NIHRs use of information from Researchfish for analysis, research, evaluation and impact assessment

Document date: 7th January 2019

Purpose
This document explains what information is collected by the NIHR via Researchfish®, how it is used and what information is likely to be published. This document should be read alongside the NIHR Privacy Policy and the Researchfish Privacy Statement.

Definitions
- Research Organisations (ROs) – organisations that the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has awarded funding to in order to support and undertake research. They may be Higher Education Institutions, Charities or other organisations that undertake research and research management activities receiving support from NIHR.
- Researchfish – refers to Researchfish Ltd, the company that currently provides the NIHR authorised web-based system to collect information on the outputs, outcomes and impacts of research activity. Researchfish® is the brand name of the online data collection tool and repository owned and operated by Researchfish Ltd.

Links
- NIHR Privacy Policy
- Researchfish Privacy Statement
- NIHR's use of Researchfish webpage

Key points
- NIHR award holders must not disclose data that is commercially sensitive, personal data, or information that might be considered confidential through the Researchfish platform. Do not name specific people in your submission.
- NIHR will use information provided by award holders to develop impact case studies, inform communications activity, populate project pages on the NIHR website, and undertake research, evaluation and comparative analysis.
- Information you submit via Researchfish may be quoted, in full or in part, and attributed to your NIHR award.
- Information is shared with the Research Organisation that has contractual responsibility for the NIHR award to which you have attributed outputs, outcomes and impacts. The Research Organisation can access that information through the Researchfish platform.

1. Why and how does the NIHR use information for analysis, research, evaluation and impact assessment?
The NIHR uses information provided to us by our award holders (researchers and Centres) via
Researchfish for a variety of analytical purposes to inform our research, evaluation, impact assessment, comparative analysis and continuous improvement activities. These analytical activities ensure the NIHR is able to:

- Be accountable for the public resources allocated to us
- Be open and transparent about the activities we fund, support and enable by publishing outputs, outcomes and impacts on our website, responding to information requests and preparing written case studies
- Make the case for continued investment in research and to address gaps in the research base
- Use the evidence available to us to inform strategic decision-making through portfolio insight and analysis, research, and to improve what we do as a funder
- Evaluate our progress towards achieving our strategic objectives and for impact assessment
- Undertake comparative analysis of our portfolio by working collaboratively with other public and charitable funders both in the UK and beyond
- Improve efficiency and effective use of information provided to reduce duplication of data entry by linking information sources together
- Provide information to key stakeholders (for example HM Treasury, Devolved Administrations) to ensure activities are joined up and shared objectives met.

The NIHR aims to be as open as possible in informing others about how we conduct our business through our publications, web and social media channels and face-to-face discussions.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has a legal duty to promote research and the use of research evidence in the NHS. The NIHR is the way in which this duty is discharged and its work is directed by the Senior Management Team of the Science, Research and Evidence directorate at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). The Chief Scientific Advisor is the senior official ultimately responsible to Ministers for ensuring that the NIHR delivers its commitments. The Chief Scientific Advisor is supported by a team within DHSC and by a range of organisations contracted to DHSC which, together, make up the NIHR.

The NIHR is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (2000). If we receive any requests for information on outputs, outcomes and impacts of research held within the Researchfish® system and which are not already publicly available, the NIHR will aim to consult with you and your Research Organisation as soon as possible to determine whether exemptions might apply. We will consider your views when considering how to respond to such a request, however the final decision on whether to disclose or withhold any information will rest with the NIHR.

2. Why does the NIHR use Researchfish®?
To collect information on outputs, outcomes and impacts of research activity supported by the NIHR we use an online system called Researchfish. Researchfish is used by a number of
3. How does award information get into Researchfish?

