



## **National Institute for Health Research**

### **RESEARCH CAPABILITY FUNDING**

#### **Introduction**

The vision of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research.

This document sets out how the NIHR's Research Capability Funding will contribute to this vision – it supersedes document 4.8 Flexibility and Sustainability Funding. From April 2012, Research Capability Funding will replace Flexibility and Sustainability Funding.

#### **Overview**

Research Capability Funding is allocated to research-active NHS organisations to enable them to maintain research capacity and capability. It does this by:

- Enabling NHS organisations to meet some, or all of the research-related component of the salary of their researchers and research support staff working on clinical and applied health research, where that component is not already provided by another funding source; and
- Contributing towards
  - sponsorship and governance costs, and
  - accommodation, financial management, and human resource management costs, associated with research staff of NHS organisations hosting research adopted onto the NIHR Clinical Research Network (NIHR-CRN) portfolio.

Research Capability Funding allows NHS organisations to support the salaries of their researchers, particularly NIHR Faculty members, in a flexible and strategic manner. This helps NHS organisations to create and maintain a sustainable capacity for people and patient-based research. It facilitates success in attracting NIHR research grants and other funding, leading to future allocation of Research Capability Funding – a virtuous circle.

In addition, Research Capability Funding may be used to contribute to the costs of hosting NIHR-supported research, or of research adopted onto the NIHR-CRN portfolio, as specified below, where these specific costs are not covered in other ways.

## Aim

NIHR Research Capability Funding aims to:

- Help research-active NHS organisations to act flexibly and strategically to maintain research capacity and capability.
- Support the appointment, development and retention of key staff undertaking or supporting people and patient-based research.
- Contribute towards costs of hosting NIHR-funded or 'adopted' research that are not currently fully covered across NIHR's programmes, and that are not met in other ways.

## Benefits

Research Capability Funding offers the following benefits to NHS organisations:

- Access to flexible funding.
- A means for developing and sustaining research capability, meeting the costs of key research support staff not funded in other ways.
- Helping build critical mass, as increased research capacity attracts additional NIHR research income and so attracts a greater share of Research Capability Funding.
- Providing a financial contribution towards the costs incurred through research-active NHS organisations hosting NIHR-funded or 'adopted' research.
- Funding for developing research management capabilities in those Trusts where R&D departments have been reconfigured within NHS research support services (see briefing document *5.2 Research Support Services*).

## Eligibility

The NIHR Research Capability Funding is allocated by the Department of Health to research-active NHS organisations in receipt of NIHR income, or via NHS organisations that host local NIHR Clinical Research Networks.

## Funding

The budget for the NIHR Research Capability Funding for 2012/13 will be £100m. There are two separate funding streams for Research Capability Funding:

1. **Trust Research Capability Funding** - allocated directly to eligible NHS organisations for their own use.
2. **Network Research Capability Funding** - allocated to NIHR Clinical Research Networks for their local research networks, via the NHS organisations that host each local network.

## Trust Research Capability Funding

The amount of Research Capability Funding allocated directly to each NHS organisation for its own use is in proportion to the amount of other NIHR income to that NHS organisation, and the number of Senior Investigators associated with the organisation.

NHS organisations potentially eligible for Trust Research Capability Funding, qualify to receive funding under two circumstances:

- Either they received sufficient NIHR income in the previous calendar year to reach a threshold to trigger an Research Capability Funding allocation of at least £20k;
- Or they recruited at least 500 patients to non-commercial clinical studies, conducted through NIHR-CRN, during the previous financial year reporting period.

**NHS organisations receiving Trust Research Capability Funding must also comply with the requirements of the new Research Support Services, to continue to receive the funding.**

Trust Research Capability Funding may be used to support the costs of some or all of the following:

- The research-related component of an NIHR Faculty member's salary, which is not covered by other funding sources.
- Salary costs of new staff, who are expected to be Faculty members, but who have not yet obtained funding from other NIHR sources.
- Salary costs of existing Faculty members who are 'between grants'.
- The time of Faculty members in contributing to the wider research endeavour (e.g. membership of peer review panels).
- The research-related time of NHS-employed scientific, administrative and secretarial staff who support Faculty members in their NIHR-related work.

Trust Research Capability Funding may also be used to **contribute** towards the following costs:

- Meeting the accommodation costs, finance management costs, and human resource management cost incurred in hosting NIHR-funded research, where these costs are associated with staff leading or undertaking research<sup>1</sup>. In the case of finance and human resource management costs, these costs must relate to dedicated and identifiable people providing these services.
- Meeting the cost of the time of Faculty members in preparing grant proposals.
- The net costs incurred by a host organisation in meeting the salary of an individual supported by NIHR, while on maternity, paternity or long-term sick leave, less any recoverable statutory pay that the employer is entitled to claim. Research Capability Funding should only be used to fund the share of costs

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<sup>1</sup> Equivalent costs associated with staff supporting research led by others ('support staff') should be met from core Network funds.

that relate to the proportion of a person's WTE that NIHR meets on a research grant (Networks should cover this through core Network funding).

