UK Rapid Response Team

INVITATION TO SUBMIT APPLICATION

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out in detail the process for an open competition to designate and fund a UK Rapid Response Team (RRT), which will be delivered by an academic institution and Public Health England (PHE), and invites single academic institutions in the UK who wish to collaborate with PHE to submit an application for a UK Rapid Response Team. The Rapid Response Team will be part of the UK offer to low and middle income countries when support is needed to investigate a possible or known disease outbreak and help to control the threat before it becomes a national or international health emergency.

This competition will involve a two stage process:

Stage 1- This call invites those academic institutions in the UK interested in delivering a UK rapid response capability to disease outbreaks to submit an application. An independent Selection Panel will review applications and make recommendations to the Department of Health.

Stage 2- Involves the successful academic institution from Stage 1, working with PHE in the development of the final Terms of Reference for the team, including a detailed operational plan for the RRT and role definition for the Director. These negotiations will be facilitated and guided by Department of Health and NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF).

It is expected that funding of up to £20 million will be available over five years, from the UK Official Development Assistance (ODA), for the establishment of the UK Rapid Response Team. This funding will be split between Public Health England and the selected academic partner. The Department of Health will oversee a process to determine the allocation of funding between PHE and the academic partner. The exact division will be dependent on the final agreed division of labour. Please note: A funding request for this project has been submitted to HM Treasury and delivery will be contingent on a successful outcome from this ODA Spending Review bid which is expected to be confirmed in late November. Given the high priority of this work, there is a strong expectation that funding will be allocated. Should this not be the case potential bidders will be informed as soon as possible after the announcement (and well before the deadline for bids).

The Rapid Response Team is intended to be in place and operational by April 2016. The tender is being run through NIHR commissioning processes by the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF).

Further details about the process are on page 7 (Process and Timetable).

BACKGROUND

The Ebola response has highlighted the need for the international community to develop a mechanism that can support countries in investigating and responding to disease outbreaks that pose a global threat before they have the chance of becoming a global health emergency. The Prime Minister announced at the G7 Summer 2015 plans to develop a Rapid Response Team
(RRT) in the UK that can respond to invitations to investigate a possible or known disease outbreaks in low and middle income countries (LMICs) (https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-calls-for-wake-up-to-the-threat-from-disease-outbreak). The Department of Health has been tasked with developing the team in close consultation with other Whitehall departments, in particular the Department for International Development, as part of the UK contribution to Global Health Security and to complement WHO work on the Global Health Emergency Workforce.

The team will support leadership of outbreak response arrangements, drawing on their international experience of controlling outbreaks as well as advising on surveillance, detection and control arrangements in a culturally relevant context. In doing so they will generate data and provide specialist recommendations to national and international stakeholders; drawing on rigorous evidence on how best to respond.

If a wider clinical and emergency response is needed, the UK will also be able to activate a broader roster of healthcare reservists through a separate mechanism. In addition it is envisaged that a member of the Rapid Response Team will deploy alongside UKMED when they are called on, to provide public health expertise to emergency responses and humanitarian disasters which may not be specific disease outbreak responses – for example the Nepal earthquake.

The Rapid Response team will consist of an identified group at Public Health England and a selected academic partner from a UK institution. This will enable the team to provide expert field epidemiological, public health skills and logistical skills, as well as rigorous research capacity and analysis. The team will be able to draw on the PHE field epidemiology training programme and develop a pipeline of future international health responders and researchers. When not responding to a disease outbreak, the team will focus on operational research to better inform outbreak response. The team will also work towards building capacity for effective outbreak response in ODA eligible countries and strengthening local capabilities to meet the International Health Regulations (IHR).

The proposed Head of Rapid Response Research for the selected university (identified as part of the bidding process) will have responsibility for delivery of the designated work programme in the research contract. A Director for the Rapid Response Team overall will be appointed in early 2016 through a formal open selection process and will have oversight of both the selected research team and the relevant Public Health England staff. The Director's exact responsibilities will be defined at a later stage but are likely to include oversight and responsibility for deployment of the RRT. Although the Director will have overall responsibility for the full team, they are not expected to necessarily have both field response and research skill sets.

The Rapid Response Team tender
Bidders are expected to suggest a model of operation as part of the procurement process. It is anticipated that at least when deployed to a disease outbreak – the team will hold Her Majesty’s Government (HMG) contracts with the relevant duty of care for the team members.

The setup costs, maintenance, training, deployment and salaries of the team will be supported from ODA funding – representing part of the UK’s Official Development Assistance budget and contributing to the UK commitment to spending 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on international development activities (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/official-development-assistance-oda--2). Research costs are likely to require grant applications, or joining in existing research led by others at the institution.
ROLE OF UK RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

The Rapid Response Team will be a standing capacity of multidisciplinary public health professionals (and researchers) that can deploy to a possible or known disease outbreak within 48 hours either at the request of an ODA country or the WHO through the Global Outbreak and Response Alert Network (GOARN).

The role of the UK Rapid Response Team when deployed to an outbreak will be to:

- Deploy within 48 hours of request;
- Investigate a possible or known disease outbreak in an ODA eligible country or at the request of the WHO; supporting the implementation of appropriate control measures with speed and where possible using standard operating procedures (SOPs);
- Provide a risk assessment (articulating the nature of the disease and threat posed), a needs assessment (articulating the need to respond and any gaps in country capacity to respond effectively), support the leadership of the outbreak response arrangements provide early (leadership of response arrangements, diagnostics, surveillance, data modelling), support the recovery stage (advising on scientifically sound public health approaches to transition, undertaking lessons learning activities and implementing capacity building initiatives);
- Undertake operational health service research and outbreak response research in the field to help inform the current and future public health response required to contain, control, resolve and ultimately recover from the disease outbreak.

