



BEST RESEARCH FOR BEST HEALTH

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 5.8 (established)

NIHR COLLABORATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP IN APPLIED HEALTH RESEARCH AND CARE (CLAHRCs)

*Best Research for Best Health*¹ set out a 5-year Research and Development Strategy for the NHS in England. This Implementation Plan provides details on one of the key components of that strategy: Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care.

The CLAHRCs plan has been fully implemented.

Gateway Reference: 6050

Version: 3 (final)

Issue date: January 2009

Sir David Cooksey's Review of UK Health Research Funding² found that a crucial stage in translating research into practice is the evaluation and identification of those new interventions that are effective and appropriate for everyday use in the NHS, and the process of their implementation into routine clinical practice. We wish to pilot the establishment of a number of NIHR Collaborations in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRCs) focused on this "second gap in translation".

The establishment of the NIHR CLAHRCs will also address a key recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer's High Level Group on Clinical Effectiveness³: the need for the NHS to harness better the capacity of higher education to support initiatives to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of clinical care.

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

² A review of UK health research funding, Sir David Cooksey. HM Treasury, December 2006
http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/cooksey_review_index.htm

³ Report of the High Level Group on Clinical Effectiveness. Department of Health, October 2007.
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_079799

The shift in the way that care is now provided in the health service argues for a more community-wide outward facing focus for the NIHR CLAHRCs.

To address these issues, the pilot NIHR CLAHRCs will not simply focus on one academic organisation and its historic local NHS partner, but will comprise a partnership between Academia and the NHS across the widest possible local geographic area.

Purpose

- The purpose of the NIHR CLAHRCs funding is to forge a mutually beneficial, forward-looking partnership between a University⁴ and the surrounding NHS organisations, focused on improving patient outcomes through the conduct and application of applied health research.

Aims

- To develop an innovative model for conducting applied health research and translating research findings into improved outcomes for patients.
- To create a new, distributed model for the conduct and application of applied health research that links those who conduct applied health research with all those who use it in practice across the health community covered by the Collaboration.
- To create and embed approaches to research and its dissemination that are specifically designed to take account of the way that health care is increasingly delivered across sectors and across a wide geographical area.
- To increase the country's capacity to conduct high quality applied health research focused on the needs of patients, and particularly research targeted at chronic disease and public health interventions.
- To improve patient outcomes across the geographic area covered by the Collaboration.

Eligibility

- The NIHR invited applications from any NHS/University partnerships in England where winning such a bid would create a step function in the level of applied research for the partnership involved. This was unlikely to be the case for partnerships that were already in receipt of substantial blocks of investment from NIHR such as Research Centre awards.
- Applications needed to come from a single NHS organisation, acting on behalf of a consortium of the majority (if not all) local NHS organisations, in partnership with the local Higher Education Institution(s).

⁴ The term University is used here to include all Higher Education Institutions

Number

- The number of pilot NIHR Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care was not determined in advance. It was determined by the quality of the applications, in the light of the need not to spread the funding too thinly. A total of nine CLAHRCs were established.

Funding

- The total amount of NIHR funding awarded is £88m over five years.
- Each of the nine CLAHRCs will receive funding of up to £10 million over five years from NIHR. The successful applicants will also need to attract additional matched funding to at least the same level as the NIHR funding for which they were applying.
- The funding from the NIHR must only be used to support:
 - the conduct of high-quality applied health research focused on the needs of patients; and
 - activities to support the translation of research evidence into practice in the NHS for the benefit of patients, including the trialling and evaluation of initiatives to encourage adoption of evidence based practice or clinical effectiveness.
- Particular value was placed on research targeted at chronic disease and public health interventions.

Selection Process

- The NIHR CLAHRCs were selected through open competition, by an independent international Selection Panel.

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria were:

- the quality of the partnership's existing applied health research and particularly research targeted at chronic disease and public health interventions;
- the strength of the track record of partnership working between the University and the NHS organisations that comprise the consortium;
- the clarity and strength of the proposals for a programme of high-quality applied health research focused on the needs of patients;
- the clarity and strength of the proposals for activities to facilitate the implementation of research findings across the health community;
- the strength of the overall plan for the CLAHRCs, clearly describing how it will add value through a step change in the way that research is done and research evidence is implemented;
- value for money.

Implementation Timetable

- 23 October 2007 - published call for proposals.
- 31 January 2008 - deadline for receipt of applications.
- February 2008 - applications short-listed by Selection Panel.
- April 2008 - short-listed applicants interviewed by Selection Panel.
- May 2008 - successful applicants announced.
- 1 October 2008 - NIHR Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care started.

Further Information

Further information on NIHR CLAHRCs is available on the NIHR website at http://www.nihr.ac.uk/infrastructure/Pages/infrastructure_clahrcs.aspx.

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