On a quarterly basis, when the NIHR makes new awards we collate award information and supply the following information about an award to Researchfish via the Respondent Hierarchy Table (known as the ‘RHT’):

- Award Reference number
- Name of NIHR Coordinating Centre
- Award Title, Abstract and Summary
- Award Type
- Programme and Programme Stream
- Start and End Date
- Funding Amount
- Research Organisation, City and Postcode
- Principle Investigator Title, Forename, Surname and Email
- ISRCTN Number
- Local Education and Training board (where relevant)
- HRCS Health Category and Research Activity classifications

Researchfish therefore holds information about awards which is drawn from NIHR research management information systems. This includes a limited amount of personal data, including email address, and the name of the research organisation holding the award (which may be your employer). This information is managed in line with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (2016) and the Data Protection Act (2018) and used in combination with the information on research outcomes you enter in Researchfish to:

- operate the Researchfish platform (including notifying award holders of changes to the system, system downtime and deadlines for submission of information)
- report to the NIHR and Research Organisations on progress in gathering data during the submission window, and to monitor data quality, compliance and administer the NIHR sanctions approach.

Researchfish users can have a number of email addresses held within their system profile so the NIHR and Researchfish may contact Principal Investigators using different addresses. Email addresses held by Researchfish include the email address provided by the NIHR from our management information systems. Where a Researchfish user also provides a different email address to be used by the Researchfish platform this is not visible to the NIHR.

Researchfish provides the facility for all users to update email contact details for the purposes of interacting with the platform. Award holders can request the amendment of any other details displayed in the system by contacting the NIHR via email evaluation@nihr.ac.uk.
On an annual basis, the NIHR undertakes a data quality check to ensure award date and award amount information held within Researchfish is accurate. In addition, the NIHR will update information held in the RHT (such as award dates, Principle Investigator) following discussion with an award holder and their Research Organisation as required.

4. What information does the NIHR collect in Researchfish?

The questions in Researchfish ask award holders for both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (written text) information. Researchfish presents a question set (known as the ‘Common Question Set’) agreed and used by all funders which use the system. These questions are developed with input from funders, researchers, representatives from Research Organisations and Researchfish Ltd. The common question set in Researchfish captures the following information about the outputs, outcomes and impacts from NIHR awards:

- Publications
- Collaborations and partnerships
- Further funding
- Next destination
- Engagement activities
- Influence on policy, practice, patients and the public
- Research tools and methods
- Research databases and models
- Intellectual Property and licensing
- Medical products, interventions and clinical trials
- Artistic and creative products
- Software and technical products
- Spin outs
- Awards and recognition
- Other outputs and knowledge
- Use of facilities and resources

The NIHR also uses the following ‘additional questions’ in Researchfish that are applied to specific groups of awards. Some of these additional questions are developed specifically for NIHR, others are used by more than one funder (known as ‘common additional questions’). The NIHR currently uses the following additional questions in Researchfish:

- Patient and Public Involvement - all NIHR award holders are asked to describe how they have involved patients and the public in their research, the factors contributing to successful involvement, challenges associated with involvement and the difference involvement has made.
- Data Sharing - those awards that will publish in the NIHR Journals Library are asked about if they have been asked to share their data and, if so, who with, for what purpose and if any known outputs are associated with the original data set.
- Senior Investigators - all awards made as part of the NIHR Senior Investigators Competition are asked about how the discretionary fund has been used, what
contributions the award has made to NIHR and economic growth in support of NIHR mission.

- Career Tracker - additional questions for all personal and institutional award holders managed by the NIHR Academy after completion of their award. These questions capture information on next destination, time spent conducting research or clinical duties and where appropriate if they have completed their PhD.

- Publications question - awards managed the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility are asked to identify their most important publications.

The Principal Investigator and invited Team Members such as co-investigators, project managers (known as ‘Delegates’) can add outputs, outcomes and impacts to an award. Information from other sources may also be added to an award by the following means:

- ORCID - publications can be added via ORCID in the following ways: where publications are linked to an ORCID and are publically available; or, where a researcher has made their information restricted and has both authenticated through their Researchfish and ORCID accounts, and made Researchfish a trusted service.

