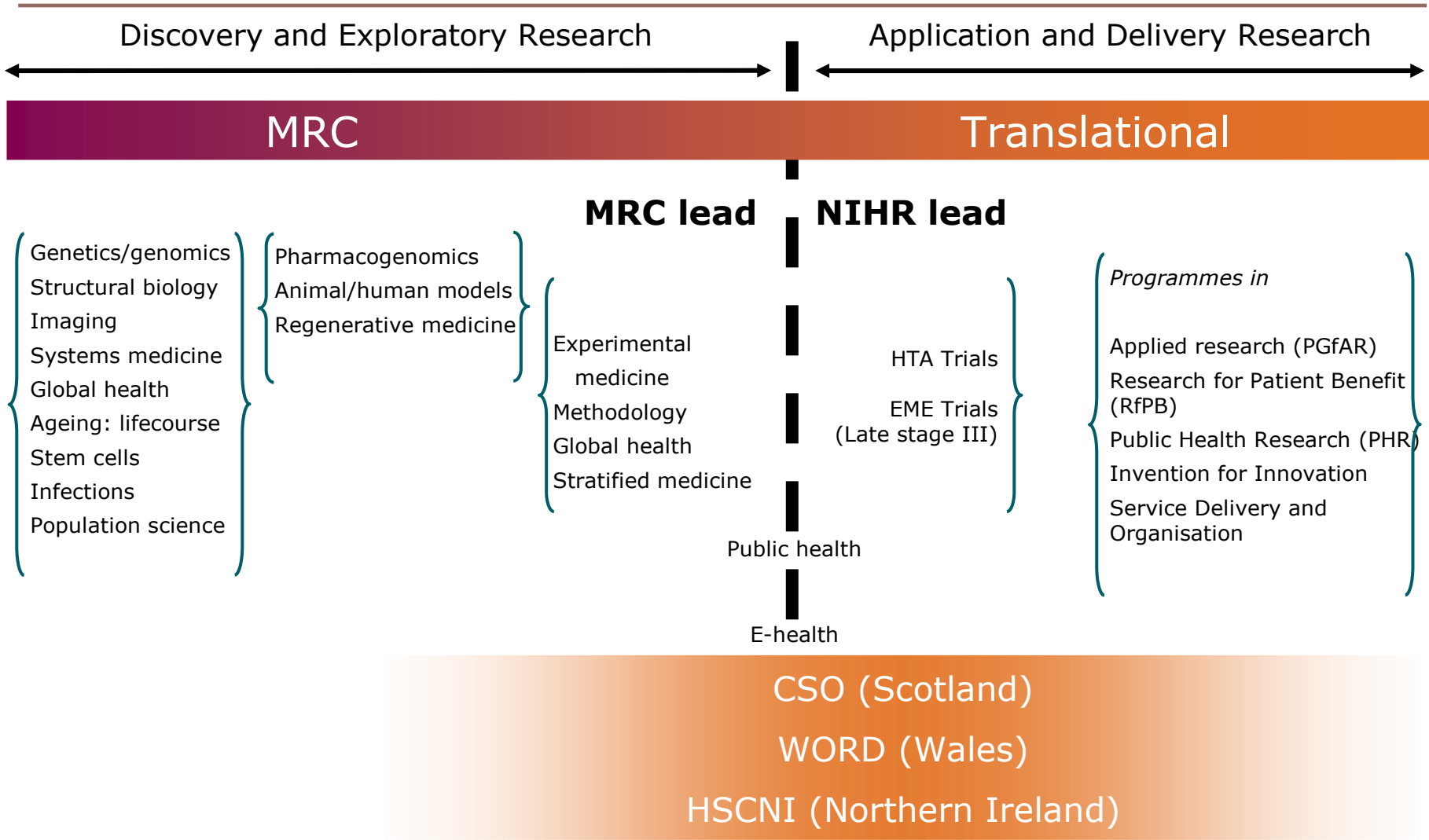




Research strategy and capacity development in population health science: an MRC and personal view