When not responding to an outbreak:

- Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for use in the field;
- Join in-country public health specialists and health service research teams to develop skills in a low resource context;
- Generate an evidence base for international disease interventions, learning, tools and recommendations for future responses;
- Ensure evidence and learning on best practice, innovative practices and tools to respond to a disease outbreak are disseminated widely and applied during an outbreak response;
- Undertake capacity building activities in ODA eligible countries that have identified weaknesses in their ability to respond to a disease outbreak; developing public health and research capacities to respond to an outbreak – including working with WHO on this as part of the WHO Global Health Emergency Workforce and supporting the country to meet their IHR core capabilities;
- Develop and deliver public health pre-deployment training on outbreak response activities and public health emergency measures for clinical care e.g. barrier nursing and proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE), for other health professionals on the UK roster for emergency medical teams and those being sent overseas as part of a global health response;
- Train and develop the future health response workforce;
- Directly complement the work of the WHO on developing the Global Health Emergency Workforce and form part of the UK contribution to this function.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE UK RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

The Rapid Response Team must be willing to:

- Work collectively between both delivery partners (PHE and the selected university partner) and the Department of Health to develop an agreed operational plan and defined Terms of Reference for the RRT;
• Deploy within 48 hours of a request to investigate a public health threat and feedback information to the national stakeholders and the international system that could inform a wider healthcare response if needed;
• Make informed recommendations to national governments and WHO on measures to control and prevent further recurrences;
• Spend a considerable amount of time (approx. 50%) in low and middle income countries, either conducting operational field research (including logistical, anthropological, health service research) or when deployed to investigate an outbreak.

**SCOPE OF THE AWARD**

Funding will be awarded to a single academic institution that, with PHE, will form the Rapid Response Team. Funding will be used to develop a team of public health specialists and researchers who can:

• Deploy to investigate international disease outbreaks within 48 hours;
• Undertake important operational health service and outbreak response research to generate an evidence base on ‘how best to respond to future outbreaks.’

The purpose of the funding is to meet the salary and infrastructure costs incurred by the university/PHE partnership in establishing the RRT and carrying out an ODA eligible programme of:

• Operational research to inform a specific disease outbreak response;
• Operational health service and outbreak response research that contributes to lessons learning and capacity building;
• Broader research into infectious diseases with epidemic potential, surveillance capability and disease response interventions in low and middle income countries.

**The core deployable team**

It is expected that the core deployable team will involve up to ten members of staff with the capacity to draw upon on specific skills from additional staff if required. A proportion of the core team or all of the core team must be able to, at any given time, deploy within 48 hours of request or notification of an international outbreak of concern. It is expected the core team will include one logistics/data administrator to support the public health specialists while deployed. It is also envisaged that the core team would spend a considerable amount of time (approx. 50 %) in low and middle income countries.

In addition, it is envisaged that the team will be supported by a wider network of public health specialists and experts from a range of disciplines in disease outbreak response and research. Bidders are expected to indicate where this network could be drawn from, for example – academics from other related departments; other academic institutions; partnerships with institutions in developing countries; and NGO’s.

**UK based programme support**

It is envisaged that the core deployable team will require a set amount of UK based support. This RRT operations team will include a Director of the UK Rapid Response Team, a Programme Manager and a Deployments Manager. The Director will be appointed by the Department of Health through a formal selection process once the successful academic institution has been selected, in consultation with the academic institution and PHE.
ELIGIBILITY: UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

All academic institutions in the UK are eligible to apply.

In order to ensure critical mass, focus and clarity, the funding for the RRT will be awarded to a single academic institution that, with PHE, will form the Rapid Response Team. It will be permissible to involve one or, exceptionally, two additional universities in the RRT bid, provided the reasons for doing so are justified. In addition, a public sector partner with a strong research portfolio and which can bring added value can also form part of the bid. Lead applicants and the centre of gravity for the RRT are expected to be located within the UK, although applications may include collaborators from outside the UK. It will be permissible to pass funding to the other partners/collaborators involved in the work of the RRT via a subcontract, provided that there are good reasons for doing so and these are justified in the application.

The RRT will be led by a single academic lead, who will have a contractual relationship with the academic partner and who will work in partnership with the Director of the UK Rapid Response Team. The public health specialists and experts in this field may be employed by either the academic partner or by PHE. During procurement of the rapid response team, an interim Director will be appointed to oversee the development of the project. Following the negotiations of the final terms of reference between PHE and the university partner, a Director will be appointed by the Department of Health through an open formal selection process. The interim Director and the newly appointed Head of Rapid Response Research will be eligible to apply for the Director position.

FUNDING

Dependent on spending review outcomes, funding will be awarded for a five year period (starting 1 April 2016). Costings for the proposed RRT are to be included.

- The total amount of funding available for this competition will be up to £20 million over a five year period to be split between Public Health England and the selected academic institution.
- It is envisaged that at least 40% of the rapid response team budget would be awarded to the successful academic institution. This figure may be higher depending on the agreed division of activities and responsibilities.
- The amount of funding allocated will be informed by the scale, nature and quality of the research activity to be conducted by the academic institution, and the division of labour agreed between the academic institution and PHE.
- The application must set out how the funding will be used to support the establishment of the RRT and related activities. The setup costs, staff salaries, maintenance, training, deployment and research of the team will be supported by the funding.
- It is not permissible for the funding to be used to undertake public health or infectious disease research that is not explicitly related to or applicable to ODA counties. In these cases, or complex research with significant laboratory or other costs, the team would be required to source additional funding to cover the research, staff time and administrative support time.
- The team will be expected to report regularly on their activities to confirm their applicability to ODA eligible countries.

