

NIHR Fellowships 2017

Chairs' Report

Introduction

Round 10 of the NIHR Fellowships Programme was launched in October 2016 and closed 17th January 2017. A slightly higher number of applications were received for round 10 of the programme compared to the previous year. This year, the NIHR Fellowships Programme also took part in 1 NIHR-wide Themed Call:

- Treatment and prevention of obesity.

In total 1 application was funded as part of the Treatment and Prevention of Obesity call.

Details of the total number of applications received and the numbers awarded funding are given below.

Round 10, 2017						
	TRF	DRF	PDF	CDF	SRF	TOTAL
Applied	10	179	105	44	11	349
Awarded	3	35	12	5	1	56

Chairs' feedback and observations

Overall the Panels were pleased with the high standard of applications to this round of the programme. A number of common themes did emerge during the assessment of the applications and details of these are given below with the intention of providing applicants applying to future rounds of the programme some general points to consider when putting together an application.

Applicants at DRF level should give careful consideration before including a request to fund a full masters course as part of their training and development programme. It is unlikely that completing a full masters course alongside undertaking a PhD and the rest of the training and development programme funded by the Fellowship will be feasible within the 3 years available for a DRF.

There were a number of applications received in round 10 that didn't fit within the remit for the Fellowships programme. It is very important before starting an application that applicants are clear on the research that NIHR will fund. If applicants are unsure or have questions about remit they are encouraged to speak to NIHR in advance of making an

application. Whatever the topic of the research being proposed, the potential impact of the research and the route to realising this impact should be made clear within the application.

The Panels were pleased overall with the quality of patient and public involvement being displayed within applications which has improved on previous rounds, where this has been somewhat formulaic.

Applicants need to be clear about the roles of any additional staff costed into a fellowship application, remembering that fellowships are *personal* awards and especially at doctoral level, the applicant should be undertaking the majority of the research being proposed. Funding for research assistants is only available at CDF and SRF level.

It is important that applicants think through the intellectual property implications of the research they are proposing. A number of applications were seen in the last round that involved the development of software and/or devices. However, the applicant hadn't thought through the intellectual property implications. Applicants are encouraged to speak to their research and enterprise office before putting in an application to ensure that the intellectual property is well considered.

For the post-doctoral fellowships, it is important that applicants think through carefully which level of the programme they are going to apply to. This should not just be based upon the amount of post-doctoral experience they have, although this is an important consideration, but where they are in their research career in terms of progress to becoming an established independent researcher. NIHR is very happy to discuss options with applicants before they start an application.

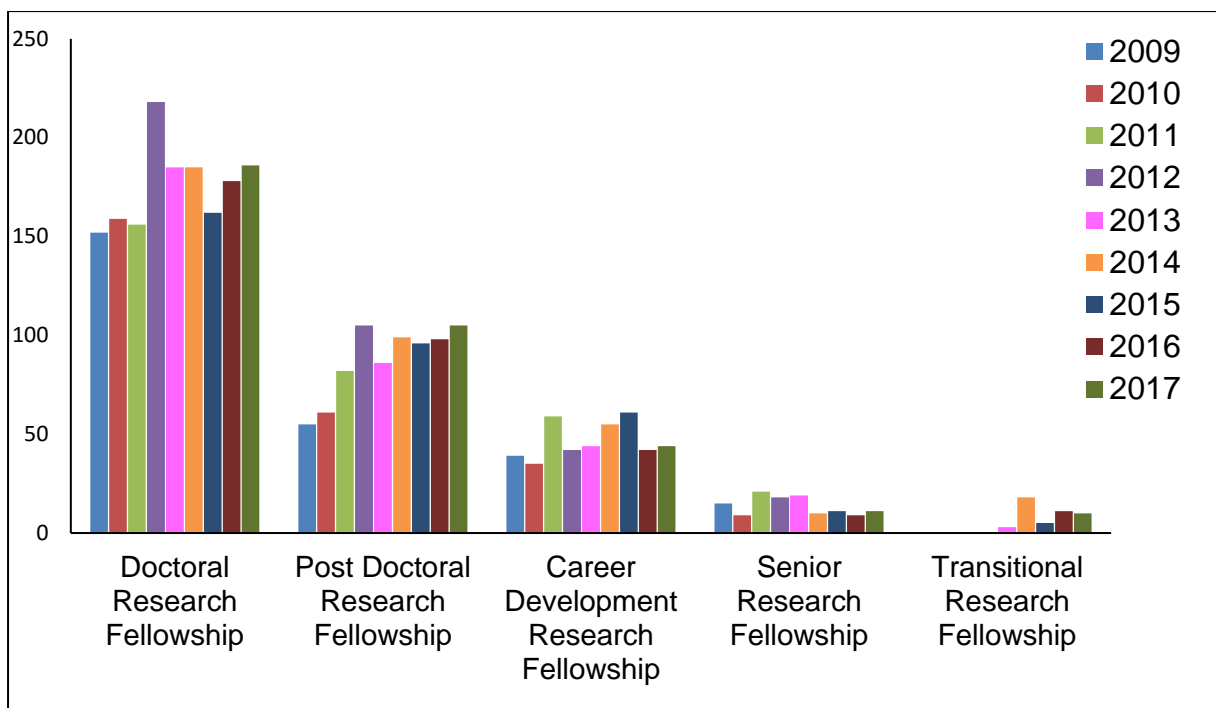
Round 10 saw the Transitional Research Fellowship (TRF) remit extend to provide an intense period of clinical trials training for those new, or relatively new to trials and who wish to transition to become a future health research leader competent in clinical trials. The TRF is also open to those who wish to re-establish their career in applied health or clinical research after a significant career break, or who wish to transition from basic science to a research area within the NIHR remit.

