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COMMON SERVICES AGENCY	
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Dear Colleague

**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE NHS IN SCOTLAND**

**Summary**

1. The Government has today launched their major strategy document on R&D in the NHS in Scotland.
2. The strategy document reviews existing arrangements for Health Service research and development, outlines present changes in this field, and proposes a strategy for the NHS in Scotland.

**Action**

3. Health Board managers are asked to draw the strategy document "Research and Development Strategy for the NHS in Scotland" to the attention of all those responsible for and involved in health research. A copy of this HMSO publication is attached.

**The strategy**

4. The strategy seeks to highlight opportunities for investing in health gain, and to realise the benefits of that investment. It underlines the importance of a clear commitment from leaders in the Health Service to the value of research and development for the future success of the NHS in leading the drive for better health in Scotland.

**A partnership**

5. A key feature of the strategy is the creation of a partnership between NHS staff and the research community, opening up new channels of communication through which a clear understanding of health issues and the role of research in providing solutions can be promoted.

### Targeted research

6. There is a need to ensure that expenditure on research is as well focused as possible to achieve the aims of promoting good health, improving health care and enabling staff to make the most effective contribution to the Health Service in Scotland. Increasingly, research will be orientated towards obtaining objectives within key areas.

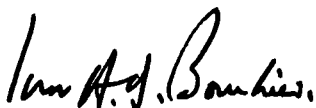
7. At the heart of the strategy is the setting of priorities for NHS R&D. These priorities are set out in the strategy document as a national framework which is tied into the aims and objectives of the Patient's Charter and Framework for Action. The strategy identifies specific headings under which health research might usefully be conducted. This will afford NHS Trusts as providers and Health Boards as purchasers the opportunity to concentrate on those health care services most in need of research and development and where benefit can be maximised to the good of the Health Service and patients.

### Implementation

8. This is an exciting and ambitious programme which is the first comprehensive approach towards developing a national R&D infrastructure for health care. The challenge is to ensure that this important and innovative programme achieves its objectives. Ultimately its success will depend on the participation of those working in the NHS - in defining the research needs and ensuring that patients benefit from research - and of the research community - in helping the NHS to define its needs and in undertaking the research.

9. The strategy is a statement of intent, recognising that achieving a coherent and co-ordinated approach to R&D for the NHS in Scotland cannot be achieved overnight. The strategy is new and it will need to develop and evolve over time. Under the leadership of the Chief Scientist Office, emphasis will be placed on securing the support and involvement of the NHS and developing the R&D agenda, and in helping to achieve a better co-ordinated approach which places emphasis on ensuring that the beneficial results of R&D are reflected in practice. There will be an Implementation Group to take forward the strategy on the ground and a Departmental Strategy Group for R&D in the NHS to monitor the whole process.

10. This strategy document is the first, important, step towards achieving a more evaluation orientated culture in the NHS in Scotland. It offers an exciting opportunity for all involved to contribute effectively to the improvement of the health of the people of Scotland.



Professor I A D Bouchier  
Chief Scientist



Geoff Scaife  
Chief Executive, NHS