- Back-filling key NIHR-grant funded posts left temporarily vacant during the award period by a member of staff taking maternity, paternity, or long-term sick leave, where absence will seriously compromise success of NIHR-funded research.
- The cost of training in research management and governance for staff of the Trust's R&D Office, provided the Trust can demonstrate outcomes showing that the Trust is using the national standards, systems and operating procedures described in the NIHR Research Support Services (RSS) framework. Research Capability Funding may also be used to train R&D Office staff so that the Trust can establish the base capability needed to begin to demonstrate such outcomes.
- Where the Trust is meeting RSS standards, contributing towards the sponsorship and governance costs associated with research adopted onto the NIHR CRN portfolio, where these costs are not met in other ways.

Host organisations may use part of their Research Capability Funding allocation to contribute towards equivalent costs incurred by other centres collaborating in NIHR-funded research, provided these are NHS organisations.

Host organisations will need to balance the advantages of short-term flexibility with the need for a strategic approach to developing and sustaining capacity and capability.

There will be a signed letter of agreement between the Department of Health and each recipient NHS organisation.

### **Network Research Capability Funding**

This funding stream is allocated to NIHR Clinical Research Networks for their local research networks, via the NHS organisations that host each local network. Network Research Capability Funding may be used flexibly and strategically to support the same **types** of costs that are met, on a longer-term basis, by core Network funding. It should not be used to support the conduct of the research itself, but may be used like core funding, to contribute towards the salary costs of those staff that support research led by others.

Network Research Capability Funding may also be used, at a Local Comprehensive Clinical Research Network's discretion, to contribute towards the following costs, **where the Trust involved does not receive Trust Research Capability Funding:**

- The accommodation costs, finance management costs, and human resource management cost incurred in hosting research adopted on the NIHR-CRN portfolio, where these costs are associated with staff leading or undertaking research (see footnote 1).
- The sponsorship and governance costs associated with research adopted onto the NIHR-CRN portfolio.

Host organisations may use part of their Research Capability Funding allocation to contribute towards equivalent costs incurred by other centres collaborating in NIHR-funded research, provided these are NHS organisations.

Host organisations will need to balance the advantages of short-term flexibility with the need for a strategic approach to developing and sustaining capacity and capability.

### **Ineligible costs**

Research Capability Funding (Trust or Network) may not be used to extend an existing award, except as bridging support between NIHR awards. Any proposals to extend existing NIHR awards, whether in time only or with additional funding, must be submitted to the relevant NIHR Coordinating Centre for consideration. If such an extension is not agreed, the study should be terminated.

Other ineligible costs include costs already supported in other ways by NIHR or others, as a research cost, a service support cost, or a treatment cost; and insurance or indemnity costs.

Research Capability Funding may only be used to support costs not met from other sources.

### **Trust Research Capability Funding allocations**

The Trust Research Capability Funding allocations will be based on the amount of other NIHR income received in the previous calendar year by each NHS organisation, and on the number of Senior Investigators associated with the organisation. Each type of income will be weighted to reflect the nature of the various NIHR funding schemes:

- Research grants (projects and programmes) will be given the highest weighting to take account of the relatively short duration and relative inflexibility of project and programme grants.
- Other funding (Centres and Infrastructure) attracts a lower weighting to reflect its relative stability.
- Senior Investigators also earn an allocation to the primary NHS organisation with which they are associated, on a per capita basis.

However, NHS organisations whose NIHR income is insufficient to trigger Research Capability Funding of at least £20k, may still receive a fixed payment of Research Capability Funding (likely to be set at £20k for 2012/13) provided they have recruited at least 500 patients to non-commercial clinical studies over the previous financial year reporting period. Eligibility will be based on data provided by Trusts as part of regular reporting to the NIHR Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre.

### **Network Research Capability Funding allocations**

NHS organisations hosting Comprehensive Local Research Networks (CLRN) and Primary Care / Topic-specific Local Research Networks (LRN) will receive a Research Capability Funding allocation for these Networks. The Clinical Research

Network Coordinating Centre (CRN CC) works closely with the Topic-specific Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centres (TCRN CCs) to agree a recommended distribution of the national Network Research Capability Funding budget. The agreed levels of Research Capability Funding will be paid directly to the relevant NHS organisations along with the core NIHR support for the CLRNs or LRNs that they host (but as a separately identifiable amount, on whose use networks will be expected to report).

Each CLRN/LRN management team will be responsible for agreeing with the NHS organisations that make up the network, how the Research Capability Funding available may best be distributed according to local need, and for making allocations. CRN CC and TCRN CCs will oversee this process, as appropriate.

### **Reporting**

The NIHR will advise NHS organisations on how the use of individual Research Capability Funding allocations will be monitored. Network Coordinating Centres will provide reports on how CLRNs and LRNs have used Research Capability Funding allocations. Each Trust CEO or Finance Director will be expected to sign off Trust Research Capability Funding reports, confirming that all funds have been used exclusively for the purposes defined in this plan. The Department of Health reserves the right to audit Research Capability Funding expenditure.

### **Further information**

Further details about Research Capability Funding is available on the [NIHR website](#).

### **Department of Health Lead:**

Dr David Cox  
Deputy Director, Research Finance & Programmes  
Research & Development Directorate  
Department of Health  
Email: [R&D@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:R&D@dh.gsi.gov.uk)