



**National Institute for
Health Research**

NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Social Care Call Specification Document

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1. Introduction

Social care is an increasing priority for the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). We intend to improve and extend the evidence base for adult social care, consistent with the remit of the Department of Health and Social Care. The RfPB programme funds a wide range of research on health services, public health and to an increasing extent on adult social care. We are keen to extend support for high quality social care research, hence this current call for research proposals specifically on adult social care.

The RfPB programme typically funds research based on ideas from practitioners in front line services, generating research findings that make a difference to practice. Since its inception RfPB has funded some research relevant to social care, usually around the use of NHS services. In the current call specifically on social care, we expect research proposals to demonstrate strong links to people with social care needs, to social care service users and carers, and to organisations which provide adult social care services. We also expect proposals to demonstrate strong and appropriate research expertise, with teams which can demonstrate a track record of relevant published research.

The response to this call for social care research will help inform possible developments to the RfPB remit and future eligibility criteria for funding applications.

2. Key information

In addition to its usual 3 response mode calls, RfPB will be holding an exceptional social care call during 2018. Applications for social care research will be eligible and will be assessed by a national panel of social care research experts.

2.1. Budget

The budget for this call will be approximately £2m to £3m and individual projects will be funded up to £350k.

2.2. Key dates

Event	Date
Call launch	09 May 2018
RDS Event - London	08 May 2018
RDS Event - Birmingham	14 May 2018
RDS Event - Leeds	30 May 2018
Stage 1 call close	4 July 2018
Stage 1 panel assessment	August 2018
Stage 2 call open	Mid August 2018
Stage 2 call close	3 October 2018
External peer review	October - November 2018
Stage 2 panel assessment	November 2018
Final decision and outcome notification	December 2018 - January 2019

2.3. Eligibility

Applications will be made through **universities, local authorities, and NHS bodies or other providers of NHS services in England**, which will act as the contracting organisation, be the recipient of the funds, and will be responsible for the delivery of the research. The sponsor of the research (that is the organisation directly responsible for securing the arrangements to initiate, manage and finance the study) can be either the contracting organisation or a collaborating partner, as long as that organisation is capable of fulfilling the role of a research sponsor as set out in the [Research Governance Framework for Health & Care](#).

Applications are expected to have strong involvement and collaboration with organisations that are responsible for delivering social care services e.g local authorities and third sector, where appropriate.

Partner organisations from outside of England may be included, provided a strong case is made that it is best placed to provide the necessary expertise to carry out the planned research.

2.4. Call guidance

- [Guidance for Applicants](#)
- [Finance Guidance](#)
- [Template Application Form](#)

3. RfPB's approach to funding social care research

RfPB will fund research which generates evidence to improve, expand and strengthen the way adult social care is delivered for users of care services, carers, and the public.

RfPB welcomes high quality proposals from researchers and practitioners which are focussed on:

- Social care needs and relevant outcomes (which could be quality of life, social or health care related, as appropriate to the study, population etc.)
- Developing a more robust evidence base for current ways of working
- Developing and evaluating new ways of delivering social care
- Secondary data analysis, record linkage and reviews
- Research methods development
- Care users' and carers' circumstances and needs
- Those who deliver social care including unpaid carers and the staff and professionals involved in the delivery of social care e.g. social workers.

Using the above points, in terms of developing research proposals, RfPB would welcome applications addressing areas of social care including, but not limited to, the following:

