

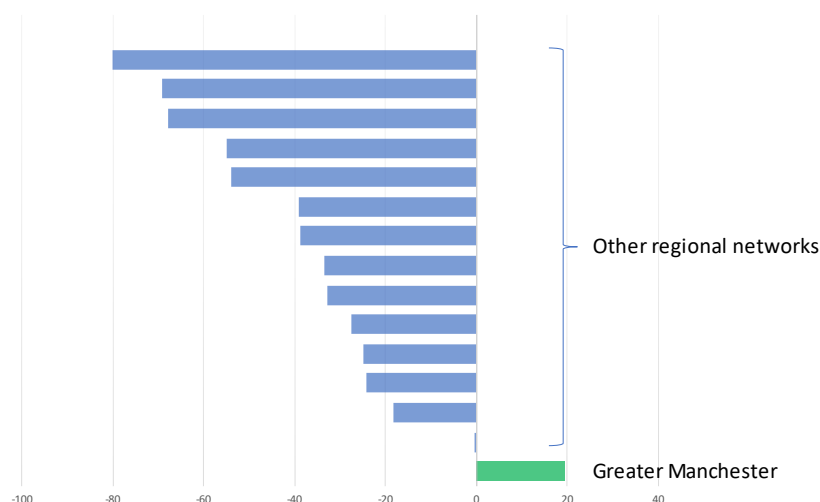
## NIHR Clinical Research Network Greater Manchester leading commercial research delivery

The UK clinical research infrastructure shifted much of its focus over 2020-21 to COVID-19 studies - encompassing basic science, epidemiology, treatments and prevention - and provided key data that was pivotal to the global response to this pandemic. However research into other clinical areas during this period decreased as a result of this pivoting of focus and the many challenges that were present as a result of NHS pressures, lockdowns and their sequelae.

The Clinical Research Network (CRN) is the National Institute for Health & Care Research body that undertakes much of the phase 2-4 clinical research within England. The CRN encompasses 15 regional networks spanning the entirety of England.

Data comparing the period before the pandemic to more recently has demonstrated a decrease in the number of recruits to commercial (i.e. life science company/pharma sponsored) studies across the CRN in England, but CRN data recently analysed has demonstrated that the Greater Manchester (GM) region (comprising Greater Manchester, East Cheshire and East Lancashire) has bucked this trend with an increase in commercial trial recruitment - despite an overall 36% decrease nationally over the last 6 years, there has been a 19% increase in CRN commercial study recruitment in GM. Greater Manchester region sites have also accelerated their study start-up timelines to be nationally leading at an average of 51 day (compared to the national median for commercial study set-up of over 117 days since 2019), and GM as a region has consistently been the top performing network in recruiting over 80% of their trials to time and target over the past 10 years (compared to a national figure of approximately 60%).

% Difference in recruitment to commercial trials pre - and post-pandemic (2021/22 vs 2017/18)





The NIHR Clinical Research Network Greater Manchester (CRN GM) and its regional health and social care providers have developed a successful record of delivering life sciences research across a range of therapeutic areas and trial phases, to a diverse and often underserved population. CRN GM has long focussed on commercial research delivery by developing a strong research infrastructure, collaboration between health and care providers, academia and industry, a supportive business environment, talented workforce, and industry clusters. They work closely with industry partners to deliver high quality research studies that meet the needs of both local communities and international sponsors, and have invested for over 10 years in a single leading business unit of research delivery experts assisting and expediting the initiation and delivery of commercial research. The region has initiated a consent for contact registry, developed feasibility and recruitment systems, embedded digital connectivity, and has recently procured a mobile research unit. This service continues to evolve through stakeholder feedback and proactive key account management, as part of the GM progressive Business Development programme. This includes local health and care providers regularly coming together with companies to discuss key issues and future ambitions.