Funding opportunities for research and for career development

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) funds a range of research programmes to produce evidence that enables professionals, policy makers and patients to make informed decisions and provide the means to turn new interventions into better care.

Research applications are rigorously evaluated, by independent peer review, to ensure that only the most outstanding proposals are funded.

Calls are issued for commissioned research, which addresses specific topic areas; and researcher-led research, which funds questions proposed directly by researchers. In order to meet an identified health challenge or government priority, the NIHR will issue a themed call. These will be promoted in advance whenever possible and clearly advertised on NIHR sites. All research programmes, including NIHR Fellowships, will participate in the themed call as far as their remit allows. Previous NIHR-wide themed calls have focused on topics such as dementia, surgery and primary care interventions.

More closely defined themed calls may be issued by individual programmes when an area of uncertainty is identified, sometimes arising from a specific event. The Health Services and Delivery (HS&DR) themed call in connection with the Francis Enquiry is one such example.

The application process can vary between programmes. For some programmes a full application is required – a one stage process. Other programmes request that outline proposals are submitted; if applicants are successful, they are invited to complete a full application in a two stage process.

A new booklet provides information about the NIHR’s research funding and career development opportunities available for researchers based in the NHS, universities, industry and other organisations concerned with health, public health and social care.

RDS NW client videos

The first in a series of videos featuring RDS NW clients and advisers is now available. These videos provide an insight on how the RDS NW can help during the development of a funding application in health and social care research. These videos can be viewed on the RDS NW website here.
RDS NW patient and public involvement update

The patient and public involvement (PPI) team

RDS NW has a specialist team of PPI advisers led by Professor Soo Downe based at the University of Central Lancashire. The wider team comprises the following specialist advisers: Dr Sara Morris, based at the University of Lancaster, Dr Tracey Williamson, based at the University of Salford, and Dr Paula Byrne, based at the University of Liverpool. This specialist team provide support in PPI to all of our advisers ensuring all are able to provide researchers with expert advice when developing proposals.

The specialist team have been busy with providing advice on how to make the best use of a RDS NW PPI bursary to facilitate the appropriate PPI in the design of a research proposal. It is encouraging to see that researchers are engaging actively with service users early in the process to assist with the design of their projects.

For expert PPI please feel free to request advice from our advice service from our advice service.

NIHR Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) PPI leads for the North West Coast

David Britt and Tim Rawcliffe have been named as the PPI leads for the new CLAHRC North West Coast.

New resources: cost calculator for PPI

INVOLVE and the Mental Health Research Network (MHRN) have teamed up to produce a new resource to help with budgeting for the costs of public involvement in research. It can be used for any PPI group and for everything from putting together an involvement budget for an entire study to working out how much it will cost to run a one-off consultation event.

The first part of the resource is a guide which provides practical advice on what costs are associated with involvement in research. It:

- includes a step-by-step process for identifying the associated costs and planning the budget
- presents examples of research projects with well-developed budgets for involvement work
- contains tips, links to useful websites, and references.

The second part of the resource is an online ‘involvement cost calculator’ to work out the costs for your research study.

Publications at INVOLVE

Public involvement in research: impact on ethical aspects of research.

This resource provides examples of the impact of public involvement in the ethical design and conduct of research.

Find more INVOLVE publications here.

The North West People in Research Forum (NWPiRF) update

The NWPiRF Executive Committee has drafted a new strategy for 2013 to 2015, focusing on using its joined up, coordinated approach to public involvement and engagement to act as a one stop shop for those in the North West and committing to evaluating its impact, reach and success.

The Events Working Group is preparing for its first large event, the Value of Working Together, which will take place 9 December 2013. Derek Stewart will be facilitating the event and Ann Jacoby, Carrol Gamble and Katherine Froggatt will be presenting.

The Training Working Group is continuing to improve their Training Route Map, an online tool that will signpost to training for public involvement resources and learning opportunities. Their next step is to pilot the Route Map with service users at Manchester Foundation Trust.

