

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

Advanced
Wellbeing
Research Centre

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

Transforming lives through innovations that help people move

The Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre
Strategy 2023-2028



Contents

1. Foreword	5
2. Our mission	7
3. Five global challenges	8
Challenge 1: Promoting lifelong physical activity	11
Challenge 2: Tackling widening health inequalities	12
Challenge 3: Addressing climate change	13
Challenge 4: Closing the skills gap	14
Challenge 5: Reimagining rehabilitation	15
4. Managing and delivering our portfolio	16
Pillar 1: Research in physical activity	18
Pillar 2: Research and development for business	19
Pillar 3: Health innovation	20
Pillar 4: Training and education	21
5. AWRC revenue streams	22
6. Strategic enablers	24
Interdisciplinary, multisector expertise	26
Collaborative, value-based culture	26
Inspiring facilities and infrastructure	27
Exceptional experience and engagement	27
7. Exploring transformation	28
8. Summary of our key commitments	30
9. Closing remarks	32
10. Footnotes	34

‘This five-year strategy sets out a bold and ambitious vision for the Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC). It builds on our current areas of strength and reminds us of the importance of our mission. Through the lens of human movement, we can help to tackle some of society’s most complex challenges and deliver tangible benefits to society and the economy.’

1 Foreword

Together, we have already made such a difference to people’s lives through physical activity-related research, innovation and knowledge exchange.

Sheffield Hallam University’s Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC) opened in January 2020 with investment from the Department of Health and Social Care and the European Regional Development Fund.

Over the past three years, we have established a thriving research and innovation ecosystem. Our novel model of co-location, state-of-the art facilities and collaborative culture creates a space in which people are encouraged and supported to be bold and curious in their thinking. The centre has worked across academic boundaries, created meaningful partnerships with multiple and diverse sectors,¹ and delivered tangible benefits to society² and the economy.³ Our belief that collaboration drives innovation has led to the creation of over 50 new jobs, supported dozens of start-ups³ and helped local and global businesses to grow and thrive.⁴ We have produced pioneering, highly innovative and impactful clinical⁵ and community services⁶ through authentic engagement with the public. Our transformational training and education programmes have ensured the next generation of researchers and practitioners have the skills required for the workplace of tomorrow.

By harnessing talent, skills and expertise from different disciplines and sectors, and engaging meaningfully with communities and the general public, we continue to show that it is possible to address the most complex and demanding challenges facing society through the lens of human movement.

The first strategy (2020–2023) focused on the establishment of the AWRC. We placed an emphasis on implementing the co-locator model - a coalition of the willing who were inspired and engaged by our mission to transform lives through innovations that help people move. We sought to create a strong regional profile and understand how we might contribute best to economic growth. Strengthening existing relationships with community organisations such as Darnall Well Being through an embedded researcher approach and building public involvement in our work was also a priority. This helped us to focus our energy on what mattered most to communities and ensured we were adding to already strong local assets. We also established a model of mentorship that enabled early career researchers to gain experience of research leadership, something we intend to expand.

This new strategy moves us beyond our establishment phase, towards sustainable growth in our portfolio and a national and international profile. We are motivated by the growing number of opportunities we have to lead research, innovation and knowledge exchange in human movement. We know our work can help to drive economic growth and address some of the most complex challenges facing society. To lead nationally and internationally, we will continue to develop our people, strengthen our relationships with industry and health sectors and work even closer with communities.

This five-year strategy sets out a bold and ambitious vision for the AWRC. It builds on our current areas of strength and reminds us of the importance of our mission. Through the lens of human movement, we can help to tackle some of society’s most complex challenges and deliver tangible benefits to society and the economy.

This is an exciting time for the AWRC.



Professor Rob Copeland, Director



2 Our Mission

Our mission is **to transform lives through innovations that help people move.** This is at the heart of everything we do and reflects a belief that physical activity, in its many forms, has significant benefits for individuals, communities, the economy and wider society. Harnessing the power of human movement through our research, innovation and knowledge exchange is the space occupied by the AWRC. We exist to transform lives.



3 Five global challenges



Major global challenges facing society have been identified by organisations including: the World Health Organisation,⁷ the United Nations,⁸ the UK government,⁹ the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority,^{10,11} Sheffield City Council,¹² and Sheffield Hallam University.¹³ These challenges, such as climate change and prevention of disease, reflect complex societal issues, where solutions require interdisciplinary approaches and collaboration across sectors. This way of working is a strength of the AWRC.

We believe that a more active population is a central part of solving these complex societal issues. This is why, for the next five years, we will focus our energy and expertise on addressing five global challenges where we believe the AWRC and its collaborators can make a material difference through research, innovation and knowledge exchange in human movement.

These five challenges are:

1. Promoting lifelong physical activity¹⁴
2. Tackling widening health inequalities¹⁵
3. Addressing climate change¹⁶
4. Closing the skills gap^{17,18}
5. Reimagining rehabilitation¹⁹

These five global challenges not only focus our work on key societal issues such as productivity and tackling generational health inequalities, but create a platform for deepening our interdisciplinary and cross-portfolio working. They also provide a framework against which we can assess the meaningfulness of our research, innovation, and knowledge exchange. Addressing these five global challenges will also contribute to the vision of Sheffield Hallam's Health Innovation Campus,²⁰ to be the most advanced cluster for health, wellbeing and sustainability in the world.



