

Summer 2019 issue

From the launch of our NHS campaign to understanding how big data is used in research, this issue provides useful information for researchers in health and social care across the North West.

Research Design Service North West



We provide free advice and confidential support on all aspects of developing and writing a research grant application including research design, research methods, identifying funding sources and involving patients and the public.

We assist researchers across the North West of England.

01524 593209

rds-nw@lancaster.ac.uk

Featured articles



Public Involvement news



Find out about news, developments and notifications from our Public Involvement Team.

Big Data in Health Research



Explores the types of big data used in health research and the challenges in using them.

Funding focus



NIHR Research for Social Care is a new funding call due to be launched in September 2019.

Meet our new adviser Georgios



Our new adviser based in the Greater Manchester local office, is an experienced Health Economist.

Success: Pre-submission Review Panels

On 4 June 2019, we held our second Pre-Submission Review Panel for Research Design Service North West (RDS NW) clients.

The panels support RDS NW clients who are nearing their funding programme submission deadline and would like to benefit from a panel style review by senior RDS NW methodologists across a range of expertise, including health economics, qualitative and quantitative methods, public involvement, statistics and trials design. Feedback from the panel will help to shape the proposal at its final stages ahead of submission for funding.

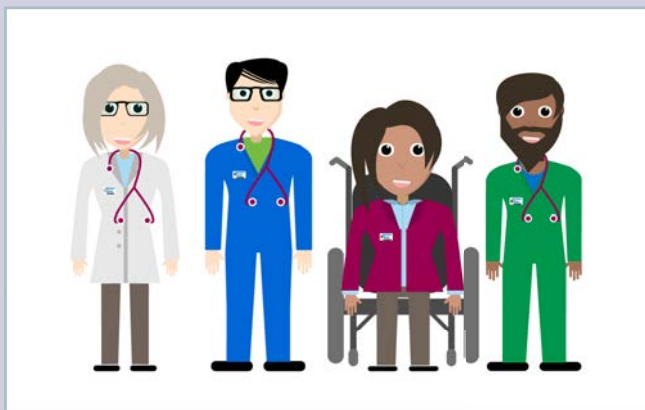
We are very pleased to be able to offer this new initiative to our clients as part of our advice pathway. The panel will review NIHR as well as other open-call peer-reviewed funding grant proposals.

The panels run three times per year in February,



June and October. If you are interested in having your application reviewed at a future panel, as well as receiving one-to-one advice throughout the course of your proposal developments, please register with us for advice at www.rds-nw.nihr.ac.uk. Your RDS NW adviser will then contact you to provide information and guidance on applying to the Pre-Submission Review panel.

Barriers to research in the NHS



Watch out for our new campaign, launching in September 2019, that will highlight how we can help you overcome some of the barriers to research within the NHS in the NW.

The barriers to involving NHS staff in research are well known and outlined in [THIS.Institute's report](#). Some of the barriers are:

- lack of time
- lack of knowledge
- lack of funding.

Research in health and social care is conducted by all health and social care staff. The campaign will seek to address some of the barriers these staff have in conducting research in our region. We will highlight the services RDS NW can provide to both first time and experienced researchers.

The campaign will run for approximately six months. We have worked closely with our NHS Engagement Officers to ensure this campaign is effective within various parts of the NHS in the NW. We want to ensure staff are aware of what the RDS NW has to offer and fully benefit from our service.

Details of the campaign will be available on the RDS NW website in early September. Also, keep a look out on Twitter #startwithus #RDSNW

@NIHR_RDSNW

We will be launching our very own Twitter feed soon, why not follow us now @NIHR_RDSNW

Public Involvement news



Public Involvement (PI) news and developments

Dr Lucy Frith, Strategic Lead for RDS NW PI, is part of an [INVOLVE](#) project to develop an ethical Framework to Support the Implementation of the National Standards at the Initial Phases of Health and Social Care Research. A new open access book designed to support researchers in public involvement has been released by Manchester University press; [A Research Handbook for Patient and Public Involvement Researchers](#) by Bee, P; Brooks, H; et al is available through Manchester University Press's Openhive. Gemma Shields, an RDS NW adviser, was one of the authors.

Finally, as part of the recent review of the RDS NW website the Public Involvement section was reviewed and updated and new [guidance for the Public Involvement fund](#) has been produced.

Recent PI events

The PI team led on two regional events in collaboration with the NIHR Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health and Care North West Coast ([CLAHRC NWC](#)), INVOLVE and the [Public Programmes Team](#), Manchester University Hospital's NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Manchester.

28 October 2018 in Manchester – Building Capacity in Public Involvement in the North West - This event focused on both the ethicality of public involvement and novel and creative approaches to public involvement activities.

14 March 2019 in Warrington - Creating Inclusive Research - This event displayed examples of inclusive public involvement across the North West, and in particular, how public involvement activities can incorporate Health Inequalities Impact Assessment tools.

Remember if you need advice on any aspect of public involvement in the design of your research proposal contact RDS NW for help Email: rds.nw@nihr.ac.uk, Tel: 01524 593209 or visit rds-nw.nihr.ac.uk

Notification - public reviewers needed

As part of the support that it provides to researchers, the RDS NW has recently set up pre-submission review panels. We are calling for Public Reviewers for the pre-submission review panels in 2019/2020.

cont. over page

Public Involvement news cont.