- EuropePMC - Researchfish harvests publications from Europe PMC where NIHR funding and valid award reference numbers are included in the acknowledgements. Researchfish adds Open Access metadata from Europe PMC to publications where this is available. Researchfish adds information from the Europe PMC Grant Checker to Researchfish, and adds funder and award reference information (but not the details of the award) to Europe PMC to reduce the duplication of reporting basic award information.

- Research Organisations - some Research Organisations upload information about publications into Researchfish directly where they have valid unique identifiers for publications, valid award reference and funder information related to those publications, and where NIHR has indicated that the Research Organisation is either the contracted organisation or one with a significant role in the research.

- ‘Harvesting’ by Researchfish - Researchfish automatically adds information on publications, datasets, software, audio visual outputs and images to an award if the researcher has included an acknowledgement to both NIHR and a valid NIHR award reference number. Researchfish uses a range of techniques to do this pulling from publishers (via Crossref, PubMed, companies house); providers such as Clarivate (via Web of Science); and institutional, thematic and general repositories (e.g. Figshare, Zenodo, University of Cambridge etc.).

It is the responsibility of the award holder (Principal Investigator) to ensure the accuracy and relevance of all information provided. Only the individual assigned the role of Principal Investigator can submit the information to NIHR.

NIHR award holders must not disclose data that is commercially sensitive, or personal data, or information that might be considered confidential through the Researchfish platform. Principal Investigators should not specifically identify individuals involved in the work, unless this
information is already in the public domain (such as the names of co-applicants, co-authors and partner organisations). Award holders should be particularly aware of the need to ensure they do not use third party identifiable personal information in their submission. Under current data protection legislation personal data is well defined and for these purposes shall be taken to mean any information relating to an individual who is identifiable, either directly or indirectly, from that information. In particular, it is important to consider if an individual could be identified indirectly from the information submitted (i.e. through linking that information to other related datasets on common items), even if it has been anonymised. For more information on this please see the Information Commissioner’s advice.

Information about research outcomes which award holders enter into the ‘My Portfolio’ section of Researchfish is only visible to the Principal Investigator, Team Members and Delegates. NIHR is unable to view information held in ‘My Portfolio’. Information about the outputs, outcomes and impacts of research held in ‘My Portfolio’ can only be seen by the NIHR after it has been attributed to one or more NIHR awards.

The NIHR can see information that has not yet been submitted via the Researchfish database. The NIHR may use unsubmitted information to manage awards, monitor submission periods and application of sanctions, but the NIHR will not use information that has not been submitted via the Researchfish SQL platform for any other purpose. The NIHR uses the Researchfish SQL in the following ways:

- Data quality: we review awards and award holder’s data regularly across the NIHR and check for consistency across our management information systems and data sets.
- Extract data: we extract data via SQL queries to respond to internal (e.g. within NIHR) and external (e.g. other funders) data requests. Such data then feed into our data warehouse to support other functions such as populating our website.

Information provided to the NIHR via Researchfish is then processed in the following ways, for example:

- We draw key information about the reported outputs, outcomes and impacts on to our website.
- We use the information to prepare impact case studies, usually corroborating the information provided with other sources available in documents, online and with individuals via telephone discussions. These cases are used in a variety of ways such as in our communications activity and website, to respond to information requests and published within NIHR reports. Text you submit via Researchfish may be quoted, in full or in part, and attributed to the appropriate NIHR award. By accepting an NIHR award you agree to this use, publication and onward dissemination of outcomes.
- We may take information such as Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) and put these into other tools such as Altmetric or Dimensions to gain a better understanding of the reach of research outputs and report on bibliometrics.
- Information may also be returned to the Research Organisation that has contractual
responsibility for the NIHR award to which you have allocated outputs, outcomes and impacts. You should contact your local administrator for guidance on how this information will be used in your own organisation.