The TRF is designed to provide a period of intense training and allows the inclusion of a specific project, although this is not mandatory. The panel has found over successive years that those that include a specific project are better able to present a coherent and joined up training plan linked to the project. Applicants should think carefully about including a specific project as part of their application. If applicants choose not to include a specific project, it is essential that definitive and concrete plans of others projects they will be involved in as part of their training plan are provided.

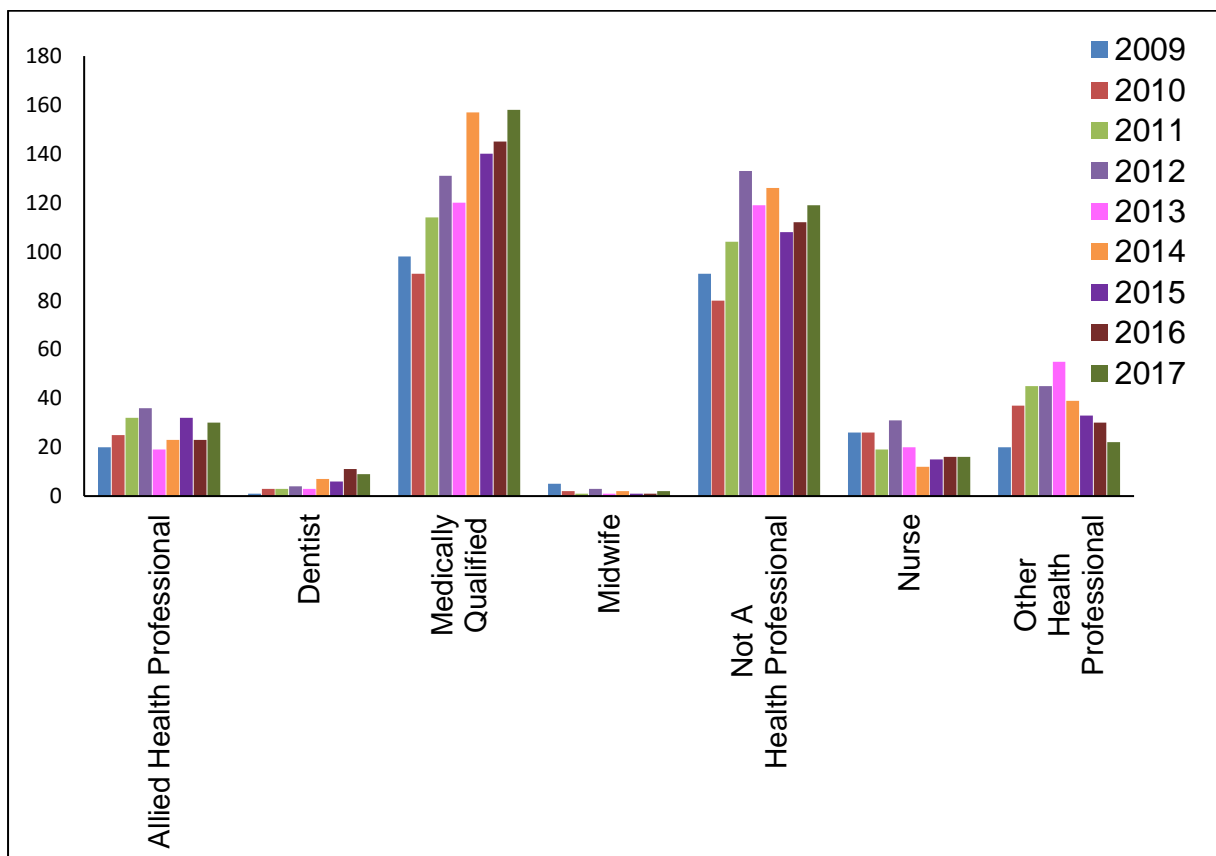
We hope that the advice above is helpful to potential applicants for round 11. Please do not hesitate to contact the NIHR TCC with any queries.