Continuation of funding over the five-year contract period will depend upon satisfactory performance, as determined by the Department of Health.

Applications should be costed at current (2015/16) prices, based on current salary scales and scale increments. Annual salary increments or other equivalent pay increases should be included in future years but not any other anticipated pay increases (e.g. nationally agreed pay awards). Do
not include uplift(s) for inflation. Should an award be made, the award may be uplifted annually, depending upon the budget available. In all cases, value for money of the proposal will be an important criterion.

Once the award has been made, the Department of Health will require the academic institution hosting the award to provide regular financial statements regarding the use of the funds under the scheme. The Department reserves the right to send independent auditors to the host institution to confirm the actual use of funds. The research programme and hence funding eligibility will be agreed with DH on an annual rolling basis.

Eligible costs – staff of the RRT including:

- Research staff engaged in relevant research;
- Research support staff supporting relevant research (as long as part of the RRT);
- Other, legitimate and reasonable indirect costs, e.g. accommodation, travel, payroll, HR, finance.
- Limited Non-pay research costs;

The RRT award will fund the following costs:

**Staff Salaries**
The time of staff engaged in RRT work undertaken within the scope for the programme. Salaries may be sought for research, research support or other staff (from all professional groups) and research trainees required to work full or part time on the RRT programme.

The expectation is that the funding will be used to support posts employed by (or funded by) the academic institution, and that any newly established posts created with funding from this scheme will be employed by the host organisation.

**Non-Pay Costs**
Non-pay expenditure required to carry out the approved research programme, including:

- Travel and subsistence;
- Software licences;
- Equipment costing less than £5,000;
- Equipment maintenance contracts;
- Consumables (limited lab capacity).

**Indirect Research**
The award will fund legitimate and reasonable, indirect costs within the academic institution, including the proportion of the costs of accommodation used for the RRT, and an appropriate proportion of HR, payroll, and finance costs. Please note that Full Economic Costs (FEC) will not be applied. Bidders should also consider the cost of travel and accommodation when undertaking operational research in low and middle income countries when not deployed to an outbreak – if suggesting specific country research models.

**Ineligible costs**
Funding will not normally be provided to meet the costs of animal research, significant laboratory research, or other work which is not related to the RRT programme of work. NHS Support Costs and Treatment Costs are not covered by this funding and should not be included in the funding requested.

The Department of Health are working towards ensuring many of the logistical requirements of the team will be pre-arranged by the time the unit is operational, this includes insurance, evacuation,
pre-deployment security training, security when in country, visas and deployment packs. Costings should not include these in their costs.

PROCESS AND TIMETABLE

The RRT will be selected by open competition.

The timetable will be:

- 21 October 2015: Publish Invitation to Submit Applications. This invites those academic institutions in the UK who are interested in delivering a UK rapid response capability to disease outbreaks to complete a standardised application form.
- 19 November 2015: Information session for potential academic institution applicants. This will be run by the DH/NIHR CCF.
- 17 December 2015: Deadline for receipt of applications from academic institutions.
- January 2016: Selection Panel reviews applications and makes recommendations on which university, on the basis of the Application, appears to best meet the selection criteria.
- January 2016: Department of Health confirms selected academic institution.
- January 2016: Development of final terms of reference with PHE and contracting process initiated.
- April 2016: Funding for Rapid Response Team commences.
- May 2016: Rapid Response Team is operational.

Stage 1 - RRT applications will be considered by an international Selection Panel, who will make recommendations on designation. As part of a separate process, Public Health England will in parallel submit a bid to DH outlining their capacity to undertake key aspects of the scope of work.

Stage 2 - When the academic partner has been selected, it will then sit with Public Health England in negotiations facilitated by the Department of Health, to agree the division of labour for the entire project between the two parties. This will result in the submission of final Terms of Reference, detailing roles and responsibilities and the division of funds. The terms of reference will be reviewed by the Department of Health, including the Chief Medical Officer and either revised in consultation with the two delivery partners or approved at this stage. The terms of reference will define the final operating model and governance arrangements for the team.

An information session for potential academic applicants will be held on 19 November 2015, at Wellington House, Department of Health, London.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria will be:

- The track record and experience in delivering outbreak response capacity and capability in low and middle income countries;
• The track record in supporting relevant programmes in low and middle income countries;
• The volume and quality of relevant internationally-excellent relevant research and researchers, public health specialists, and multidisciplinary experts;
• The track record in developing and delivering relevant public health training programmes in relevant low and middle income countries and plans for capacity building;
• The track record and ability to work collaboratively both nationally and internationally with other sectors engaged in public health responses, service delivery and research;
• The strength of the operational model proposed;
• The proposed commitment and contribution to the RRT;
• Value for money.

The overarching principles for NIHR funding of transparency, competition and contestability will also be applied.

INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED

To assess against the selection criteria outlined above, we require information from academic institutions in the following areas:

1. Details of the proposed RRT

Please provide details of the applying academic institution and partners, to include:

• Details of the lead academic institution;
• Details of the proposed academic lead;
• Where applicable, details of the additional university(s) and/or public sector partners involved in the RRT.

2. Plain English Summary (300-750 words)

In plain English, present the specific aims of the RRT. The summary should explain to a lay reader the goals and objectives of the RRT and potential impact the proposal will have when delivered. The plain English summary is aimed at members of the public, rather than researchers or professionals. It should be written clearly and simply, without jargon and with an explanation of any technical terms that have been included.