Challenge 1: Promoting lifelong physical activity

Lifelong physical activity can help protect and restore physical health and mental wellbeing. It creates connected and vibrant communities, preserves the environment and helps to grow the economy.

We believe in a future where a child born today should expect to live 100 years of healthy active life. The problem is that physical activity has been engineered out of daily living. This has resulted in the majority of society — and particularly the least affluent — experiencing negative physical, mental and emotional health, with huge medical, psychosocial, environmental and economic consequences. Promoting lifelong physical activity is therefore a priority.

To address this challenge, we will undertake research and innovation that seeks to create the conditions that mean everyone in society can live healthy, active and prosperous lives as they age.

Through our research we will help prevent non-communicable disease by creating innovations that provide children and young people with an active start to life, recognising the importance of the family unit.

We will support people and communities to sustain meaningful contributions to society as they age, and ensure individuals and communities are empowered (e.g. via social prescribing and hyper-local innovations) to remain active throughout their lives.

We will work with communities — building on what is strong, not what is wrong — to identify solutions and overcome barriers to a healthy active life.

We will work with startups, entrepreneurs and global businesses to develop products and services that create healthier, physically active communities, increase productivity and deliver sustainable economic growth. This will also return consequential savings on primary and secondary healthcare budgets.

We will work with commissioners and policymakers to transition resources and ideas away from the paradigm of treating illness and towards prevention. We will explore new methodological and evaluation approaches to wellbeing.

We will be bold and curious in our pursuit of innovations that transform the health and wellbeing of people and populations across the lifespan, harnessing the talent, skills and expertise from different disciplines and sectors to do so.

‘We believe in a future where a child born today should expect to live 100 years of healthy active life’



Challenge 2: Tackling widening health inequalities

Inequality of opportunity, education, employment, housing and access to physical activity across our communities can make people vulnerable to poorer health, wellbeing and economic outcomes. These outcomes can be exacerbated by policies, programmes and environments that create systems which drive further inequalities — often observed in post-industrial northern communities.

In the second of our challenges, we will undertake research, innovation and knowledge exchange that focuses on tackling system-wide inequality. We'll do this through a radical rethink about the way societies design policies, places and programmes, with the aim of making being physically active more equitable for people across our region.

We will design, develop, evaluate and help others adopt systems, whole-of-systems, and place-based approaches. We will also pioneer new methodologies and approaches to community engagement and involvement.

We will prioritise and embrace 'real-world evidence' and build on our current patient and public involvement in research infrastructure to find new, sustainable ways to meaningfully involve people and communities in our work.

We will co-produce our interventions with a focus on those individuals and groups who are currently underserved, seldom heard or otherwise excluded from research (e.g. by virtue of disability, protected characteristics, social, demographic, or economic factors), using our dashboards to track the impact we make on health inequalities across our entire portfolio.



Challenge 3: Addressing climate change

Climate change and physical inactivity are two major issues impacting population wellbeing. The past 100 years have been characterised by an exponential and unsustainable growth in the size and ageing of the population, with accompanying use of energy in multiple forms (traditionally in the form of fossil fuels).

This has led to greenhouse gas emissions increasing in urban environments, alongside a reduction of green spaces. This in turn has driven up illness caused by poor air quality and vulnerability to climate shocks — particularly in the poorest communities, which are often densely populated. The NHS has committed to reduce its carbon footprint to zero by 2045²¹ and this will require direct action within its services and staff but also its supply chain. As part of a longer-term commitment to becoming an exemplar for a carbon-conscious employer, Sheffield Hallam has also committed to climate action.²²

As a leading research centre, we need to consider how our research and innovation activities align and what we can do directly to impact climate change. For example, our work to mode-shift populations towards cycling and walking around our towns and cities will be a key lever in tackling climate change. Active travel has been associated with decreases in air pollution and CO₂ emissions, as well as helping create economically vibrant cities and communities.

We will work with regional partners and colleagues across the world to undertake research and innovation that helps to improve the health of our planet and tackle climate change. By prioritising research and innovation focused on reducing the carbon footprint of human movement, we can help the UK to deliver its productivity goals, prevent disease by reducing air pollution, and harness the benefits to business of a healthier, more resilient and more productive workforce.



'We need to consider how our research and innovation activities align and what we can do directly to impact climate change'

Challenge 4: Closing the skills gap

The UK faces a critical challenge in relation to skills,^{23 24} employment expectations and pathways to employment in the context of the fourth industrial revolution.²⁵ Young people are at the forefront of the response because of additional factors such as an ageing workforce (in healthcare and across other sectors) and the impact of the pandemic on society.

The pace and scale of technological changes across all sectors is also accelerating rapidly and the training and education of the future workforce needs to adapt. Integrating the latest knowledge and skills in digital technology across healthcare, for example, would help to embrace remote monitoring of patients, aid screening and diagnosis, and speed up and scale up rehabilitation via the use of wearable sensors.

