

Research for Patient Benefit



funding to prioritise the
NHS patient and service user

The NIHR programme at the heart of patient and NHS staff experience

Focus

The NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Programme funds regionally derived applied research projects in health services and social care. Our main purpose for the programme is to realise, through evidence, the huge potential for improving, expanding and strengthening the way that healthcare is delivered for patients, the public and the NHS.

In deciding which projects to support, we take care to involve not only scientific reviewers and experienced researchers, but also practitioners and service users. We also appoint public members to our Regional Advisory Panels.

A major funding stream of the NIHR, RfPB is co-ordinated at national level but delivered regionally within England. Funding of up to £350,000 is available per project for up to three years*.

The funding available for individual projects is up to £350,000 for up to 36 months*

What counts as Research for Patient Benefit?

More than 650 projects have received support since RfPB's first competition launched in July 2006. As RfPB is a responsive programme, we don't specify topics for research but accept proposals for projects covering a wide range of health service issues and challenges.

The programme:

- supports applications for high quality, investigator-led research that is relevant to the NHS in England
- funds research related to day-to-day practice in areas identified and developed by health service staff – often in partnership with service users
- selects proposals for funding on the basis of the quality of the research proposal and its likely transition into patient benefit locally and for the wider NHS
- supports relevant feasibility studies to help reach the next step of a definitive trial (please note that it is expected that applications for feasibility studies will cost less than £250,000, unless otherwise justified)
- considers proposals which will generate results that may be useful for more downstream investigations or might carry higher risk of not carrying through into patient benefit. Such applications are expected to cost less than £150,000. Examples of such proposals are described in the programme guidance.

We particularly welcome proposals that have benefited from interaction with patients and the public, which relate to patient and service user experience and/or have been drawn up in association with relevant groups of service users.

N.B. The programme will **not** fund laboratory-based or basic science research, the setting-up or maintenance of research units, or proposals which are solely service developments or audits, surveys, needs assessments, etc.

*Refer to programme guidance for further information on funding limits for different types of research.

Who can apply?

All researchers in the NHS in England can apply through an NHS body or other provider of NHS services in England. We welcome joint applications with academic partners (for joint NHS/university applications, funding will be awarded to the NHS partner). RfPB welcomes applications from new investigators who are supported by more experienced researchers.

Programme management

The Central Commissioning Facility (CCF) administers the programme under the guidance of a national Programme Director. The CCF coordinates the application process, manages the peer and public review process and acts as secretariat to the Regional Advisory Panels. We have established:

- eight* Regional Advisory Panels, each meeting three times a year under an appointed Regional Chair to promote the programme within the region and assess the applications
- allocations of regional funding on a population basis
- a fully electronic process for making applications to the programme
- ongoing opportunities to apply, with three competitions per year.

* From 2016. Previously 10 Regional Advisory Panels.

Assessment

From Competition 28 a new two-stage application process has been introduced.

- A shortened version of the application form is required to be submitted at Stage 1 which is assessed by a Regional Advisory Panel.
- Applicants will be provided with feedback following assessment at Stage 1 which will either inform them as to why a Stage 2 application has not been invited, or provide constructive comments from the Panel that applicants should address and factor into a subsequent Stage 2 application.
- Invited Stage 2 applications are sent for peer review which includes input from public reviewers. We find such input especially valuable for the insight, for instance, into patient experience, consultation and implications for practice.
- Stage 2 applications and feedback from reviewers are assessed by a Regional Advisory Panel to make funding recommendations.
- Recommendations are ratified by the Programme Director and the Department of Health.
- Stage 2 applicants will receive feedback in relation to their application.

Selection process

Applications are assessed by all panels on the quality of the research they propose, value for money and on their significance for, and potential benefits to, the NHS and service users. RfPB also looks for project applications that indicate:

- a sound and appropriate research design
- a strong likelihood that tangible benefits for NHS patients and other users of health and social care services will be realisable in the short to medium term
- a team with the right mix of skills and experience for the research question
- evidence of relevance for a public or patient community.

How to apply

All applications must be submitted electronically. To begin the process, register on the Research Management System (RMS) via the RfPB website. All details of what a submission must include, the procedure and the dates involved, as well as the selection criteria we use to evaluate submissions, are given on the RfPB website.

www.nihr.ac.uk/rfpb

Further information online:

- guidance on completing your application
- frequently asked questions
- additional tips for applying
- guidance for feasibility study applications.

Research Design Service

For help in planning your application to the RfPB Programme, please note that consultative advice on research methodology and comments on draft proposals are available from the Research Design Service (RDS) which is based in ten regions across England. To locate your nearest RDS please visit:

www.rds.nihr.ac.uk

Clinical Trials Toolkit

Researchers designing or undertaking clinical trials are encouraged to consult the Clinical Trials Toolkit (www.ct-toolkit.ac.uk). This NIHR resource will benefit researchers and R&D staff setting up and managing clinical trials, in line with regulatory requirements, and provides useful information and guidance.

About the NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF)

The CCF is a primary gateway for NHS clinicians and related healthcare researchers seeking funding from the NIHR. We provide an online application and research management operation for the NIHR. The CCF is managed by the Grant Management Group in Government Services at science-based company LGC in Twickenham, Middlesex.

More information on research programmes managed by CCF can be found at:

www.nihr.ac.uk/ccf

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About the National Institute for Health Research

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is funded by the Department of Health to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. Since its establishment in April 2006, the NIHR has transformed research in the NHS. It has increased the volume of applied health research for the benefit of patients and the public, driven faster translation of basic science discoveries into tangible benefits for patients and the economy, and developed and supported the people who conduct and contribute to applied health research. The NIHR plays a key role in the Government's strategy for economic growth, attracting investment by the life-sciences industries through its world-class infrastructure for health research. Together, the NIHR people, programmes, centres of excellence and systems represent the most integrated health research system in the world.

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