



**National Institute for
Health Research**

BEST RESEARCH FOR BEST HEALTH

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 4.1a

BUREAUCRACY BUSTING: GOVERNANCE, ADVICE AND ETHICS SYSTEMS

*Best Research for Best Health*¹ set out a 5-year Research and Development Strategy for the NHS in England. This Implementation Plan provides an overview of the linked components that will together provide systems underpinning the NIHR: Governance, Advice And Ethics Systems. This document will be regularly updated. The latest version should be used.

It should be read with the implementation plans for the NIHR Comprehensive Clinical Research Network and NIHR Information Systems Programme.

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This plan is a summary of measures to reduce research bureaucracy, ensure good governance, and help researchers and research managers find their way successfully through the essential processes that lead to high-quality, safe research. For more detail, see the plans listed.

Overall Aim

- To support a vibrant and efficient research environment that commands patient and public confidence and ensures good governance through:
 - world-class research networks; and
 - action to simplify processes and save time.

Purpose

- To offer authoritative expert support for regulatory approvals and permissions to everyone who needs it.
- To unify and streamline procedures associated with regulation, approvals, and management and reporting, ensuring good governance.
- To do once, whatever does not have to be done more than once.

¹ *Best Research for Best Health: A New National Health Research Strategy*. The NHS contribution to health research in England. Department of Health. 2006.

- To maximise use of national standardised systems and processes.
- To support decisions with national standards and templates.
- To facilitate high-quality research.

Nature

- Linked initiatives:
 - **Networks**
 - A key function of the NIHR Comprehensive Clinical Research Network (CCRN) is to support and streamline research management to deliver proper governance.
 - The NIHR Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre (CRN CC), (previously known as the UKCRN CC) coordinates research management for the NIHR in the NHS.
 - The research-active NHS organisations that constitute the CCRN work together, locally and nationally, using R&D management approaches which minimise bureaucracy and maximise efficiency.
 - Networks share common procedures, integrated national R&D information systems, streamlined HR arrangements for Honorary Research Contracts (HRCs) and a national expert advice service.
 - CCRN Local Research Networks (CLRNs) deploy R&D management expertise to deliver proper governance.
 - **NIHR Coordinated System for gaining NHS Permission (NIHR CSP)**
 - The NIHR CRN has developed a coordinated standard process to streamline NHS permission.
 - The NIHR CRN led a planned programme of communication, engagement, testing and training before the NIHR brought the new system into operation in November 2008. From April 2009, after testing in use, it became the standard process for all studies supported by the NIHR.
 - **The Research Passport and streamlined HR arrangements**
 - The CLRNs have adopted a scheme with their non-NHS partners to harmonise and simplify honorary research contracts. The NIHR CRN has also streamlined arrangements for NHS staff involved in research in other NHS organisations.
 - **Regulatory and Governance Advice Service**
 - The NIHR CRN provides a network of front-line advisers in the CLRNs. It draws on a network of national regulatory experts under the umbrella of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC).
 - **Research ethics**
 - The National Research Ethics Service is implementing a package of measures to strengthen expert support to research ethics committees,

speed up the review of low-risk studies and help research ethics committees improve consistency. Further information is available in the [NRES Plan 2009/10](#) at www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk

➤ **Investigating research misconduct**

- In 2005, Universities UK established a UK Panel for Research Integrity in Health and Biomedical Sciences, to provide advice on maintaining high standards of scientific integrity and to support those investigating allegations of research misconduct.
- A [procedure](#) for investigating research misconduct provides researchers' employers with standards, applicable to all fields of research, that are thorough and fair to all parties. A [code of practice for research](#) to encourage good conduct and help prevent misconduct has been issued for public consultation. Further information on both documents is available from the [UK Research Integrity Office](#).

➤ **Research Support Services**

- The focus of the new framework for NIHR Research Support Services is to harmonise and streamline those systems and processes that are essential to increasing the speed and efficiency of Trust R&D Departments' roles in setting up and managing the research for which their organisations are responsible, either as research sites or as sponsor. The work promotes collaboration to develop tools to help consistency and delivery.

➤ **Integrated national R&D information systems**

- The NIHR CRN is working closely with the NIHR Information Systems Programme, in order to develop and implement research management information systems to support the operation of the NIHR, and a portal for researchers. The NIHR portal went live on 31 January 2009.

Eligibility

The initiatives described above will be available to:

- All organisations and individuals in England that provide care, fund research, employ researchers, review or regulate research.
- Organisations and individuals in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the context of UK-wide co-operation in health R&D and contribution of appropriate funding.
- These initiatives are designed to:
 - help researchers prepare and conduct studies to high quality;
 - enable organisations operating within the responsibilities of the Health Secretary to meet their duties efficiently and effectively; and
 - enable industry and public funders to rely on predictable systems.

- UKCRC partners are invited to consider whether it should be a term of contract or condition of grant for all funding members of the UKCRC that their contractors and grant-holders collaborate in these national systems, using standard processes.

Funding

- UKCRC partners are invited to contribute in cash or in kind, and to propose additional functionality for which they are willing to pay.

Monitoring and Performance Management

- Performance of networks, centres, services and systems are monitored annually against agreed metrics and indicators, including through the Care Quality Commission.
- An NIHR annual progress report is published after discussion by the NIHR board.
- The structure and working methods will be subject to regular review.

Related plans

For details, refer to the following implementation plans:

- Plan 4.1.b Ensuring good governance through networks.
- Plan 4.1.c NIHR Coordinated System for gaining NHS Permission (NIHR CSP).
- Plan 4.1.d The Research Passport and streamlined HR arrangements.
- Plan 4.1.e Regulatory and Governance Advice Service.
- Plan 4.1.f Research Ethics.
- Plan 4.1g NIHR Research Support Services
- Plan 1.2 NIHR Information Systems Programme.

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