In the fourth of our challenges, we will focus our research, innovation and knowledge exchange activity on the creation of skilled individuals, ensuring the workforce of the future is fit for purpose.

We will strengthen our links with schools, colleges and employers, create space to listen to the needs of young people, and help shape a path to employment. We will stimulate and nurture ambition and entrepreneurship, by involving students and young people from local communities in our research and innovation, benefitting from their ingenuity.

Developing skills through state-of-the-art facilities and the unique multidisciplinary, collaborative environment of the AWRC, we will develop a workforce that is not confined by current boundaries. This new type of enterprise will produce highly skilled graduates and postgraduates who are adaptable, creative and able to act quickly and respond to new opportunities as they arise.



Challenge 5: Reimagining rehabilitation

The fifth and final global challenge focuses on reimagining rehabilitation to optimise recovery.²⁶ When people become ill or experience trauma (physical and psychological), they need support.

This support should be focused on optimising their wellbeing as quickly and efficiently as possible so that they can maintain independence, return to education or work (if appropriate) and experience a good quality of life.

Interdisciplinary approaches to rehabilitation, built around a personalised care agenda, can deliver the best outcomes for patients. Yet the health and care system has little flexibility to support rehabilitation outside the clinical environment. Multimorbidity and service design complexity make this difficult to achieve in practice, requiring new approaches and ways of working across the health and care system.

The rapidly evolving 'transformative technologies' revolution (e.g. robotics, AI and digital) in health also presents unique opportunities to change the way

rehabilitation products and services are delivered to patients. Research in the role of physical activity as a therapy is also expanding our horizons on how movement can bring benefit across the care continuum.

To improve outcomes and address the challenges currently facing rehabilitation, we will harness physical activity, AI, digital and non-digital technologies to advance rehabilitation for people with progressive conditions (e.g. chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, multiple sclerosis), recovering conditions (e.g. cancer, stroke) and multimorbidity.

We will develop tools to support self-management, help people prepare for and recover more quickly from treatment and promote interdisciplinary approaches to rehabilitation, with a strong focus on ensuring that access to rehabilitation is equitable.



4 Managing and delivering our portfolio



The research, innovation and knowledge exchange that will contribute to addressing the five global challenges, will be organised into and managed through four pillars:

1. Research in physical activity
2. Research and development for business
3. Health innovation
4. Training and education

These pillars are operational groups that reflect the core areas of our portfolio. Pillars help plan, communicate, organise and manage the delivery of our work. Each pillar is supported by professional services staff, and a lead and a co-lead. Together they oversee the development and implementation of delivery plans, i.e. the detailed activity that we undertake on a daily basis to deliver our collective goals.

Each pillar is made up of a number of themes. Themes are focused delivery areas of research, innovation or knowledge exchange and reflect specific strengths within our portfolio. Themes are led by a senior and

early career researcher. This means that themes are informed by strong leadership and new ideas. The lead and co-lead approach also provides early career researchers with leadership opportunities, mentoring and early exposure to the development of complex and large-scale grant funding.

A summary of each pillar, the associated themes, and the aims and objectives are provided on the following pages.

Pillar 1: Research in physical activity

Organised into five themes: (i) Healthy and Active 100, (ii) Living Well with a Health Condition, (iii) AI, Robotics and Digital Innovations, (iv) Transforming Places for Health and Wellbeing and (v) Technology-assisted Rehabilitation.

Aim

Capitalise on the collective talent, skills and curiosity of our regional, national and international collaborators and researchers across Sheffield Hallam, to develop large-scale (£500k+) interdisciplinary research proposals that address one or more of the five global challenges through physical activity-related research.

Objectives

- Lead research and innovation that increases people's physical activity across the life course, helping to prevent non-communicable disease
- Harness the power of digital and non-digital technologies and artificial intelligence to help people recover from treatment quickly and live independently for longer
- Drive forward Olympic legacy by growing the research hub of the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine in Sheffield. This means translating knowledge and innovations from elite sport into the health and care sector, enhancing the promotion of physical activity as part of NHS treatment

- Use exercise as a therapy to enhance quality of life across a range of health conditions (e.g. people living with cancer, neurological conditions, or musculoskeletal issues)
- Lead research that radically reforms the way we design our policies, places and programmes, so that we make being physically active more equitable for people across our region
- Find new, sustainable ways to engage people and communities in our research, particularly those who are from marginalised communities and those often excluded from health-related research
- Use the AWRC facilities to bring together teams, engage partners and provide methodological input in research and innovation programmes that lead to the promotion of active travel across the South Yorkshire region



‘Lead research that radically reforms the way we design our policies, places and programmes’

Pillar 2: Research and development for business

Organised into two themes:
(i) Innovations for Life and
(ii) Strategic Collaborations.

We will contribute to the UK's economic growth ambitions by leading the development of a health, wellbeing and life sciences cluster at the Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park, as part of the South Yorkshire Innovation District. We will achieve this through the provision of agile and dynamic consultancy services to business and the public sector, targeted at health and wellbeing companies.