- Transitions and interactions between health and social care and other systems

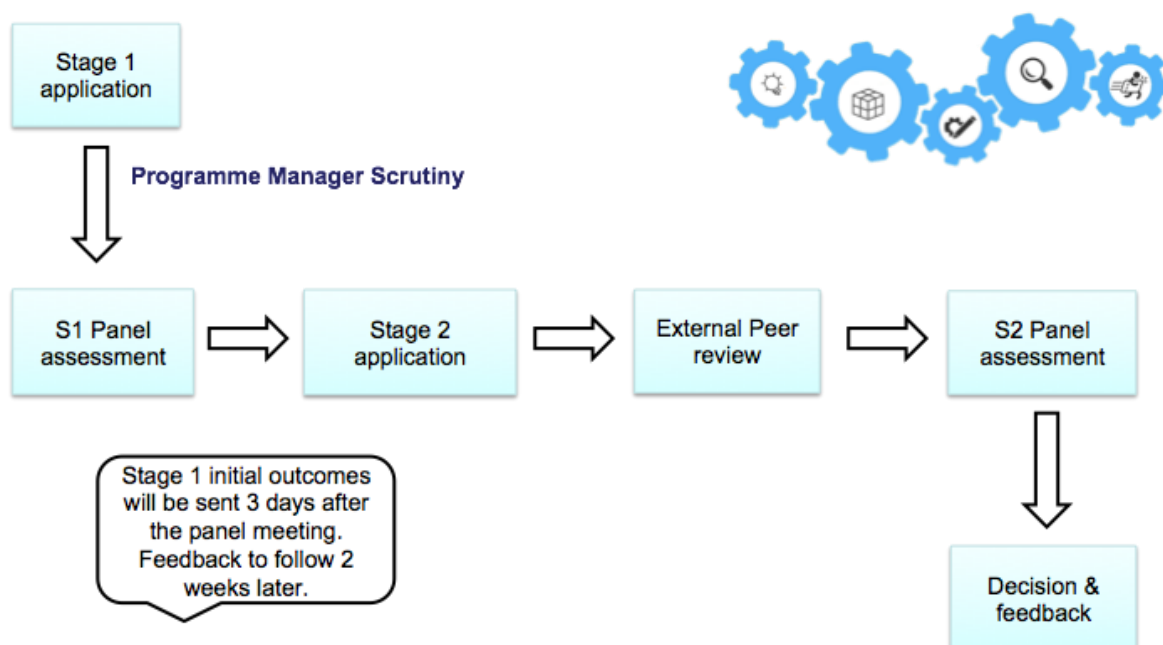
- Transition from children's to adult care services
- Health and social care inequalities
- Transitions between self-funded and local authority-funded care
- 'Unmet' social care needs
- New models of care
- Self-funders and their families
- End-of-life care
- Housing and employment related support
- Family carers, unpaid carers and carer support
- Social care practice and workforce
- Social prescribing and other approaches to working, such as strengths- and assets-based approaches
- Economic analyses of social care services and systems
- Interventions to help tackle loneliness and isolation

We are aware that social care is broad and if you are unsure as to whether a topic is within scope for the call, please contact us on 020 8843 8057 or by email on rfpb@nhr.ac.uk. You may also wish to consider submitting a [Presubmission Form](#) (details below in Section 5.)

RfPB operates a three tier funding system and encourages the following types of applications:

- Tier 1 (funding up to £350k) for research which has a close and clear trajectory to, and provides evidence which is likely to, benefit social care directly e.g. a comparative case study, a rigorous evaluation of a new way of delivering care (perhaps a full randomised controlled trial, if appropriate).
- Tier 2 (funding up to £250k) for research which will typically require further research to lead to direct benefit to social care e.g. a feasibility/pilot study.
- Tier 3 (funding up to £150k) for research which is more developmental or innovative in nature and on a trajectory to providing evidence which will be of benefit to social care. Such research could include, but is not limited to, developing and refining improved ways of delivering care, scoping reviews of the field and literature, ethnographic observations, developing new scales or outcome measures, systematic reviews and evidence synthesis.

4. Application process and selection criteria



The criteria used by the assessing panel at both application stages will be:

Quality of the research proposed:

- Is this an important research question?
- Is the proposed methodology robust, and based on sound scientific rationale?
- Will the proposed methodology answer the research question?
- Has the research involved service users at relevant stages of the project?

Significance and potential benefit to social care and users of services:

- What is the trajectory to social care benefit?
- What is the likelihood this will lead to benefit?
- What is the likely scale of impact?

Value for money provided by the application:

- Given the likelihood of achieving benefit, is this proposal costed in the right funding tier?
- Given the likely scale of impact, does it provide value for money?

5. RfPB's approach to applicants

RfPB welcomes proposals led by social care researchers and/or practitioners as part of a wider multidisciplinary team, which would be expected to include strong methods support from experienced research specialists.

RfPB has a track record of funding researchers at various stages of their careers, from new investigators to senior investigators. RfPB's approach to assessing the research team is to **assess the team as a whole**, meaning the lead applicant can be a relatively newer investigator providing there is a clearly identified, sufficient, convincing and appropriately resourced team supporting the newer researcher. When the team support is robust we actively encourage less experienced researchers as leads.

Support for applicants

When developing a proposal for submission to RfPB, the programme strongly recommends seeking advice from your local NIHR [Research Design Service \(RDS\)](#) at the earliest opportunity.

To support applicants to this social care call, the RDS will be holding a number of events, which will include presentations from RfPB and the RDS on the scope of the call and the support that is available. There will also be opportunities for researchers to discuss their research ideas with members of RfPB programme team and the RDS.

Current events are planned for:

- London - 8 May 2018
- Birmingham - 14 May 2018
- Leeds - 30 May 2018

More details about these events can be found [here](#).

Applicants considering submitting a Stage 1 application should consider submitting an outline of their proposal for guidance before official submission. This can be done using the [Presubmission Form](#). This is non-mandatory and purely aimed at helping potential applicants to engage with the requirements of the programme (e.g. eligibility and remit) and allowing them the opportunity to seek advice from the Programme team when constructing their applications.