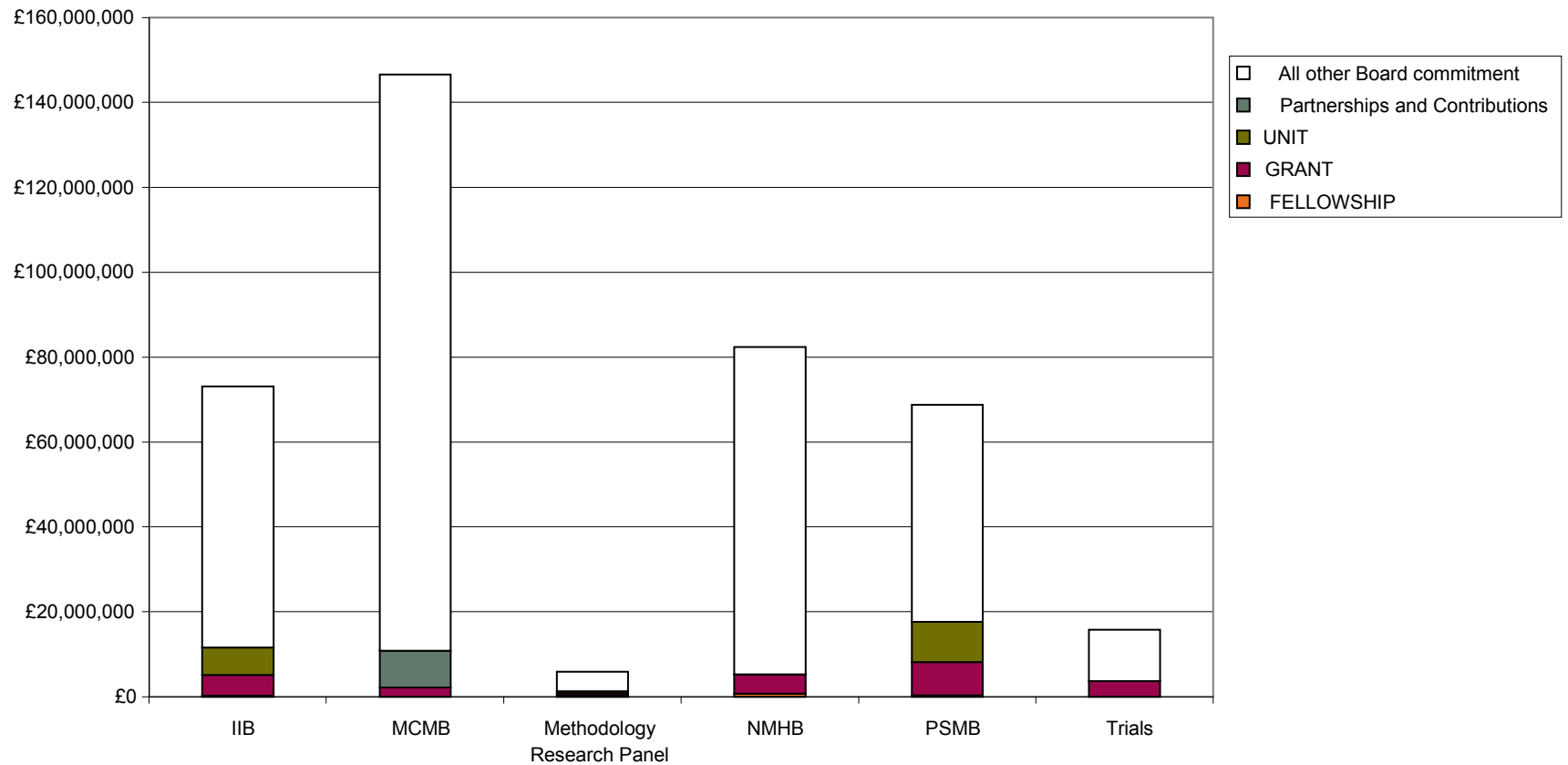
*Professor Anne Johnson, UCL
Former Chair, MRC Population Health Sciences
Strategy Group*