We will provide rapid access to world-leading facilities and interdisciplinary research and design expertise from multiple academic disciplines at Sheffield Hallam, helping to move innovations across the technology readiness levels to commercialisation. This will drive regional growth, accelerate productivity and create a wide range of high-quality jobs.

To attract inward investment, we will develop collaborations with global companies and national businesses in areas that help deliver on the AWRC's five global challenges. We will work together with local communities to co-produce and evaluate products, interventions and services that address the social, behavioural and environmental determinants of health by helping people move.



Aim

Provide technology and service solutions across the business lifecycle for startups, dynamic SMEs, global businesses and the public sector that address one or more of the five global challenges.

Objectives

- Develop new strategic collaborations with global organisations in the areas of cancer, technology-assisted rehabilitation and healthcare who invest to support the mission of the AWRC
- Establish a startup incubator that provides Sheffield Hallam students and researchers with the skills, experience and confidence to enter the world of entrepreneurial innovation
- Develop a process to engage and support formal and fee-paying consultancy from industry and the public sector across the business lifecycle, including thematic acceleration for startups, spinouts and entrepreneurs
- As part of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Innovation District, lead on the development of an innovation cluster at the Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park, based around the concept of health, wellbeing and life sciences
- Manage and harness existing strategic collaboration relationships

‘We will provide rapid access to world-leading facilities and interdisciplinary research and design expertise’

Pillar 3: Health innovation

Organised into two themes: (i) Prehabilitation²⁷ and Rehabilitation Services and (ii) Designing Physical Activity into Health and Care.

While we must prioritise prevention and the promotion of health, it is also important that we seek ways to support people when they experience trauma or illness. To do this, we will act as an innovation incubator and testbed for health and care services, bringing together patients, industry, clinicians and researchers to generate solutions to real-world problems in the NHS that can then be scaled across the UK in partnership with our collaborators (e.g. Health Innovation Yorkshire and Humber).

We will push the boundaries of current clinical care, harness new and emerging technologies and use exercise as a therapy to deliver benefits to patients. We will co-design and test innovations that can be adopted and scaled, and build capacity and capability to embed physical activity at the heart of health and care.

Aim

Use the AWRC as a testbed to develop, deliver and evaluate innovative rehabilitation services, models of care delivery and technologies that address one or more of the global challenges, and translate these innovations into practice through key partners into usual NHS care.

Objectives

- Develop and test innovations in prehabilitation/rehabilitation and support adoption and scale
- Create clinical champions who seek to promote the value of physical activity to patients and colleagues through routine clinical interactions
- Build physical activity innovation capacity and capability across the clinical/research interface, including the development of novel student placements to augment the health innovation workforce
- Lead nationally on workforce wellbeing programmes to support current NHS staff into good health
- Support people who are currently on a waitlist for surgery to avoid deconditioning and help them take control of their own rehabilitation trajectory
- Harness the power of AI, digital and assisted technologies to create innovative and scalable services that support people into better quality of life through restorative rehabilitation



Pillar 4: Training and education

Organised into three themes: (i) Transforming practice, (ii) Inspiring the next generation and (iii) Building research and innovation capacity.

We will combine academic, health professional, patient and industry expertise from a range of disciplines to deliver world-leading, training and education.

Our work will ensure that the next-generation workforce has the appropriate skills for health and wellbeing organisations of the future, as well as beneficial lifestyle behaviours to model healthy living to colleagues and patients alike. We will empower professionals to transform health and wellbeing practices and build capacity to engage in physical activity-related research.

Our learners will benefit from the state-of-the-art facilities and unique multi disciplinary, collaborative research environment of the AWRC. Our work will support continued professional development (CPD) for professionals already working in practice, including short courses, study days and postgraduate provision.

We will make our research accessible and inspiring to schools and the local community through public engagement, open days and science festivals. We will promote entrepreneurship to our students, encouraging them to develop ideas and to establish businesses that contribute to regional economic growth.

Aim

Combine academic, health professional, patient and industry expertise from a range of disciplines and workforce sectors to deliver a transformative, research-informed programme of training and education. Our work will address one or more of the global challenges, providing a superb student experience.

Objectives

- Deliver a programme of CPD that supports professionals working in practice, across a range of workforce sectors, to deliver and drive forward health and wellbeing practices for tomorrow's world
- In partnership with educational and industrial partners, contribute to training and education programmes that enable health and care professionals to develop their skills in digital and AI-driven technologies, so that they are well equipped to use the latest solutions in health and care
- Support the delivery of doctoral programmes and apprenticeships and the training of the next generation of researchers who can work across academia and industry
- Introduce learners (early on in their education or career) to the practice of research and innovation, creating opportunities that allow them to simultaneously learn from and progress real-world research projects
- Meaningfully engage the public with the work of the AWRC through activities that provide an opportunity to raise awareness of practice and research, including career pathways, in the field of health, wellbeing and physical activity
- Ensure the AWRC is permeable and accessible to those with varying degrees of teaching and learning commitments and aspirations to develop a research portfolio



