heard and valued. We will be recognised as leaders in abortion and reproductive health research, generating evidence that drives meaningful change and improvements within BPAS and beyond.

Research has formed part of BPAS's charitable objectives since its founding in 1968. Over the decades, we have conducted our own studies and supported external research by providing access to BPAS patients, staff, and data.

In 2019, we established the Centre for Reproductive Research & Communication (CRRCC) to unify and expand our clinical, social science, and policy research efforts. This development also allowed us to increase our capacity for service evaluation and quality improvement projects, all guided by a dedicated steering committee and strategic framework.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, BPAS rapidly introduced telemedicine to maintain access to abortion care, enabling patients to receive treatment without attending a clinic. Our research during this period was critical, providing robust evidence to support these changes. This work not only contributed to national and global discussions on telemedical abortion care but also underpinned successful advocacy for permanent legislative change in the UK.

The success of our research efforts during the pandemic underscored the importance of research within service delivery and led to increased recognition of its value by the BPAS Board of Trustees. In 2024, the Board formally established Research and Innovation as one of its three strategic pillars, alongside delivering high-quality clinical care and advocating for reproductive autonomy. This commitment marked the start of a new chapter for BPAS, with the appointment of our first Director of Research and Innovation to lead this work.

This new integrated strategy sets out how BPAS will transform into a research-active organisation in which generating and applying evidence becomes central to how we work. By embedding a culture of research, we will provide pioneering, evidence-driven services while creating an environment where all staff feel valued, supported, and inspired to innovate. Over the next five years, this strategy will guide our efforts, ensuring we remain adaptable and responsive to the needs of our patients, staff, partners, and stakeholders. Through this work, we aim to benefit patients and staff at BPAS and play a key role in shaping the wider abortion and reproductive health, advocacy, and policy landscape.

Developing Our Strategy

We developed our strategy through a collaborative process to ensure it is practical, relevant, and reflective of BPAS's mission. Three key areas guided our approach: embedding a research culture at BPAS, involving and engaging patients and the public, and improving communication and knowledge sharing. These focus areas served as the foundation for the conversations, feedback, and decisions that shaped the strategy.

Our next step was engaging with colleagues across BPAS, including clinical and non-clinical staff. We gathered feedback through one-on-one interviews, surveys, and group discussions in clinics and with telehubs. This inclusive approach ensured everyone had the chance to contribute, building a sense of ownership and connection to the strategy. We also carried out on-the-ground visits to clinics and telehubs to test initial ideas, identify gaps, and explore priorities for research and innovation in practice.

Listening to patients was a key part of shaping the strategy. We held two focus groups to understand how patients view research at BPAS, how they would like to be involved, and where improvements could be made. Their input made sure the strategy reflects the needs and priorities of those who rely on our services. We also consulted widely with external stakeholders, including policymakers, professional organisations, commissioners, campaigners, academic researchers, and funders. These conversations ensured the strategy was well-informed, forward-thinking, and relevant to the wider reproductive healthcare sector.

As the draft strategy took shape, we moved to leadership collaboration, presenting it at a Senior Managers' conference and to the Executive Leadership team to discuss priorities and identify any barriers. This step ensured the strategy aligned with BPAS's wider organisational goals.

The draft was then shared with Board members, the Staff Forum, and patients to gather final feedback and ensure it was clear, realistic, and achievable. After making refinements, the strategy was formally approved by the BPAS Board of Trustees.

This thorough and collaborative process has produced a strategy that reflects the views of our staff, leaders, patients, and external partners. It provides a strong foundation to advance research and innovation at BPAS and to drive meaningful improvements in abortion and reproductive healthcare in the years ahead.

Why Integration Matters

Integration enables BPAS to connect research, service evaluation, quality improvement, and innovation into a cohesive framework, ensuring sustainable and impactful improvements in abortion and reproductive healthcare. By embedding these activities across our services, we ensure that evidence is central to how we deliver care, enhances outcomes, and responds to emerging needs.

This approach creates a system where each element builds on the others. Research generates knowledge to guide change, service evaluation assesses effectiveness, quality improvement drives ongoing enhancement, and innovation allows us to explore new approaches. Together, these activities ensure BPAS delivers forward-thinking, evidence-based care that benefits both patients and staff, while positioning us to lead the future of abortion and reproductive healthcare.



Strategic Aims and Objectives

Engage

We will build relationships that support high-quality research and innovation. By strengthening staff engagement, improving patient participation in research, and fostering external collaborations, we will lay a strong foundation to achieve our research and innovation goals.

By 2030 we will

- Expand BPAS's strategic partnerships to enhance our research capabilities and increase opportunities for collaboration.
- Create resources and pathways to support the next generation of abortion researchers, at BPAS and beyond.
- Increase patient participation in research by simplifying processes and creating appealing opportunities.
- Communicate our research and innovation activities clearly, transparently, and consistently to all stakeholders, fostering trust.