The Forum has appointed a new Facilitator, Mel Chapman. Mel has been working in public involvement for a number of years, with a focus on learning disabilities.
The Help DiaBEATes campaign is a National Institute for Health Research Diabetes Research Network initiative aimed at helping people who want to take part in diabetes research to find studies that they are eligible to participate in.

If you are conducting research and require volunteers to take part in your study, the Help DiaBEATes team may be able to assist you with recruitment.

They have a team of diabetes health advisers based within an NHS contact centre. Currently they guide volunteers through a simple registration process, obtaining their consent to be contacted about future research opportunities. We assist with keeping personal details up to date and contact them when suitable opportunities to take part in research become available.

As part of the NIHR Diabetes Research Network they are able to:

- assist with registering a study for NIHR network support
- advise on all the necessary approvals that need to be in place to enable a study to be offered to the volunteers through the Help DiaBEATes campaign
- help with feasibility for a study to strengthen the bid for funding. They have access to a system called FARSITE which links to GP data systems and provides anonymised information about the number of people meeting the eligibility criteria for a study. If volunteers have registered their NHS number with the campaign and have a FARSITE GP, they can also provide the number of people who are both eligible to participate and who have expressed an interest in being contacted about research
- provide information on how many potential volunteers are registered with the campaign in a region/area and can contact them on behalf of a researcher to find out whether they may be interested in taking part in your study
- help decide the best approach to use to inform Help DiaBEATes volunteers about a study.

For more details please visit the [Help DiaBEATes website here](#).

**Diabetes Research Network**

The Diabetes Research Network (DRN) is part of the NIHR Clinical Research Network, and forms part of the UK Clinical Research Network. The Networks support and deliver high quality clinical research studies.

The primary goal of the DRN is to achieve benefits for people with diabetes, or at risk of developing diabetes, through excellence in clinical research.

People with diabetes, their carers and the public will be involved in deciding the research priorities and a research portfolio will be generated by investigators from different disciplines which will encompass clinical studies. It will also include epidemiological studies and health services research and will interact with basic and clinical science and translational research.

As the care of those with diabetes is based largely in primary care this will be the dominant setting for research and implementation although secondary care will also be involved.

Find out [more about the DRN here](#).
The Thrombin Pathway in Breast Cancer Dissemination: a potential biomarker and novel therapeutic target

In 2012, Miss Cliona Kirwan, a consultant in Oncoplastic Breast Surgery, was awarded an NIHR Clinician Scientist Award to investigate the relationship between cancer and the clotting system.

It is well recognised that cancer increases the risk of patients developing clots in the leg (deep vein thrombosis) and clots in the lung (pulmonary embolism). Increasingly it is being recognised that the relationship between cancer and clotting works two ways. It appears that the clotting system may help cancers grow and spread. Miss Kirwan has been awarded £1.3 million to perform a programme of work that will investigate this relationship between cancer and clotting. She aims to develop methods of targeting the clotting system to help reduce growth and spread of breast cancer.

Clinician Scientists Awards are post-doctoral training fellowships, awarded to clinicians, from any discipline, with a strong background in clinical research. This NIHR personal award funds a five year programme of work with the aim of benefitting patients and also developing future research leaders.

The RDS NW was able to help Miss Kirwan develop and review her application. She is now over a year into her award and has a team of researchers assisting her in both clinical and laboratory studies, with some exciting results already being found.

NIHR Fellowships

The NIHR Trainees Coordinating Centre (TCC) has launched round seven of NIHR Fellowships with a closing date of 21 January 2014.

NIHR Fellowships support outstanding individuals to become the health research leaders of the future by buying out their salary costs, meeting their training and development costs and by contributing to the research costs needed to complete an identified research project.

This round of the Fellowships Programme is included in three NIHR wide Themed Calls:

- research on the evaluation of health care interventions or services delivered in primary care settings
- research into the evaluation of public health measures, health care interventions and health services to reduce the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance
- evaluative research for long term conditions in children and young people. Further details to be announced on the NIHR website in due course.