5 AWRC revenue streams



Focusing on tackling our global challenges and delivering world-leading interdisciplinary research, innovation and knowledge exchange will deliver our mission and lead to growth in the following revenue streams:

- Research and innovation funding from UK Research and Innovation and beyond
- Use-inspired research with commercial and non-commercial organisations
- Use of the AWRC building and equipment, office space, meeting rooms, clinical and knowledge exchange floors
- Knowledge exchange activities between clients, staff, students and the public
- Exploitation of existing and new IP from research, innovation and knowledge exchange activity
- Fee-generating education and training through postgraduate, CPD and apprenticeships

6 Strategic enablers



The next five years represents an exciting and potentially transformational time for the AWRC. We have ambitious plans to grow our portfolio and extend the scale and reach of our impact internationally.

To ensure that our growth is sustainable, we must focus on the continued development of our people, our processes and our portfolio. This means maximising the benefits of our collaborative, interdisciplinary, cross-sector model of co-location, and our position in the UK innovation ecosystem. Our strategic enablers will help us to achieve this.

Our strategic enablers are: (i) interdisciplinary, multi-sector expertise, (ii) a collaborative, values-led culture, (iii) inspiring facilities and infrastructure, and (iv) exceptional experience and engagement.

The actions we take in each of these areas will keep us focused on developing a world-leading research centre that remains mission-focused as well as an engaging, inspiring, challenging, fun and impactful place to work.

Over the next five years our strategic enablers will help us to increase collaboration across our four pillars and make explicit our values as a research centre. They will help create a culture where we can be bold and curious in the pursuit of our global challenges, creating investable propositions that capture the imagination of staff, funders and collaborators.

A focus on values will keep our responsibility to the local community and the South Yorkshire region front and centre, prioritising them throughout this adventure. There is a need to strengthen and review our approach to engaging co-locators, and we must expand our resources in terms of external communications if we are to create a step change from being regionally known to being globally leading. Our work on engagement and experience will help us to achieve this.

We will continue to contribute to the vision of Sheffield Hallam University to be the world's leading applied university, by harnessing talent across interdisciplinary academic and professional services teams, and channelling this talent to deliver world-leading research, innovation and knowledge exchange activity under one roof. However, we must ensure we are not unintentionally building organisational or structural barriers to engagement, accessibility or inclusion of staff at Sheffield Hallam or beyond who want to engage with us. The AWRC's doors are open to all.

Interdisciplinary, multi-sector expertise

- Continue to promote interdisciplinary, cross-sector collaboration by harnessing academic expertise from both within and — importantly — beyond the organisational boundaries of the University
- Map existing co-located expertise, identify gaps and prioritise engagement of Sheffield Hallam staff and external collaborators in under-represented areas
- Create open days and showcase events to engage a wider spectrum of Sheffield Hallam staff, community organisations, other universities, and public and private sector institutions in the mission of the AWRC
- Celebrate success across our portfolio with our co-locators, recognising the contribution made by different disciplines to the impact of the centre



Collaborative, values-based culture

- Undertake a collaborative and centre-wide process to make explicit the AWRC values
- Be ideas-led, creating innovative, interdisciplinary ‘investable propositions’. These ideas can also be shaped to meet grant funding opportunities more effectively as they arise
- Use the five global challenges to drive collaboration across the entire AWRC portfolio
- Use events and interactions like the AWRC seminar series, invited talks and on-site workshops to drive collaboration and generate ideas
- Strengthen links with UK Research and Innovation, the National Institute for Health and Care Research, charitable organisations and other appropriate national agencies to support the development of large-scale research applications. The goal is to shape future funding calls, to which we then respond



Inspiring facilities and infrastructure

- Working collaboratively across the University, take responsibility for the continuous development and delivery of a high performing building that becomes an exemplar centre for carbon-conscious research
- Deliver an infrastructure service to ensure robust and professional operations which enable delivery of the centre’s strategy
- Ensure the AWRC facilities and equipment are maintained and continuously reviewed to deliver our strategy
- Use our unique facilities and location to generate income through hires of the facility (e.g. meeting rooms, conference space, offices, incubation space, NHS and private hires of the clinical floor)
- Ensure sector-leading health and safety and clinical governance, ensuring a safe working environment for all