3. Operational plan

• An outline of the proposed operational plan to support a rapid response function and undertake relevant operational research (including health service, anthropological, logistical, epidemiological, political research).
• An outline of the proposed research programme and geographical coverage that would be pursued should the applicant be selected and how this fits into the overall aims of the initiative.
• A description of the existing information management platforms that would be deployed by the team and arrangements for their maintenance and development.
• The expertise and intended roles of all named partners and collaborators.
• How the partners will work together to deliver the aims of the RRT.
• A brief description of research dissemination plans.
• Evidence that the bidder is cognisant of and will take an approach sensitive to the challenges posed by anti-microbial resistance.
• A brief description of plans for patient and public involvement and engagement, in both outbreak response work and operational research.
4. *Overview of existing relevant outbreak response activity*

- The volume and quality of relevant internationally-excellent research and researchers.
- The existing strengths and track record in conducting relevant outbreak response in low and middle income countries.
- Three examples over the last five year period of successful outbreak response in low and middle income countries.
- Success in navigating local ethical and regulatory boards and existing links in low and middle income countries.
- Track record of undertaking research in low resource, challenging and potentially dangerous settings.
- Track record in developing data analyses to aid on the ground decision making and inform operational processes.
- Track record in developing public health capacity building initiatives in low and middle income countries.

5. *Researchers*

Please describe the leadership and expertise demonstrated by the proposed Academic Lead and key researchers, including the following:

- Evidence that they are at the forefront of their fields;
- Evidence of their ability to influence the practice of outbreak response delivery in low and middle income countries;
- Their respective track records in terms of a) publication output, b) success at attracting external research funding and c) conducting successful relevant research in low and middle income countries;
- A Curriculum Vitae for the proposed Head of Rapid Response Research and for each of the key researchers who will actively be involved in the RRT.

6. *Collaboration and partnerships*

- The track record of the academic institution in working collaboratively with others, and future ability and appetite to work collaboratively with other sectors and non-government organisations (NGO’s) engaged in public health.
- A brief description of existing partnerships, programmes or agreements in place with relevant eligible ODA countries.

7. *Training & capacity building*

- An overview and relevant evidence of the academic institution’s excellence in providing and delivering relevant public health training programmes in the UK and in low and middle income countries.
- Plans to develop public health training and pre-deployment training in preparation and response to a health emergency.
- How the academic institution plans to develop capacity building activities in eligible ODA countries.

8. *Deployment of resources*

- The financial or other contribution from the lead academic institution and any named partners.
- Justification for the types of expenditure for the RRT.
- Breakdown for the resources requested.
• A statement of how the staff capacity would be adapted in the event of a major outbreak response incident.
• A suggestion of how the academic partner could work with PHE most effectively to deliver the Rapid Response Team.

9. Confidentiality

Applications are considered confidential by the NIHR CCF and all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that this confidentiality is not breached. Further information and guidance can be found within the Confidentiality and Guidance Document.

10. Declarations and Signatures

A declaration signed by representatives of the academic institution stating that they fully endorse the application and that appropriate support will be provided to the RRT should the application be successful.

OTHER INFORMATION

Governance arrangements

Appropriate arrangements will be established to advise the Department of Health on the strategic direction and performance of the RRT. The Department of Health will review the performance of the RRT regularly against the overall operational plan, agreed research plan and annual delivery plans.

Until a Director is appointed, Public Health England will appoint an Interim Director from its staff who will be able to sit alongside the Head of Rapid Response Research proposed from the selected academic institution. At this stage of the RRT development, the Interim Director and Head of Rapid Response Research will report to the Senior Reporting Officers for the programme - Director for Health Protection and Emergency Response (DH) and the Medical Director (PHE). Once a Director is appointed, he/she will take this position as lead for the team.

It is envisaged that the appointed Director will report to the Chief Medical Officer (DH) and the Medical Director (PHE) as an oversight group, escalating decisions where necessary and submitting annual delivery plans and reports as required. Both staff from the academic institution and Public Health England will form a core deployable team and be accountable to the RRT Director. The Director will have an obligation to inform a cross-Whitehall group of stakeholders on the team’s deployments to outbreaks, and to ensure full transparency and sharing of data/information during in country work.

The NIHR Central Commissioning Facility will hold the contract with the academic institution and manage contractual issues with oversight and input from the RRT Director.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

Academic institutions that are interested in being considered for the UK Rapid Response Team should complete and submit the application using the CCF Research Management System (RMS) accessed at https://ccfrms.nihr.ac.uk/

Members of the Selection Panel are bound by confidentiality and are not able to discuss this scheme with applicants. Any enquiries should be sent to Frederica Longfoot (frederica.longfoot@nihr.ac.uk).
A live document containing frequently asked questions about the Raid Response Team will be available from the NIHR CCF website at: http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/uk-rapid-response-team.htm.

An information session for potential academic applicants will be held on 19 November 2015, at Wellington House, Department of Health, London. Up to two people from each institution are invited to attend. To confirm your attendance, please contact Tina Hunt (tina.hunt@nihr.ac.uk) by 12 November 2015.

We wish to ensure that applicants fully understand what is needed in their applications before submission. We are therefore very happy to respond to requests for clarification from the application lead or their nominated person. We cannot, of course, provide advice on what an applicant should say or how they should say it.

Applicants are reminded that during busy periods, such as close to a competition deadline, it could take slightly longer to submit your application. It is likely that during such periods, our helpline will be receiving a very high volume of calls. We therefore advise that you do not leave your submission until the last 24 hours.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The deadline for submitting applications is Thursday 17 December 2015 at 1:00pm. No applications can be accepted after this deadline. The ‘wet ink’ Declarations and Signature section of the application form should be received by NIHR CCF on Wednesday 23 December 2015, and sent to:

Dr Mags Sara
NIHR Central Commissioning Facility
Grange House
15 Church Street
Twickenham
TW1 3NL

GUIDANCE ON USING THE RESEARCH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO COMPLETE THE RAPID RESPONSE APPLICATION FORM

To be able to submit an application you must complete all the relevant sections of the online form managed by the Central Commissioning Facility Research Management System (CCF RMS), accessed at https://ccfrms.nihr.ac.uk/

Please note that a list of specific questions and answers relevant to each call will be provided and updated regularly on the CCF RMS. To access this list, go to ‘Home’, then ‘New grant application’, ‘Open funding rounds’ and click on the ‘More info’ link.