Foci of MRC and NIHR activities



MRC Population Health Sciences Portfolio 2008

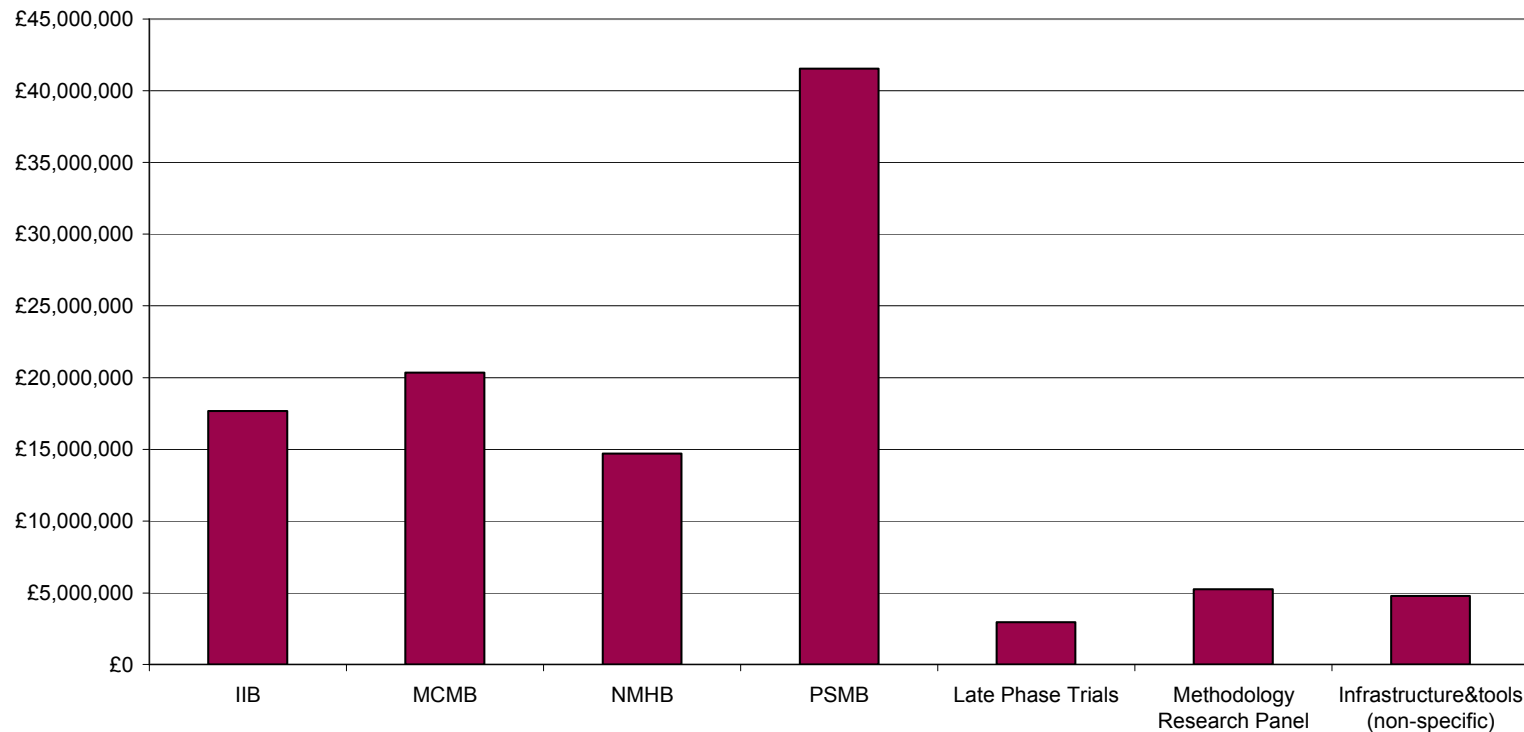
Population Health annualised weighted commitment by Health Research Classification System



NB Includes live grants and fellowships at 15 July 2008 plus Unit projects with spend in 2006/07 and Partnerships and Contributions with spend in 2007/08