Applications are invited from individuals working in any sector or scientific discipline who propose to undertake people or patient-based clinical and applied health research at an institution based in England.

Applicants should use the scheme specific guidance notes below relevant to the application level they intend to apply to. You are strongly advised to read the guidance notes carefully and refer to them as you complete the online form.

Feedback from last year's round of NIHR Fellowships is available in the form of a Chair's Report. Please click here to view the Chair's report from round six of NIHR Fellowships.

For more information on the NIHR Fellowships, including the five levels of fellowship that are available, visit the TCC fellowship website here.

For research design advice on your fellowship application contact the RDS NW at rds-nw@lancaster.ac.uk.
I've been involved with Research Design Service (RDS) long before it was even a glimmer in the eye of the NIHR, in its previous incarnation as a research training and support unit. I was part of the small and select group developing the RDS approach as we worked through the end of our contract and pioneered this new way of delivering targeted support. Through the years I have withdrawn from providing as much first-line advice as I used to, as I'm now considered to be a senior advisor. Throughout this time I have been an Associate Director, leading the Mersey and Cheshire team. My background is as an academic GP and Health Services Researcher, specialising in mixed methods for complex interventions. As a GP, and more particularly, as I'm identified as an 'expert' through my role with RDS I am frequently invited not just to advise, but to become a co-applicant, which adds considerably to the associated workload.

However these opportunities have led to some major successes, including Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) and Programme Grants (PGfAR) but means I also have to exercise diplomatic sifting and prioritising and signposting to others better suited to certain bids. My philosophical approach has been, and remains, supportive. It's far easier and more productive to persuade colleagues of the required changes, or the low chance of success of their proposal in some cases, if time is taken with them to hear their proposal and aspirations. This should also hopefully encourage them to access support and training and develop networks to help them build better research bids.

Most of my research funding (£40 million and counting so far as chief investigator or co-investigator) has come from NIHR or other government sources rather than research councils due to the types of research I engage in. It is gratifying to help design a new service, nurse it through infancy and see it emerge as increasingly effective and popular. The key challenge now is to help persuade more experienced researchers to acknowledge that RDS might have useful advice to offer them as well. However Jung apparently said that the only good thing about advice is that nobody takes it. As an 'advisory' service I guess that points to the most effective ways to provide advice through listening, feedback, signposting and enabling applicants to make more effective choices (sorry, can't help the psychotherapist training in my clinical background leaking through).

For advice on your funding proposal contact the RDS NW at rds-nw@lancaster.ac.uk.

News in brief

**NHS and Foundation Trusts announced as new hosts for NIHR Local Clinical Research Networks to help people across England take part in clinical research in the NHS**

The Department of Health, through the NIHR has announced the 15 NHS Trusts/Foundation Trusts that will host the local branches of the NIHR Clinical Research Network from April 2014.

**NIHR Showcases the Clinical Research That Could Bring Hope to the Nation’s Dementia Sufferers**

The NIHR is showcasing some of the cutting-edge clinical research that could bring new hope to dementia patients and their families, and those with other neurodegenerative diseases.

**The NIHR Annual Report for 2012/2013 is now published**

The report is in a new format with four main sections illustrating the work carried out by the NIHR in the last year.
This seminar is one of a series organised by the RDS NW to highlight national funding opportunities for applied health and social care research. The aim is to give researchers a better understanding of funding priorities, application processes and future plans and an opportunity for dialogue with panel members and successful grant holders. For more details visit the seminar website here.

Developing proposals for RfPB
21 November 2013 - Lancaster

This seminar is one of a series organised by the RDS NW to highlight national funding opportunities for applied health and social care research. The aim is to give researchers a better understanding of funding priorities, application processes and future plans and an opportunity for dialogue with panel members and successful grant holders. For more details visit the seminar website here.

We welcome your feedback
We are always striving to improve the service we offer you. We welcome feedback on any aspect of our service including our website and this newsletter.

Please send any feedback to rds-nw@lancaster.ac.uk.

Please always check the event or funder website for the latest information and dates.