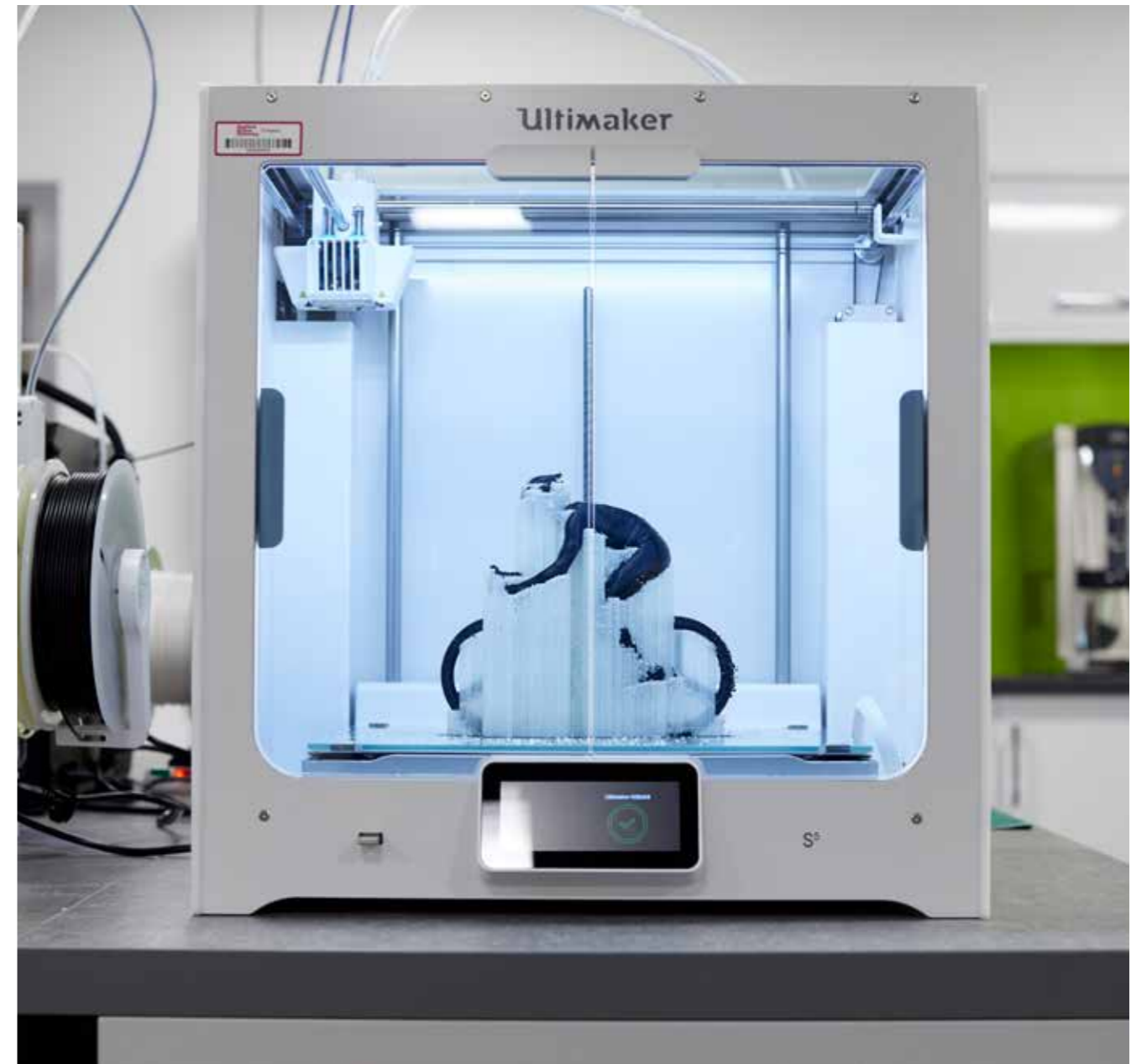


Exceptional experience and engagement

- Showcase the impact of the work of academics and partners within and connected to the AWRC, nationally and internationally, through world-leading research publications, REF impact case studies, PR activity, digital channels, conferences and public lectures. This will help us to inform and influence funding calls and build our reputation
- Create and execute an engagement strategy that allows staff, funders, industry, NHS services and local communities to easily collaborate and engage with us. This will include a vision for stakeholder engagement with guiding principles based on inclusivity, transparency, appropriateness, clarity and comprehensiveness
- Create an environment that delivers an exceptional employee and visitor experience, which leads to increased engagement, productivity and wellbeing, as well as ensuring that all visitors — from school groups to patients to senior public figures — leave feeling inspired and enthused by their visit
- Embed exceptional experience into the culture of the AWRC and create an overall experience where any co-locator, collaborator or community member feels a deep sense of belonging, purpose, and impact



7 Exploring transformation



To innovate, there needs to be space for curiosity, a spirit of collaboration, and a culture where we can be bold in trying new things. We acknowledge that not everything we try will succeed, but each attempt will tell us something valuable to inform the next.

This sentiment is at the heart of the final aspect of this strategy: exploring transformation. There is plenty for us to go at over the next five years in pursuit of the global challenges, and there is no doubt that this is where we will allocate the majority of our resources. But we need to remain agile and build our readiness and capabilities to move in different directions as external and internal challenges shift. The pandemic is a good example of this.

While we can't predict the future, we can plan for it. Exploring transformation provides an intentional space in our strategy for us to be bold and curious in seeking out new and emerging areas that will help inform our future as a research centre. It is impossible to predict what these will be — and that's the exciting part — but without providing permission and creating space, we might miss something extraordinary.

8 Summary of our key commitments

The success of the AWRC over the next five years will be measured against the impact our activities have on the five global challenges. We will track our progress via our established dashboard model, which captures an extensive set of KPIs that will be monitored through our four pillars.