MRC Population Health Sciences Portfolio: £107M

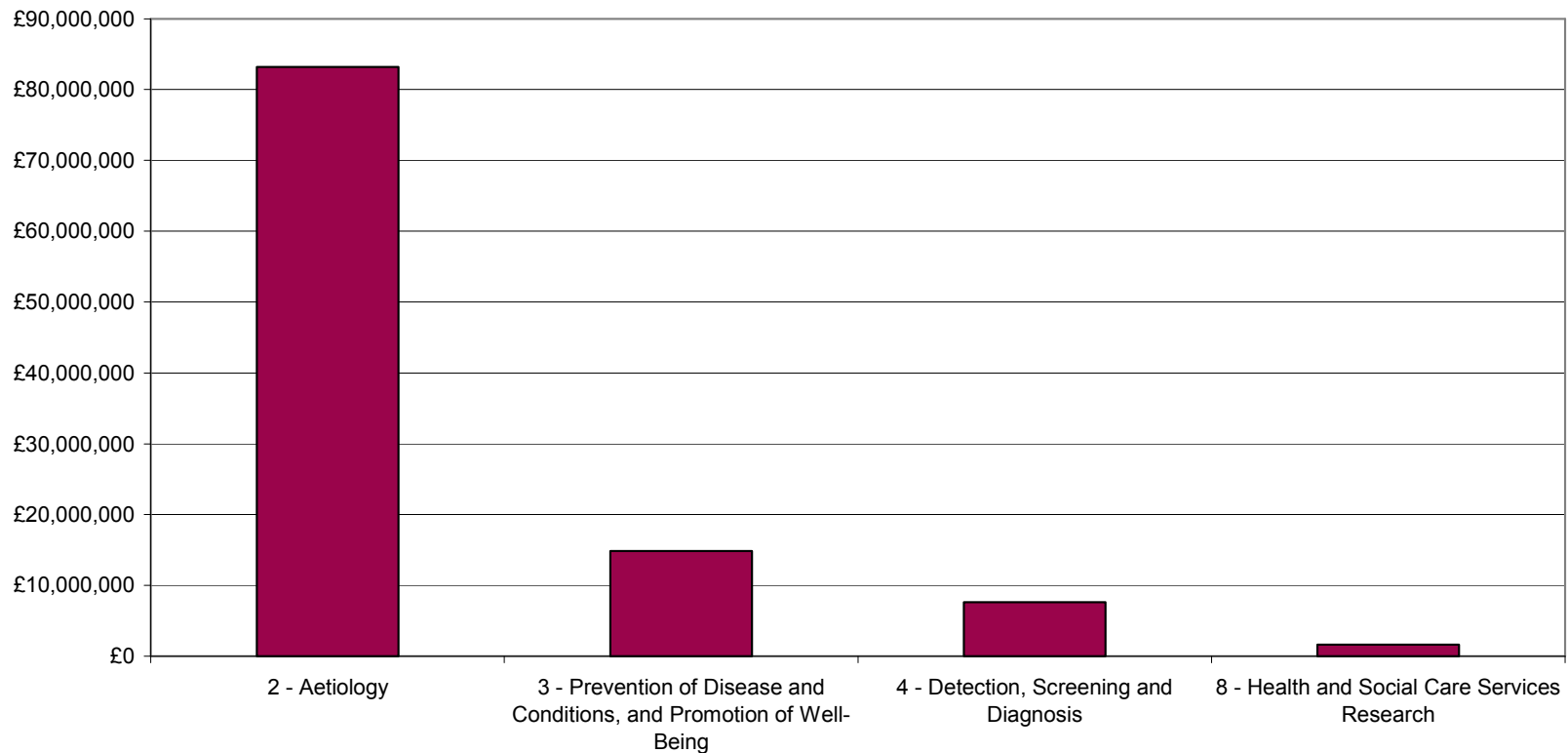
Population Health - annualised weighted commitment by HRCS Research Activity
September 2009



NB Includes live and awarded grants and fellowships at September 2009 plus Unit projects and Partnerships & Contributions with spend in 2008/09
Total annualised commitment for Population Health Sciences is £107M

