



**National Institute for
Health Research**

BEST RESEARCH FOR BEST HEALTH

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 6.3b (established)

NIHR SERVICE DELIVERY AND ORGANISATION PROGRAMME

*Best Research for Best Health*¹ set out a 5-year Research and Development Strategy for the NHS in England. This Implementation Plan provides more details on one of the key components of that strategy: NIHR SERVICE DELIVERY AND ORGANISATION (SDO) PROGRAMME.

The NIHR SDO programme has been fully implemented.

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Aims

- The National Institute for Health Research Service Delivery and Organisation (NIHR SDO) programme aims to generate and promote the use of research evidence about improving services to increase the quality of patient care, ensure better patient outcomes, and contribute to improved population health. The new NHS National Institute for Innovation and Improvement is a key strategic partner of this programme.

Purpose

- The NIHR SDO programme improves health outcomes for people by:
 - commissioning research and producing research evidence that improves practice in relation to the organisation and delivery of health care, and
 - building capacity to carry out research amongst those who manage, organise and deliver services and improve their understanding of research literature and how to use research evidence.

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

- Priority areas for future research commissioning have been developed following an extensive opinion-gathering exercise in 2006/7 and now include:
 - Research utilisation and knowledge mobilisation by healthcare managers
 - End of life care
 - Management fellowships
 - Primary care and community healthcare services
 - Patient safety & quality
 - Emergency planning
 - Access to care
 - NHS financial efficiency and productivity.
- Research calls in these priority areas will reflect programme's remit to produce research that will support management practice in health care delivery. The programme will refresh its commissioning group membership and leadership to match these new priorities and to maintain the involvement of a range of stakeholders.
- A programme of activities to build capacity to promote research participation and uptake by organisational decision-makers is being developed through the SDO Knowledge Mobilisation and Capacity Building Strategy, one strand of which is the SDO network.
- The SDO website is being further developed to provide an accessible repository of research reports funded by the programme and to promote this internationally as a knowledge resource.

Funding

- The programme's annual budget is planned to grow to £12 million at maturity.

Process

- The programme continues to operate calls for proposals following topic identification and prioritisation. These generally follow an open, two-stage process with outline proposals prioritised according to their importance to the NHS and scientific merit prior to shortlisted full proposals being considered for funding. Other processes may be adopted from time to time using transparent assessment criteria.
- The programme will also operate in researcher-led mode with an open SDO Studies Call and regular closing dates. This will also follow the two-stage assessment process.
- The programme will launch a third workstream focussing on evaluating NHS initiatives and innovations in a hybrid model where the call will be for full proposals within a fast track commissioning process. The Evaluations work

stream will advertise a call in Autumn 2009 with a briefing meeting for interested parties also planned.

- Applications are welcome from researchers in the NHS, universities, consultancies and other research organisations.

Selection Criteria

- Applications are judged on the quality of the research proposed and on the significance and potential benefit of that research to the NHS and to patients.
- Service user involvement at all stages is encouraged
- Detailed guidance for applicants, including specific selection criteria, can be downloaded from www.sdo.nihr.ac.uk. Please check the website on a regular basis for the most up-to-date guidance and frequently asked questions.

Eligibility

- Applications can be submitted by an individual or institution.

Further Information

Further details about the NIHR SDO programme is available at www.sdo.nihr.ac.uk.

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