- **Registration**
  - Only registered users of the system can apply and applicants should follow the online prompts and system help guidance for specific issues.

- **Managing your details**
  - The home page is your starting point to create applications or to update your details, including your professional and academic CV. Applicants and key researchers can manage their CVs in ‘Manage My Details’. Please note your CV details are considered mandatory for submission and will automatically be included in the application.
• **Creating an application**
The Lead Applicant must create the application, but it can be jointly completed by the Lead Applicant and any key researchers. Other Key Researchers may be added to the application at any time. When a Key Researcher is added, the RMS will automatically email them to invite their participation. Key Researchers can then decide whether to accept their inclusion, and later to consent to the application being submitted jointly in their name. Please note that all Key Researchers must accept their invitation to participate in the application by the submission deadline in order for the application to be eligible for submission.

• **Completing an application**
The different sections of the application form are displayed as a menu down the left-hand side of the screen. To complete the application all sections must be completed. You can move from page to page using the ‘Previous’ and ‘Next’ buttons, or using the menu on the left-hand side.

Remember to save your work. You will be prompted to do so if you leave the screen but it is always good practice to save work often in case of computer problems. **You can save and return to the application form as often as you like before the submission deadline.**

The system will prevent your key researchers from accessing your application at the same time as you. This stops applicants and key researchers inadvertently making changes to the same part of the application at the same time and overwriting each other’s work.

• **Exiting and returning to work on your form**
Should you wish to exit the application form, you can return to it at any time; simply log in using your username and password and select ‘My Applications’ from the menu. You will then be presented with a list of all the applications you are currently involved with as well as details of their stage in the submission process.

• **Technical difficulties**
If you encounter any technical difficulties please refer to the 'Systems help' document which is located at the bottom on the left hand menu in the research management system. This document sits on every page of the research management system and outlines various technical difficulties and solutions.

If the ‘System help' document does not help you to resolve your technical difficulty, then applicants are asked to follow the procedure below:
- Take a screen shot of the problem. This can be done by pressing the ‘Print Screen' button on your keyboard and then pasting the content either in a word document or directly into an email.
- Immediately email the CCF (frederica.longfoot@nihr.ac.uk) ensuring to include both the print screen image and a detailed description of the technical issue.
- Someone at the CCF will respond to your email as soon as possible. Please continue working on your application if possible.

**Technical Faults**
- The CCF will provide as much help to applicants as possible, but are not held responsible for applicants missing the deadline, unless there is a technical fault with the RMS.
- If applicants genuinely believe that there is a technical fault with the RMS which has led to them missing a submission deadline, they should provide a detailed description of the problems encountered and we will then initiate a formal review to determine whether the RMS was at fault. We are able to look at a key stroke system audit to investigate further. This is a detailed log of all activities carried out on an application. We will then communicate the outcome of this review to the applicant.
• Submission and beyond
When the application form is complete it must be ‘validated’ prior to submission. This will highlight any omissions in the form, and provide you with the opportunity to correct them. It will also highlight where you have exceeded any word counts. After successful validation the Lead Applicant may submit the application.

The Lead Applicant can preview the progress of their application at any time by selecting the ‘View/Print’ option to generate the application as a PDF file.

• On completion of validation
Upon submission, the application automatically enters the process of being considered for funding, which begins after the commissioning round closes.

An information session for potential academic applicants will be held on 19 November 2015, at Wellington House, Department of Health, London. Up to two people from each institution are invited to attend. To confirm your attendance, please contact Tina Hunt (tina.hunt@nihr.ac.uk) by 12 November 2015.

APPENDIX A

CCF Research Management System: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Initial Registration and CV Completion

Q: I was registered on your previous system. Why doesn’t the new system recognise my password?
Q: I have registered online and got a reply back to say that an email would be sent with registration details but nothing has come through.
Q: I have registered as a new user and received my temporary log in details but the system will not allow me to log in.
Q: I cannot log in to the system despite having done so previously. I have tried the ‘forgotten password’ option but received an error message.
Q: Where do I enter CV details and can I alter/update these details (including changing institution name)?
Q: One of my key researchers is too busy to add their own details and they want someone else to do this for them. Can someone who is not on the applications do it for them without becoming a key researcher?
Q: I am coordinating this bid for the lead applicant. I have registered and accessed the application form, but now appear as the lead applicant. Can I change this without having to start all over again?

System Usage

Q: Where can I find guidance to help me complete this online application form?
Q: I am having difficulty fitting my response into the online form within prescribed world limits.
Q: The system closed while I was in the middle of working in it. What shall I do?
Q: Can I generate a Word format document of the application form, so that I can circulate it to key researchers to complete and then cut and paste the information onto the on-line form?
Q: Is there a way to print out the application?
Q: With the declarations and signatures form, the guidance states that signatories will receive an email notifying them of how to approve the application. What will this email say?
Key Researchers

Q: How do I invite key researchers to be able to access this application? I understand they need to be able to input their CV but am unclear how that is done.
Q: How many key researchers can be invited to join the application?
Q: I am trying to add key researchers but the relevant individuals have not received the emails inviting them.
Q: I am trying to add a key researcher but cannot find the individual I wish to invite on the system.
Q: I have been sent an invitation to participate as a key researcher on an application. How do I proceed?
Q: I have been sent an invitation to be a key researcher on an application, but I cannot access my account. The system says that my account already exists and I cannot proceed.
Q: My colleagues are having difficulty accessing the system to approve our application (they are out of the country). Could you approve the application on their behalf?
Q: I am a key researcher on the project and am very pressed for time but want to be a part of this bid. What is the key content that I will need to provide in the on-line CV that will benefit the application?
Q: One of the key researchers I am trying to invite has multiple work addresses and I want to enter a different address to his default one. Is this possible without creating another account?