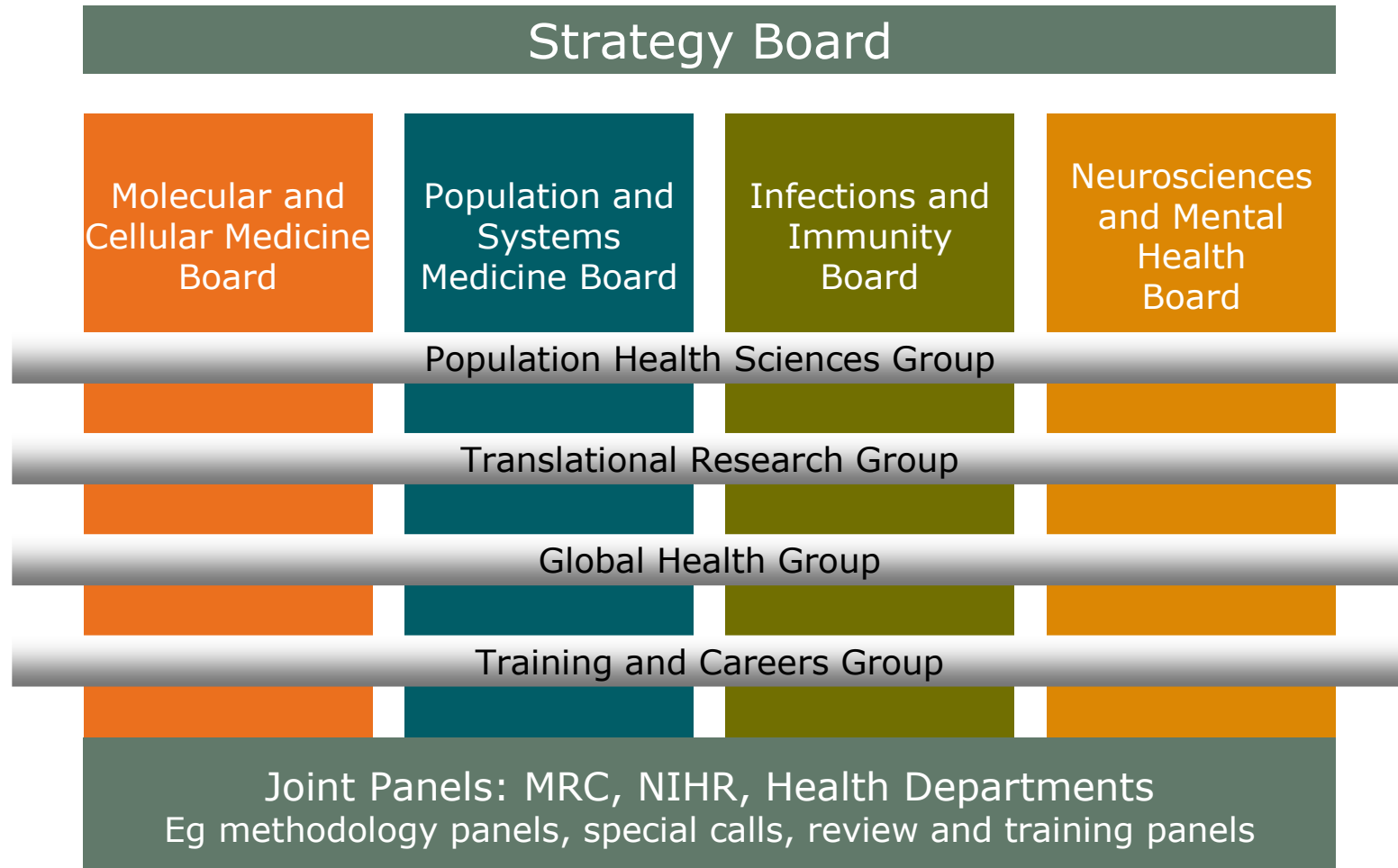
MRC Population Health Sciences Portfolio

Population Health - annualised weighted commitment by HRCS Research Activity Codes
September 2009



NB Includes live and awarded grants and fellowships at September 2009 plus Unit projects and Partnerships & Contributions with spend in 2008/09
Total annualised commitment for Population Health Sciences is £107M

MRC Boards and Overview Groups



Role of Population Health Sciences Group

- Oversee population health sciences investment across MRC Boards and panels
- Advise Strategy Board, Boards and panels on development and implementation of strategies and policies
- Advise on strategic funding initiatives and partnership activities
- Carry out gaps analyses and horizon scanning (cognisant of activities of NIHR)

