

Research Design Service

Working agreement

This document describes the role of the Research Design Service (RDS) North West, detailing in particular how we can advise and support you in developing grant applications. It describes both what you can expect from the RDS, and what we anticipate from you in return.

Scope

The RDS is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to assist researchers preparing research proposals for submission to national, peer-reviewed funding competitions for applied health or social care research. Priority will be given to supporting proposals to be submitted to an NIHR scheme.

Nature of support provided

RDS staff have the knowledge and expertise to advise on a wide range of research-related issues, including in particular all aspects of research design and methodology. We can also advise on issues such as involving patients and public, identifying resources and dissemination plans. Although one RDS adviser will take the lead in coordinating support, other RDS staff may become involved to bring complementary skills, and we have a wide range of other contacts in academic and clinical disciplines to facilitate any necessary additional input where required.

Eligibility

We provide support to NHS, social care researchers and other researchers who are working in partnership with the NHS. Our services are free of charge, but it is useful to give some examples of situations where we are not able to provide support free of charge:

- the development of projects for which there is no intention to submit a grant application to a recognised funder as described above
- doing the research; if required this would need to be costed into the project grant bid, and it would also depend upon available research capacity and interests of host institution
- formal supervision or informal support for students
- requesting support to conduct unfunded analysis on data already collected.

It should also be noted that it is only within our remit to support applications to national peer-reviewed funding agencies.

If you are in any doubt about eligibility, please contact us to discuss your situation.

Mutual Understandings

You can expect to gain access to a professional service in a timely manner. You may approach the RDS at any stage of development of a research proposal: from simply wanting to discuss an initial idea through to requesting input on a specific issue relating to a well-developed proposal. The earlier you approach us, the more comprehensive our advice can be. We prefer you to make an initial on-line request for support using via our website (www.rds-nw.nihr.ac.uk/request-advice). You may, however, also make contact in person, telephone, email or post.

If eligible, you can expect the following from the RDS:

- professional advice about aspects of developing a grant application and practical support for such development, free of charge; advice will be given to all projects that have potential to achieve funding and advice will be provided throughout the submission process
- face-to-face meetings at a mutually convenient time and venue and/or other forms of communication as appropriate
- support in co-ordinating the process of proposal development, as required
- advice on drafting relevant sections of proposals, as required
- support in identifying and approaching other potential lay and professional collaborators, as required
- support in identifying a suitable NIHR funding stream and advising on their application processes; if not eligible for NIHR funding we would try to provide advice on other potential funding bodies depending on local knowledge
- support for obtaining appropriate user and carer involvement in project development
- in the case of unsuccessful applications, support with deciding what to do next
- all discussions regarding the proposal to be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

In return, the RDS expects that you will:

- use the RDS only for eligible purposes
- carefully consider proffered advice, discussing as necessary
- ensure that the research team includes input from NHS staff and lay person(s)
- where RDS staff are invited, and agree, to be grant co-applicants, include appropriate costs in the grant to cover any work they will undertake in the conduct, analysis and reporting of the project
- accurately reflect the nature of RDS involvement and support in the relevant section of the grant application; RDS staff can provide you with a reminder of input given by the RDS
- provide the RDS with a copy of any completed, submitted application in which RDS support has been involved
- inform the RDS of the funding committee's decision.