Completing the online application form

Q: Is it possible that more than one application might be funded per call?
Q: Can I access my key researchers’ CVs?
Q: I am on the ‘Research details’ page and our particular institution is not on the list of ‘Host organisations (which will administer the award)’. How should I proceed with completing the application form?
Q: The application asks for my UK Rapid Response Team name. What is this?
Q: The Finance page asks me to use the Financial Plan Template excel form and upload it as a PDF. How do I access this form and upload it?
Q: I tried to log in to the online application form but a key researcher forgot to save their changes. The system tells me that if I enter their data 'may be lost'. Can I get into the form and save his changes?

General Guidance

Q: How do I access the CCF RMS?
Q: How do I contact the CCF team for advice on any queries that may not be covered here?

Illustrated guidance

How to confirm and approve your participation
Q: I have been invited to become a key researcher, went to the link on the email to accept, but there is nothing pointing me to accepting the invitation. What do I need to do?
Initial Registration and CV Completion

Q: I was registered on your previous system. Why doesn’t the new system recognise my password?

A: This is a brand new Research Management System (RMS). While no records or contacts were ‘lost’ in the transition to our new system, every individual must register as a ‘New User’ when first using the CCF RMS.

Q: I have registered online and got a reply back to say that an email would be sent with registration details but nothing has come through.

A: The CCF RMS will automatically send out an e-mail confirming that you have registered your details. Following a review by staff at CCF, you will receive a further e-mail confirming that your RMS Portal account has been validated and issuing a temporary password. Please change this password when you next log into the system.

If you have provided too little information when you first registered, you will be sent an e-mail asking for any additional details required; at a minimum your name, position held, institution and address will be required for registration. Your account can be validated once you have provided these details.

If you have not received any e-mails from ccfrms@lgc.co.uk then it may be that your spam mail filters have prevented these e-mails from reaching you. We recommend that CCF RMS users ensure that this e-mail address is added into their e-mail account’s ‘safe senders’ list.

Q: I have registered as a new user and received my temporary log in details but the system will not allow me to log in.

A: Your CCF RMS Portal account will be locked if you try to log in incorrectly too many times. Please call the CCF (020 8843 7114) and ask for your locked Portal account to be reset. You will then be sent an e-mail containing a new temporary password. Use this temporary password to log in and then change the password.

Q: I cannot log in to the system despite having done so previously. I have tried the ‘forgotten password’ option but received an error message.

A: It is likely that you have locked yourself out of system as a result of trying to log in too many times. The ‘forgotten password’ option will thus not allow you to enter the system any more. Please contact the CCF (020 8843 7114) and ask for your locked Portal account to be reset. You will be sent an e-mail containing a new temporary password, which will need to be changed when you next log in to the system.

Q: Where do I enter CV details and can I alter/update these details (including changing institution name)?

A: If you need to enter CV details (including making updates or alterations to your CV such as a change of institution you are affiliated with), this can be done by entering the ‘Manage my Details’ tab on the left hand side menu once you are logged in to the Research Management System Portal account home page. There is an option to ‘Update CV’ and any details entered here will be ‘pulled through’ into any applications you are participating/leading on.

If you are new to this Research Management System, please register the institution details you would like to see reflected in your application form during the registration process, again using the ‘Manage my Details’ section. These details will be held for you until such time as you update them.
Please encourage key researchers to complete/update their own on-line CV. Lead applicants can view key researchers’ CVs but not edit them.

Q: One of my key researchers is too busy to add their own details and they want someone else to do this for them. Can someone who is not on the grant do it for them without becoming a key researcher?

A: Only the account holder is able to manipulate their basic info/CV details. However, there is nothing stopping them from sharing their log in details with someone else to allow that person to do this for them.

Q: I am coordinating this bid for the lead applicant. I have registered and accessed the application form, but now appear as the lead applicant. Can I change this without having to start all over again?

A: No, I’m afraid not. This Research Management System works on the premise that the individual applying for a new application is doing so as the lead applicant. This is very much an email-driven (contacts) system and the lead applicant, if not already registered, needs to apply for the application themselves. There is nothing to stop the lead applicant then sharing their log in details with you if they wish to.

System Usage

Q: Where can I find guidance to help me complete this online application form?

A: A document giving more detailed guidance can be found by clicking on ‘Applicant Guidance’ in the left hand menu bar.

Q: I am having difficulty fitting my response into the online form within prescribed word limits.

A: Word limits are denoted by a word counter within each of the online text boxes. This will not only count the words entered/pasted in but will also highlight when you have gone over the limit.

Word limits for all questions have been specifically configured to ensure that an adequate amount of information can be populated as relevant for each research programme. We are not able to increase these word limits. To do so would give individual applicants unfair advantage.

Q: The system closed while I was in the middle of working in it. What shall I do?

A: The system is only ever purposefully taken down for maintenance. Portal users will always be advised of when such activities are planned and how long this maintenance is scheduled to last. Users will also be informed that they should save and exit the system for this down time.

When you navigate from one tab to another on the online application form, the work completed on the last tab should automatically save. If you have recently not moved from one tab to another, and have not saved the content of the tab you are working on, you can lose your work. Please save your work regularly as a matter of course.