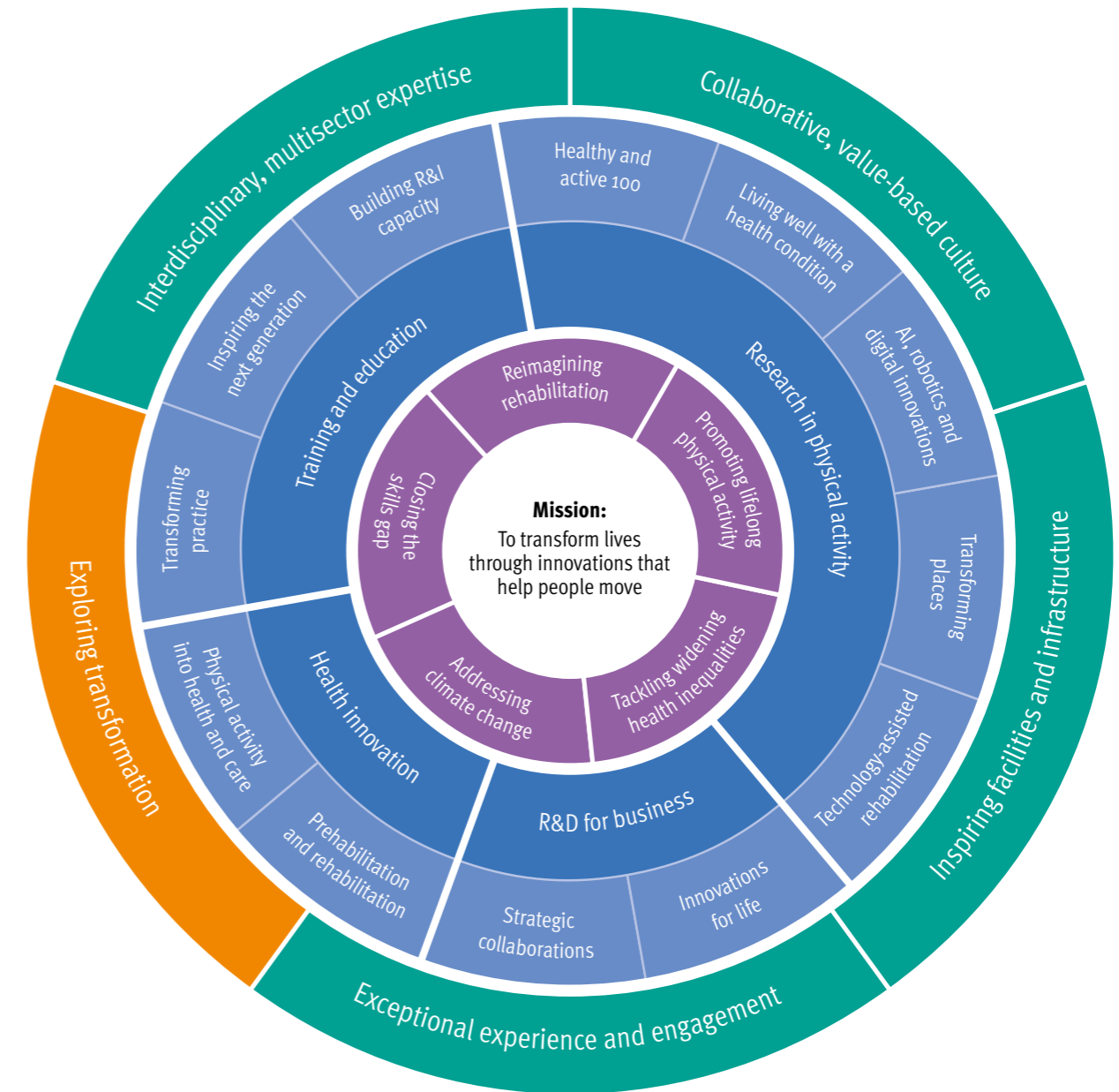
This strategy builds on our collaborative, interdisciplinary and cross-sector model of co-location, which harnesses the skills, talents and curiosity of academics, professional services staff, external organisations and members of the public to transform lives.

We have ambitious plans to grow our portfolio, contribute to economic growth and extend the scale and reach of our impact across communities locally, nationally and internationally.

To deliver impact over the next five years, we will deliver the following ten objectives:

