



BEST RESEARCH FOR BEST HEALTH

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 6.8 (previously 5.4) (established)

NIHR SCHOOL FOR PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH

*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: the NIHR School for Primary Care Research.

The NIHR School for Primary Care Research plan has been fully implemented.

Gateway Reference: 6050

Version: 5 (final)

Issue date: August 2007

Aim

- To increase the evidence-base for primary care practice.

Purpose

- To increase the volume of high-quality research focused on improving practice in primary care for the benefit of patients.
- To provide a focus for applied research in primary care within the National Institute for Health Research.

Nature

- The School for Primary Care Research is first research school to be established within the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).
- The School comprises the leading academic centres of primary care research in England.
- The Director of the NIHR has selected, following consultation, one of the members of the School to be the inaugural Director of the School.
- The funding for the School is to be used to support the conduct of clinical trials and other well-designed studies in primary care and at the interface with secondary 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

Selection Criteria

- The academic departments of primary care which were rated as 5 or 5* in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise were invited to become founding departments of the NIHR School for Primary Care Research.

Selection process

- The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has already judged the quality of the research conducted in English Higher Education Institutions through the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). NIHR minimised unnecessary bureaucracy by using the outcomes of this assessment to identify the leading university departments of primary care research.
- All departments of primary care that demonstrated that they were rated as 5 or 5* in the 2001 RAE were invited to submit a short statement to that effect.
- The DH Director General of Research and Development validated these statements and confirmed acceptance to the NIHR School of Primary Care Research.

Monitoring and Performance Management

- Appropriate arrangements have been established to advise the Director of the NIHR on the strategic direction and performance of the School.
- The School has produced a Business Plan, which has been agreed with the Director of the NIHR. The Business Plan sets out the research programme to be conducted by the School and the deployment of the human and financial resources to deliver it.
- The performance of the School as a whole, and of its constituent academic departments, will be reviewed regularly against the Business Plan by the Director of the NIHR.
- The continuation of an individual academic department as a member of the School will be dependent on satisfactory performance and future RAE results.

Future Development

- Following the next RAE (due in 2008), the membership of the School will be revised accordingly.

Eligibility

- All academic departments of primary care in England.

Funding

- The total amount of funding awarded is £3 million *per annum*.
- The amount of funding allocated to each academic department is determined by the scale and nature of the research activity to be conducted by that centre.

Duration

- Funding will be provided for the period covered by the RAE, subject to satisfactory performance.

Implementation Timetable

- The implementation timetable was as follows:
 - 25 Jan 2006 - R&D strategy published confirming intention to establish the NIHR School of Primary Care Research
 - 27 February 2006 - call released for academic departments to submit a statement confirming their eligibility
 - March 2006 - DH Director of R&D validated statements and confirmed acceptance of successful departments to the School of Primary Care Research (Manchester, Birmingham, Cambridge, Oxford and Bristol were confirmed as the five founding member departments)
 - April 2006 - Director of School of Primary Care Research selected (Professor Martin Roland, Manchester)
 - April 2006 - School started in shadow form
 - October 2006 - NIHR School of Primary Care Research started operation.

Further Information

- Further information on the NIHR School for Primary Care Research is available at: <http://www.nspcr.ac.uk>

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