Q: Can I generate a Word format document of the application form, so that I can circulate it to key researchers to complete and then cut and paste the information onto the on-line form?

A: Unfortunately, this is not possible. Applications are now made solely via an online form. If a number of people need to work on the online form at the same time (such as key researchers), the
lead applicant should invite the relevant individuals as key researchers onto the application, such that they can make changes/suggestions directly onto the online form.

As well as applicants being able to making changes directly to the online form there are further helpful tools including:

• ‘Journal entry’ - applicants can leave notes or attach documents for others to review
• ‘Change history’ - summarises (by colour coding and time stamping) the various sections of the application form that have recently been amended, including details of who made amendments to which section(s) and when.

Q: Is there a way to print out the application?

A: Yes. On the application summary screen, on the right hand side, there are a number of grey boxes. The second of these grey boxes from the top says ‘pdf’ with an option to ‘View/Print’. By selecting this, applicants will be able to view the application form as a pdf at any time and print it if necessary.

Q: With the declarations and signatures form, the guidance states that signatories will receive an email notifying them of how to approve the application. What will this email say?

A: Whilst the functionality to allow electronic signatures is in development, the application form will at present need to be completed online before printing off a copy of the completed form as a pdf (generated by selecting view/print on the main summary screen online) and having the paper copy of the declarations & signatures page signed.

In answer to your question, signatories will be directed to print off a hard copy of the declarations & signatures page, sign it in wet ink and send it to the CCF by 23 December 2015. This is the only page of the application form that must be sent to the CCF.

Key Researchers

Q: How do I invite key researchers to be able to access this application? I understand they need to be able to input their CV but am unclear how that is done.

A: The CCF RMS has made it possible for a new approach to be taken in managing the involvement of key researchers. Under the ‘Key Researchers’ tab of your on-line application form there are tools for finding your colleagues in our database of contacts and for sending out an automatic invitation email to them to take part in your application.

Please instruct your colleagues to look out for an e-mail invitation from ccfrms@lgc.co.uk. To confirm formally that they will be a key researcher, your colleagues will need to log on to the RMS, and follow the ‘your applications’ link on their RMS Portal account home page. Please also encourage key researchers to complete their own on-line CV; the on-line CV form can be reached via the ‘Manage my details’ link in the toolbar on the left hand side of their RMS Portal account home page.

Key researchers can review and edit the on-line application form once they have confirmed their involvement. Then, later, when they are satisfied with the content of the application, each key researcher will need to click on the ‘Approve’ button for your application, accessed through the ‘My co-applications’ tab in the toolbar.

As the lead applicant, the ‘Key researcher details’ section of the application form allows you to monitor which of your key researchers are yet to ‘Confirm’ their involvement or ‘Approve’ the
application. In addition, you can see who still needs to complete their CV by using the ‘View/print’ option to produce pre-submission versions of the application.

We strongly encourage you to advise the key researchers to approve the application well in advance of the submission deadline and certainly in advance of any scheduled absence that may overlap with this deadline.

**Q: How many key researchers can be invited to join the application?**

**A:** There is not a limit to how many individuals can be included within an application as Key Researchers. The system has a built-in tool that enables lead applicants to search the key researchers from the extensive list of researchers in the CCF RMS contact database.

**Q: I am trying to add key researchers but the relevant individuals have not received the emails inviting them.**

**A:** Please encourage your colleagues to look through their e-mail inboxes. It could be that their spam filters may have blocked the message. We recommend that CCF RMS users ensure that the e-mail address ccfrms@lgc.co.uk is added to their e-mail account’s ‘safe senders’ list.

**Q: I am trying to add a key researcher but cannot find the individual I wish to invite on the system.**

**A:** As a general rule, if your key researcher is already present on our database you just need to search the contact records (within the ‘add key researcher’ pop up box located within the application form), ensuring that you enter both forename and surname. This will bring up a list of the person(s) you are searching for.

If you cannot find your key researcher in this way, you may need to refine your search. The search function is only able to display 10 matches, so it is best to refine your search as far as possible.

If your colleague abbreviates his or her forename, this may be the reason why your initial search did not succeed (for example instead of searching for Tony, try Anthony).

In the situation where the individual is indeed “unknown” to us you will need to select the ‘contact not found?’ option and type in their e-mail address (together with the forename and surname) and send out the invitation that way.

Finally, if the e-mail address entered prompts the RMS message ‘this email address already exists within the system’ then return to the previous screen and refine your search as suggested above. If you are still having problems, contact the CCF.

**Q: I have been sent an invitation to participate as a key researcher on an application. How do I proceed?**

**A:** If you have not previously accessed this Research Management System you will need to access the system as a new user and register. Once successfully registered, you will be able to access the (co-) application to confirm your participation.

Once you have logged into the CCF RMS, select the link called ‘Home’ in the toolbar on the left hand side of the web page. In the centre of this web page you will find a list of all the applications that you are involved with. Select the ‘click here’ link, beside the entry on the list for this particular application. On the right hand side of the next web page is a button labelled ‘Confirm’ which you will need to click on. It will then be possible for you to review and edit the on-line application form in collaboration with the lead applicant and the application team.
Please support the lead applicant by completing your on-line CV in the ‘Manage my details’ section of your CCF RMS Portal account. The information that you enter will be automatically added into the final application form.

In addition, all invited key researchers will need to have ‘approved’ the application before it can be submitted by the lead applicant. Therefore, when you are satisfied with the application, select the ‘Approve’ option on the applications web page, reached through the ‘my co-applications’ tab. Doing this will greatly ease the pressure that falls on the lead applicant in the run up to the deadline.