Population Health: New opportunities

A changing landscape

- Information revolution (Health and Bioinformatics, large cohorts, computing power for biostatistics, modelling, internet etc)
- High throughput (and affordable) molecular methods (molecular epidemiology, aetiology, pathogenesis)
- Genomics (GWAS, Biobank etc) and co.
- Biomarkers
- Well phenotyped disease cohorts
- Measurement of population impacts
- Public Health White Paper

Selected Recent PHSG Activities

- Input into MRC's strategies in mental health, infections, obesity and ageing and guidance for funding cohorts
- Analysis of MRC portfolio in population health sciences and ongoing analyses of applications and awards
- Engagement with MRC's Population Health Sciences Research Network (PHSRN), OSCHR partners and NIHR programmes
- Landscaping population health sciences research in the UK and identifying gaps

Current and Future PHSG Activities

- Shaping MRC strategy in big data and the joint strategy with ESRC and Wellcome Trust on longitudinal studies
- Advising on strategic initiatives eg e-health & mental health
- Work on capacity development, including interactions with the Faculty of Public Health especially in field of training and research capacity building
- Increasing communications and awareness of opportunities in population health sciences
- Promoting the translation and impact of population health sciences
- Considering mechanisms to facilitate development of interventions across MRC and NIHR schemes

MRC CSR 2010 Programmatic Themes

Population health sciences

Strategic Delivery Priorities

Supporting population based research in partnership with NIHR, Health Departments, Research Councils and Charities, to maximise the contribution that population health sciences can bring to a vibrant public health research agenda

Living a Long and healthy life

❑ **Mental Health** – Build on MRC mental health review to accelerate the development of intervention strategies for preventing chronic mental illness and promoting wellbeing

❑ **Addressing the impact of lifestyle and behaviours on the health of the nation**

Understand the processes leading to obesity and identification of testable interventions

Build on MRC addiction research strategy to understand the cause risk and natural history of addiction

❑ **Health Ageing** MRC lead Lifelong Health and Wellbeing – Build on ageing strategy with a focus on neurodegeneration, musculoskeletal and extended working lives

Harnessing the value of population health sciences

❑ **Maximising the impact of large scale population cohorts** – including UK Biobank

❑ **Increasing economic and societal gain through e-health research** – Strengthen UK research capability offered by increased access to linked ehealth-related data