How we will achieve these goals

Building Strategic Partnerships

- Identify and collaborate with organisations aligned with our vision, including universities, healthcare providers, and research institutions.
- Expand our network to include diverse expertise beyond sexual and reproductive health, enriching our research capabilities.
- Facilitate external research partnerships by streamlining application, approval, and conduct processes.
- Strengthen academic collaborations by hosting students, trainees, and interns while pursuing partnerships with leading experts to ensure our patients benefit from cutting-edge research.

Improving Internal Engagement

- Introduce research at BPAS induction to raise awareness among all staff groups.
- Establish clear pathways for staff to propose and begin contributing to research and innovation projects, providing encouragement and support.
- Engage regularly with executive leadership teams to ensure alignment on strategic priorities and timelines.

Increasing Patient Participation

- Collaborate with patients and staff to identify strategies that increase patient participation in projects.
- Integrate research opportunities into the patient pathway, ensuring they are easy to access and appealing.
- Train BPAS colleagues to confidently discuss research with patients, highlighting its role in improving care.

Strengthening Communication

- Raise the visibility of ongoing research and innovation activities to reinforce their importance and demonstrate their impact.
- Work with communications teams to develop and deliver clear, regular research updates.
- Regularly review and refine communication strategies to ensure they are accessible and effective for all stakeholders.

Strategic Aims and Objectives

Involve

We will ensure that patients, staff, and partners are actively involved in shaping our research and innovation activities. By integrating diverse perspectives, we will make our work more relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of those we serve.

By 2030 we will

- Enable BPAS patients and staff to shape research priorities, co-produce projects, and influence grant development.
- Create fair and transparent ways for patients, staff, and stakeholders to contribute to research and innovation.
- Have inclusive processes that ensure involvement accessible, meaningful, and welcoming for all participants

How we will achieve these goals

Developing Resources and Infrastructure

- Establish a robust infrastructure, including digital platforms and logistical support, to make involvement activities accessible and sustainable.
- Streamline processes for patient, staff, and public involvement, ensuring they are clear, well-communicated, and adequately supported.

Supporting Inclusive and Flexible Involvement

- Create tailored involvement plans that cater to diverse needs, offering both one-off and ongoing participation options. Proactively engage seldom-heard voices, ensuring involvement activities reflect the diversity of BPAS patients, staff, and stakeholders.
- Provide measures like translation and interpretation services to remove barriers to participation in involvement activities.

Offering Training and Support

- Deliver training to staff and patients to equip them with the skills needed for effective involvement and co-production.
- Clearly define roles, expectations, and remuneration for involvement activities to ensure fairness and transparency.

Promoting Transparency and Recognition

- Simplify ethical approval and safeguarding procedures to make involvement easier and more efficient.
- Recognise and reward the contributions of patients and staff to demonstrate the value of their involvement.

Strategic Aims and Objectives

Embed

We will have a culture at BPAS where research and innovation are integral to everything we do, ensuring these practices are sustained, standardised, and continuously improve care and operations across the organisation.

By 2030 we will

- Provide staff with the tools, training, and support they need to lead research projects and use findings to improve care.
- Establish research and innovation champions and centres of excellence.
- Ensure BPAS invests in internal evaluation, innovation projects, and infrastructure to support continuous improvement.
- Strengthen BPAS's ability to use internal data for better decision-making, patient care, and operational improvements.
- Develop our systems and governance frameworks to guide and ensure oversight of research and innovation activities.

How we will achieve these goals

Institutionalising Research and Innovation

- Create processes for taking forward research and innovation ideas, from proposal and selection to integration into practice.
- Dedicate time, resources, and infrastructure for research and innovation activities across all departments.
- Establish centres of excellence in a telehub and a clinic to lead cutting-edge research, mentor staff, and serve as hubs for collaboration and best practices.

Building Capacity and Sustaining Engagement

- Ensure BPAS invests in internal research, evaluation and innovation projects, amending job roles, and allocating staff time and resources for sustainability.
- Develop our ability to help staff at every stage of the project process, from planning and securing funding to conducting studies and sharing results.
- Roll out tailored training programs to equip staff with the knowledge and tools needed for research and innovation.
- Appoint local research champions to facilitate communication, support projects, and act as points of contact for staff engagement.
- Develop strategies to balance clinical demands with research and innovation activities, ensuring initiatives are practical and sustainable.

Leveraging Data and Analytics

- Build BPAS's capacity to analyse clinical datasets for operational insights and decision-making.
- Develop secure data infrastructure to manage internal and collaborative research projects.
- Ensure all data use complies with data protection laws and legal frameworks while supporting impactful research.

Ensuring Governance and Accountability

- Develop our research and innovation governance framework, ensuring compliance with ethical, equality, and regulatory standards.
- Implement supporting policies, templates, and forms to standardise processes and ensure consistency and efficiency across research and innovation activities.
- Ensure regular board reviews, reporting processes, and feedback mechanisms to maintain accountability, manage risks, and ensure continuous improvement.
- Conduct regular audits and evaluations to ensure compliance and identify areas for enhancement.

Strategic Aims and Objectives

Impact

We will ensure BPAS research influences clinical practices, policies, and standards at a national and sector-wide level, solidifying BPAS's role as a leader in abortion and reproductive healthcare research.