Q: I have been sent an invitation to be a key researcher on an application, but I cannot access my account. The system says that my account already exists and I cannot proceed.

A: Please register on the CCF RMS as a ‘New User’. You will need to provide further brief details in the online registration form: name, position held, institution and the institution’s address. These details will be reviewed and validated by CCF staff. You will then be sent a temporary password that will allow you to log into the system. Please follow the instructions on the web pages to confirm your willingness to become a key researcher for the application in question.

Q: My colleagues are having difficulty accessing the system to approve our application (they are out of the country). Could you approve the application on their behalf?

A: It is not the policy of the CCF to undertake the confirmation/approvals process on behalf of any key researchers invited to participate on research bids. Our advice would be to keep the names of these individuals on the application for as long as possible (giving yourself reasonable time to submit) to ensure they have every opportunity to comply before the deadline. However, if there are still problems you can easily remove the relevant individuals from the application in order to submit it. You can enter a note within the case for support section to explain the situation.

Q: I am a key researcher on the project and am very pressed for time but want to be a part of this bid. What is the key content that I will need to provide in the on-line CV that will benefit the application?

A: Your CV can be edited at any time prior to submission, though it is important not to leave this too close to the deadline. Having logged into the RMS system, the on-line CV form can be reached via the ‘Manage my details’ link in the toolbar on the left hand side of the web page. You will need to enter details of your education, employment, publications and grants in order to help the lead applicant demonstrate the quality of the proposed project team.

If you have an extensive publication record and are truly pressed for time, we recommend that those publications most relevant to this area of research are included. The CV can actually only be a maximum of 4 pages long.

Q: One of the key researchers I am trying to invite has multiple work addresses and I want to enter a different address to his default one. Is this possible without creating another account?

A: Yes, however this can only be edited by your colleague. Once he/she has successfully logged into the system, he/she will be able to amend his/her contact details. The most up-to-date address in his/her account details will end up being included in the application form.

As CV and basic information is a mandatory element of the application, please do encourage all key researchers to complete their CVs and basic information well in advance of the competition deadline. This will ensure that their expertise can be presented to the reviewers and the Commissioning Panel.
Completing the Online Application Form

Q: Is it possible that more than one application might be funded per call?

A: Please refer to the research specification and note the guidance therein. Unless mentioned specifically in the research specification, the Department does not anticipate funding more than one piece of research in each call.

Q: Can I access my key researchers' CVs?

A: Once key researchers have approved their submission you will be able to view their details online by selecting the 'key researchers' details' tab and clicking on the relevant names. They will be hyperlinked, allowing you to review the content of all CVs. However, only the key researcher can modify their CV.

Q: I am on the 'Research details' page and our particular institution is not on the list of ‘Host organisations (which will administer the award)’. How should I proceed with completing the application form?

A: The official list of names of eligible host organisations is centrally sourced by the CCF annually. If your organisation does not appear on the official list, please contact the helpdesk (020 8843 7114) and provide the name and address of this organisation. CCF staff will make enquiries as to whether your organisation is eligible to be introduced onto this list.

Q: The application asks for my UK Rapid Response Team name. What is this?

A: The system requires a team name for ease of application reference (much like an application reference number or title for a project). For this question, simply create a short name to be used when referring to your application (i.e. Your Institution Name, RRT).

Q: The Finance page asks me to use the Financial Plan Template excel form and upload it as a PDF. How do I access this form and upload it?

A: The excel template should populate automatically onto your application. However, if you cannot see it, it is possible this template did not automatically populate correctly. Please email frederica.longfoot@nihr.ac.uk with your application reference number and request the template.

When converting the .xls document into a .pdf, please take care to publish the entire workbook to ensure you successfully upload all 4 pages of the document.

Q: I tried to log in to the online application form but a key researcher forgot to save their changes. The system tells me that if I enter their data ‘may be lost’. Can I get into the form and save his changes?

A: If you saved and closed and logged out of the form then all changes should be saved. If you still need to make edits you could override the edit.

General Guidance

Q: How do I access the CCF RMS?

A: Directly through the RMS page (https://ccfrms.nihr.ac.uk/Login)
Q: How do I contact the CCF team for advice on any queries that may not be covered here?

A: There are three ways of contacting the CCF:
- through the “contact us” link on the CCF RMS
- through email: frederica.longfoot@nihr.ac.uk
- through the helpline at 020 8843 7114

Illustrated Guidance

How to confirm and approve your participation

Q: I have been invited to become a key researcher, went to the link on the email to accept, but there is nothing pointing me to accepting the invitation. What do I need to do?

A: Select ‘Home’. You will be presented with a welcome screen at the bottom of which will list applications you are involved in and their current status, If you are involved in more than one bid, please select the appropriate one and ‘click here’.

This will show details of the application and direct you to 'confirm' your participation.
By selecting ‘Confirm’ you will be taken directly to the main summary page of the application. You are now confirmed as a key researcher and can edit this application and update your CV in ‘Manage my Details’.

At a later date (or immediately if you have already seen the contents of the application) you will be also be able to “approve” your participation in this bid from this same page.
N.B. Approval needs to be given by ALL invited key researchers before an application will become eligible for the "submit" option.

Members of the Selection Panel are bound by confidentiality and are not able to discuss this scheme with applicants. Any enquiries should be sent to Frederica Longfoot (frederica.longfoot@nihr.ac.uk).

A live document containing frequently asked questions about the Rapid Response Team will be available from the NIHR CCF website at: http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/uk-rapid-response-team.htm

An information session for potential academic applicants will be held on 19 November 2015, at Wellington House, Department of Health, London. Up to two people from each institution are invited to attend. To confirm your attendance, please contact Tina Hunt (tina.hunt@nihr.ac.uk) by 12 November 2015.