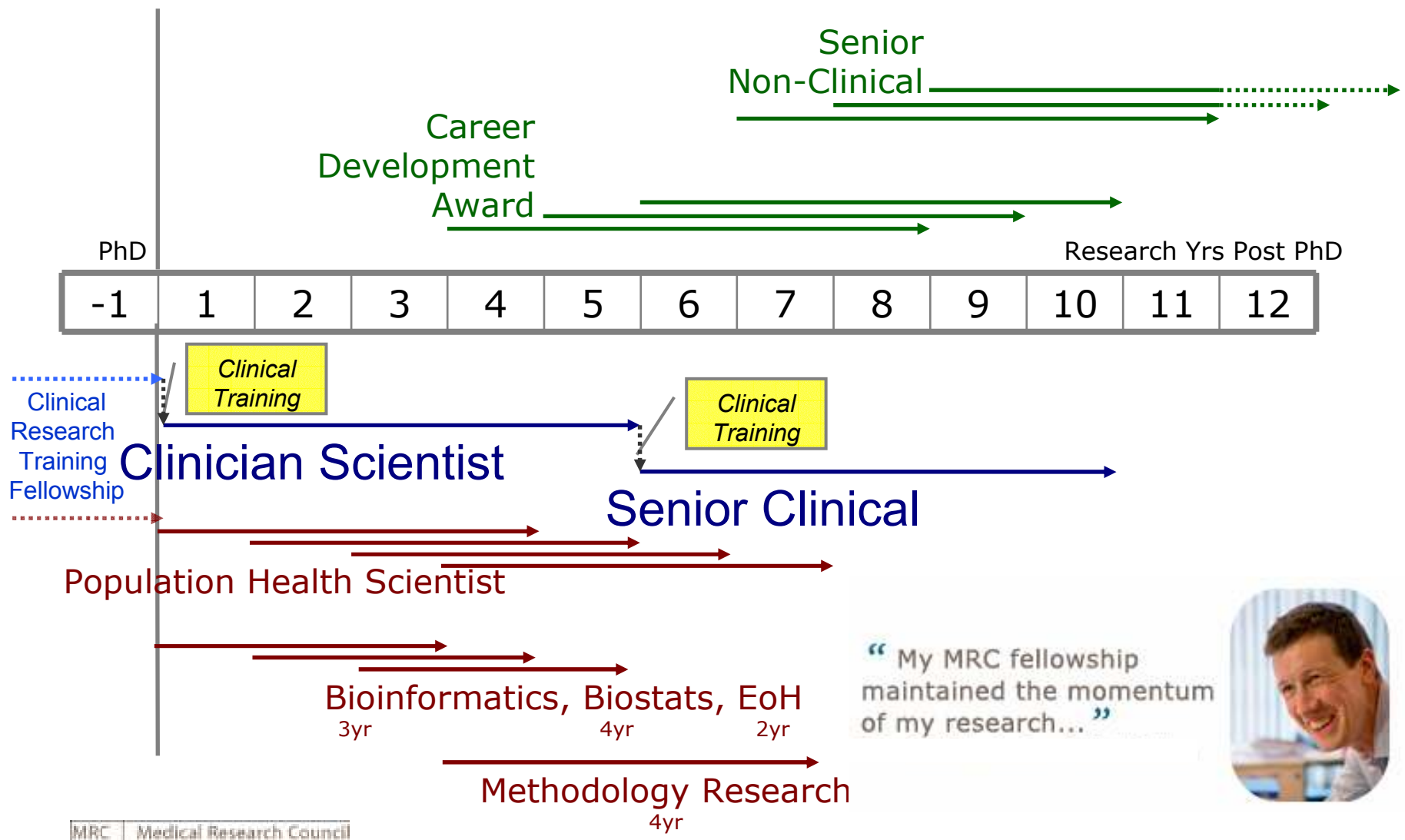
❑ **Public health infections research** – Build on infection strategy by increasing UK's ability to respond to new and re-emerging infections and target interventions to vulnerable groups

Population health opportunities are everywhere! Examples of X-cutting initiatives and other funding streams

- Living with environmental change
- E-health/big data initiatives
- NPRI
- Biobank
- Pandemic flu initiatives
- Genome-wide association studies (GWAS)
- Birth cohort studies
- Global health trials
- DFID consortia
- Disease specific charities etc etcetc

MRC Fellowships – A Summary

Non-Clinical, Clinical and Strategic Capacity Building fellowships



“ My MRC fellowship maintained the momentum of my research... ”



MRC Capacity Building Fellowships

Outstanding scientists
Extraordinary opportunities

Extraordinary opportunities

MRC fellowships enable outstanding individuals to undertake challenging projects in excellent research and training environments.



"It's incredibly rewarding to know that my research could have a direct impact on public health"

MRC Population Health Scientist Fellowship

- Part of a suite of strategic capacity building fellowship schemes
- Opportunity for early career research training and skills development in population health sciences
- Provides research costs and a specific training programme (for up to 4 yrs)
 - Entry level: pre- or early post-doctoral (up to 4 yrs post-PhD)
 - Eligibility: non-clinical and clinical applicants (including AHPs)

For further info see: www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Fellowships/Populationhealthscientist

Other Fellowship and training schemes

- NIHR- range of doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships.
- Academic Clinical Public health fellows and lecturers
- Wellcome Trust clinical and non-clinical fellowships at all grades
- Disease specific charities (BHF etc)
- CRC PH centre of excellence fellows

Public health white paper

- Threats and opportunities
 - ❑ 'Localism' vs national strategy? - Role of LAs and Public Health England
 - ❑ Fragmentation or coordination? – service dept, university depts, NHS, LHOs, MRC Units, PH Centres of excellence....
 - ❑ Role of academic health sciences centre? Global health movement?
 - ❑ New NIHR School of Public health
 - ❑ New Policy Research Unit on Behaviour and Health

Order or Chaos?

Creating a new Population Health Universe

- Opportunity to shape the future
- Respond to the White Paper consultation
- Be imaginative about future capacity building
- Feedback to MRC/Wellcome/NIHR
- Encourage the next generation of undergraduates and graduates