Data on Round 10

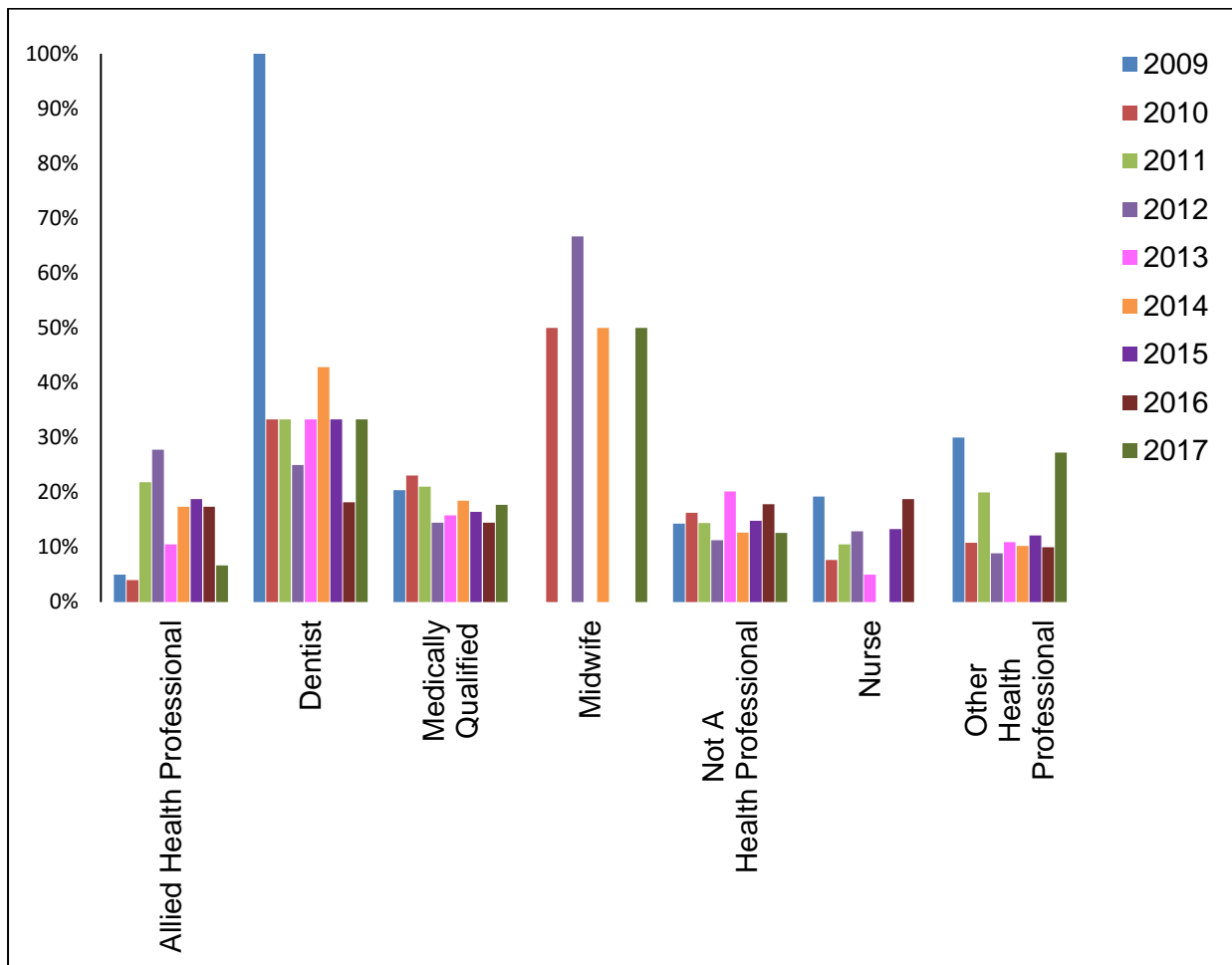
1. Applications to the NIHR Fellowships Programme from 2009-17*



2. Applications to the NIHR Fellowships Programme by Profession from 2009-17.



3. % Success rate of applicants by professional background**.



*Please note NIHR TRFs were launched for the first time in 2013.

**Please note this chart (1) should be considered alongside chart 2 which shows application numbers, due to the small number of applications from certain backgrounds.

Key

DRF	Doctoral Research Fellowship
PDF	Post-Doctoral Fellowship
CDF	Career Development Fellowship
SRF	Senior Research Fellowship
TRF	Transitional Research Fellowship
NM	Nurses and Midwives
AHP	Allied Health Professionals
OHC	Other Healthcare Professionals
NHC	Non Healthcare Professionals