1. Make a demonstrable contribution to addressing five complex societal issues through our research, innovation and knowledge exchange in human movement. Described as global challenges (see section 4.0), these issues reflect health, social, environmental and economic priorities, where a more active population can make a material difference to people's wellbeing, economic growth and the health of the planet
2. Enhance the pace and scale of the involvement of local communities in our work to ensure that, along with our ambition to grow internationally, we will still meet the needs and challenges of people and communities in the local region — particularly those who are most underserved
3. Double the number of large-scale interdisciplinary research proposals (aligned to our five global challenges) submitted to research and commercial funders (e.g. UKRI, NIHR, Wellcome Trust, Industry partners) by 2028. We will achieve this by increasing our talent and skills pool, and building new collaborations with researchers, business leaders and health and care stakeholders
4. Directly contribute to economic growth by providing technology and service solutions across the business lifecycle for startups, dynamic SMEs, global businesses and the public sector. This will include the region's first startup incubator that provides Sheffield Hallam students and researchers with the skills, experience and confidence to turn their ideas into a successful business
5. Use the AWRC as a testbed for health and care innovation. Either directly or by working with industry and the health and care system (e.g. Health Innovation Yorkshire and Humber, Integrated Care Boards), we will develop, deliver, evaluate and scale innovative rehabilitation services, models of care delivery and technologies, and translate these innovations into practice
6. Create a highly skilled workforce for the future of health and care, who recognise and value the potential of physical activity and wellbeing to transform lives. We will achieve this by integrating academic, health professional and industry expertise from a range of disciplines to deliver a transformative programme of training and education that provides an excellent student experience
7. Grow our external profile so that the impact of our research, innovation and knowledge exchange is known nationally and internationally
8. Continue to pursue a culture where any co-locator, collaborator or community member feels a deep sense of belonging, purpose, welcome and impact at the AWRC
9. Create space in our strategy to be bold and curious in seeking out new and emerging areas that will help inform our future work and future direction as a research centre
10. Track progress against our KPIs transparently using our comprehensive dashboard approach, and adapt based on this insight

9 Closing remarks



This strategy provides the direction that the AWRC will go in over the next five years. It clarifies the global challenges we intend to influence and sets out priorities for our research, innovation and knowledge exchange in human movement.

Strategies evolve to take into account changes in the environment, whether this is new university priorities, government mandates or local requirements.

Our mission, however, will remain the same, regardless of the route we take. The continued growth of our portfolio and the long-term success of the AWRC will be dependent on the culture we create and the talent and skills of the people we engage.

We will therefore continue to pursue a culture and overall experience where any co-locator, collaborator or community member feels a deep sense of welcome, belonging, and purpose at the AWRC.

10 Footnotes

- ¹ <https://www.shu.ac.uk/advanced-wellbeing-research-centre/collaborators>
- ² <https://www.shu.ac.uk/advanced-wellbeing-research-centre/public-engagement/innovation-futures>
- ³ <https://www.shu.ac.uk/advanced-wellbeing-research-centre/accelerator>
- ⁴ <https://www.shu.ac.uk/advanced-wellbeing-research-centre/projects/westfield-health>
- ⁵ <https://www.shu.ac.uk/advanced-wellbeing-research-centre/projects/active-together>
- ⁶ <https://www.shu.ac.uk/advanced-wellbeing-research-centre/public-engagement/innovation-futures>
- ⁷ <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/324775/WHO-PRP-18.1-eng.pdf>
- ⁸ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>
- ⁹ <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-aid-tackling-global-challenges-in-the-national-interest>
- ¹⁰ [https://southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/getmedia/4256c890-d568-42c8-8aa5-c8232a5d1bfd/SCR_SEP_Full_Draft_Jan_21-\(accessible\).pdf](https://southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/getmedia/4256c890-d568-42c8-8aa5-c8232a5d1bfd/SCR_SEP_Full_Draft_Jan_21-(accessible).pdf)
- ¹¹ https://syics.co.uk/application/files/7816/7898/2247/South_Yorkshire_Integrated_Care_Partnership_Strategy_March_2023_Full.pdf
- ¹² <https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s34751/Joint%20Health%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%202019-24.pdf>
- ¹³ https://www.shu.ac.uk/-/media/home/about-us/governance-and-strategy/strategy/transforming-lives.pdf?sc_lang=en
- ¹⁴ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/key-issues-parliament-2015/social-change/ageing-population/>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/marmot-review-10-years-on>
- ¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy>

- ¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-jobs-lifelong-learning-for-opportunity-and-growth>
- ¹⁸ <https://labour.org.uk/skillsreport/>
- ¹⁹ <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/07/19/the-need-for-a-new-rehabilitation-strategy-in-the-uk/>
- ²⁰ <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-us/our-role-in-the-region/civic-university-agreement/economy-and-jobs/our-health-innovation-campus>
- ²¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/a-net-zero-nhs/#:~:text=For%20the%20emissions%20we%20control,reduction%20by%202036%20to%202039>
- ²² <https://www.shu.ac.uk/-/media/home/about-us/our-values/sustainability/files/sheffield-hallam-climate-action-strategy---2023.pdf>
- ²³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-for-jobs-lifelong-learning-for-opportunity-and-growth>
- ²⁴ <https://labour.org.uk/skillsreport/>
- ²⁵ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/>
- ²⁶ <https://www.who.int/activities/integrating-rehabilitation-into-health-systems>
- ²⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6899232/>



Contact Us

Would you like to find out more about our work?
Interested in working with us? We'd love to chat.

Email us: awrc@shu.ac.uk

Read more about our work: www.shu.ac.uk/awrc

Call us for a chat: 0114 225 3399

Follow us on X/Twitter: @SHU_AWRC



Department
of Health &
Social Care



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

Advanced
Wellbeing
Research Centre