By 2030 we will

- Establish BPAS as a nationally visible research organisation, actively contributing to clinical guidelines, best practices, and public policies.
- Maximise the impact of BPAS research by focusing on high-priority areas and ensuring dissemination to key stakeholders.
- Collaborate with external partners to address sector-wide challenges and advocate for improved policies and standards.
- Use BPAS's data and partnerships to conduct impactful research that enhances reproductive health outcomes.
- Increase funding and diversify funding sources to expand BPAS's research agenda and capacity.

How we will achieve these goals

Setting Research Priorities

- Collaborate with patients, providers, and other key stakeholders to identify research priorities that reflect community, sector, and health service needs.
- Define criteria for high-impact research to guide resource allocation and ensure relevance to the sector.
- Align BPAS research with identified priorities and focus on projects that address critical gaps with potential to influence policy, guidelines, or public discourse.

Enhancing Visibility and Influence

- Publish research findings in high-impact journals, present at national and international conferences, and share insights through public platforms.
- Work with BPAS's External Affairs team to amplify research visibility and position BPAS as a leader in abortion and reproductive healthcare.
- Ensure BPAS research and expertise shape clinical guidelines and are represented on national advisory boards to influence standards and policies.

Driving Data-Driven Collaboration

- Develop BPAS's capacity to provide de-identified datasets for collaborative research projects with external partners.
- Advocate for sector-wide linked datasets and standardised data practices to support comprehensive research and inform public health policies.
- Partner with external organisations to maximise the use of data in addressing key questions and improving reproductive health outcomes.

Expanding Research Capacity

- Increase funding and diversify income streams through grants, partnerships, cost-recovery, and fundraising.
- Build internal expertise in grant writing and project development to help staff secure funding.
- Create a plan to focus funding, staff time, and other resources on high-priority projects, ensuring efficient and impactful delivery.
- Strengthen long-term partnerships with funders, academic institutions, and other organisations to secure sustained support for ambitious research initiatives.

How We Will Measure Success

ENGAGE

- Establish 10 new strategic partnerships by 2030, focusing on diversity and alignment with BPAS's mission.
- Achieve a 50% consent rate among patients to be contacted for research by 2030, ensuring representation across social groups based on UK census data.
- Support up to 10 external research projects annually by 2030, starting with incremental growth and maintaining an 85% satisfaction rate.

INVOLVE

- Engage 100 patients and staff in meaningful research and involvement activities by 2030, ensuring diversity aligns with UK census benchmarks.
- Achieve 80% satisfaction rates in involvement activities, measured through participant surveys.
- Develop training programmes on research skills, co-production, and involvement by the end of 2025, and train staff annually from 2026, reaching a total of 100 by 2030.

EMBED

- Appoint research champions in 50% of clinics and telehubs by 2027, expanding to all sites by 2030.
- Establish one research centre of excellence in a clinic and one in a telehub by 2030.
- Increase the number of staff engaged in research to 10% by 2030, with incremental targets (e.g., 5% by 2026).
- Complete governance review by 2025, including a comprehensive suite of procedures, forms, and reporting templates.

IMPACT

- Demonstrate 10 examples of internal research, evaluation, innovation, or improvement projects influencing clinical practice or policy by 2030.
- Secure £0.4m in external funding by 2030, including at least one NIHR Programme Grant.
- Publish three research projects annually in high-impact journals and present findings at five conferences annually by 2030.
- By 2026, create a metric to measure research impact on internal operations, including service development and cost savings.
- Track research dissemination using citations, policy references, and Altmetric scores, focusing on reach and engagement.
- Develop one cross-sector linked clinical outcomes dataset in collaboration with stakeholders by 2030.

Find Out More

If you have any questions about our strategy or would like to find out more about what we do, please contact us via the channels below.



email
research@bpas.org



You can also visit our webpage at
bpas.org/crrc



Follow us on Twitter/X
@CRRC_BPAS



Or read our page on LinkedIn at
linkedin.com/showcase/bpascrrc/

Glossary

Co-production: Working together with patients, staff, and other people to design and deliver research, services, or policies. It ensures that everyone's experiences and ideas help shape the final outcomes.

Culture: The shared knowledge, beliefs, and behaviours of a group, which are learned and can change over time.

Equity: Fairness and justice. It is different from equality, which means treating everyone the same. Equity recognises that people have different starting points, so extra support may be needed to make things fair.

Evaluation: Looking at how well a project or process is working and whether it is meeting its goals. It involves collecting evidence to make informed decisions or improvements.

Inclusivity: Making sure everyone has fair access and can take part fully, no matter their background, characteristics, or circumstances.

Innovation: Finding and putting into action new ideas, methods, or technologies to make things better, easier, or more effective.

Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPIE): Involving patients, carers, and the public in research to make sure it is relevant, inclusive, and has real-world impact.

Research: Discovering new information that can lead to better policies, services, or treatments. Research can include lab studies, surveys, or projects involving patients and the public.

Strategy: A high-level plan that sets out clear actions to achieve a specific goal. It helps decide the best way to use resources and skills.

Telemedicine: Providing healthcare remotely using technology like video calls, so patients don't have to visit a clinic or hospital in person.