As patient and public involvement is a key element of NIHR research, we would like to include public reviewers in the pre-submission panel process whose role would be to read a proportion of grant applications and review the public involvement elements of the applications and to attend one of the panel meetings.

The role is fully supported and financial remuneration for preparing for the meetings, travel, and family expense (e.g. childcare) will be provided.

For further information and guidance on how to apply, please contact: Suzanne Parsons, Specialist Public Involvement Adviser for Greater Manchester on 0161 276 6614 suzanne.parsons@manchester.ac.uk

A new approach to Patient and Public Engagement

Health researchers in York have recently collaborated with a digital agency in south Cumbria called [MORP](#) to create multimedia information (MMI) resources for patients. The Trials Engagement in Children and Adolescents (TRECA) project developed an evidence-based approach to trial recruitment and used it to engage with young people. There is the potential with this kind of work to be used to engage with diverse and hard to reach communities in clinical trials. [More about the TRECA trial can be found here.](#)

The MMI in the York research involved text, audio, video and animations to better inform children, adolescents and their parents about trials, leading to increased engagement in healthcare trials.

This research project shows that collaborating early with an SME of this kind is a good way to think about impact and innovative approaches to patient and public involvement. Crucially for researchers, it is important to ensure that these factors are included at an early stage and in costings to potential funders.

The RDS NW Public Involvement Fund

Don't wait until your research proposal is fully formed before involving the public. As long as you are in receipt of advice from RDS NW, you can apply for public involvement funding (PIF) even when your research idea is at a very early stage. Public contributors can help to develop and refine the research focus and importantly offer feedback on priorities or questions deemed most relevant from a public or patient perspective.

If you're already registered with us for RDS NW advice, and you're interested in applying for the Public Involvement Fund, an application form is available from the RDS NW Coordinating Office: rds-nw@lancaster.ac.uk.

If you are not in receipt of advice for your project and would like advice on any aspect of research design then you can [request advice here](#). Please note that eligibility criteria apply.

Big Data



```
00100 001001101
11100 100010100
10010 101011101
10001 110111000
01001 000011110
01111 001000101
```

Big Data and Applied Health and Social Care Research

The term big data is often used to describe a variety of datasets and what is determined to be 'big' differs from use to use. Common examples included mobile phone data, social media activity or financial transaction information.

In the applied health and social care research world big data typically, but not always, refers to patient level data either from administrative datasets with population coverage or from large sample/cohort datasets. These may achieve their big status because they included millions of patients and/or hundreds of fields: they are long and wide.

Some interesting examples:

- **Hospital Episode Statistics:**
patient level hospital activity for all NHS care provided in England. Per year: 20 million inpatient stays, 23 million A&E attendances and 120 million outpatient appointments.
- **Clinical Practice Research Datalink:**
patient level GP activity for a large sample of 1500 practices using Vision or EMIS systems. Data on all consultations including diagnoses, treatments and prescriptions.

Gaining access to these data can be complex and there are issues with storage and analysis too; secure, high performance computing is often needed and your trust or university may be able to provide you with access to existing systems.

The Research Design Service has expertise with access and using these large datasets for applied health and social care research and can help with advice and research design. Please get in [contact with RDS NW](#) if you require assistance or would like to know more.

New NIHR Applied Research Collaborations in NW

The NIHR has announced a £135 million investment in 15 new NIHR Applied Research Collaborations (ARCs), which will join up some of the country's best universities, leading innovators and local authorities to solve some of the biggest issues facing health and social care over the next five years.

The funding has been awarded to 15 partnerships covering every area of England, made up of health and care providers, commissioners, local authorities, universities, private companies, charities, and academics, who will work together to address specific health or care issues in their region.

The partnerships in the North West are as follows;

- NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Greater Manchester hosted by Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust
- NIHR Applied Research Collaboration North West Coast hosted by NHS Liverpool CCG

[Find out more on the NIHR website.](#)

Our new adviser: Georgios Gkountouras



Georgios Gkountouras, RDS Adviser

Georgios Gkountouras started working for RDS NW in May 2019 as an adviser. Here he tells us about his background in health research.

I work as a health economics research associate in the University of Manchester. I am an economist by training, and I received my master's degree in health economics policy and law from the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. After the end of my studies, I joined the School of Pharmacy in the University of Nottingham, where I was involved in studies evaluating interventions about the frail elderly, pharmacy services, and diagnostic interventions delivered in primary care. My PhD study was about the economic

evaluation of antiplatelet medications in patients with Type 2 diabetes for secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease. My research experience is in economic evaluations, trial based economic evaluations, decision analytical modelling, and the use of routinely collected health care information from large datasets. My work has covered several disease areas (diabetes, asthma, COPD, liver disease, cardiovascular disease).

I have been based at the University of Manchester since October 2017. Before joining Manchester I was based in the University of Nottingham from 2012 till September 2017, where I worked for two years as a full-time researcher, and then as part-time researcher during my PhD studentship. I am really looking forward to help out researchers who need advice for their projects.

Welcome from the RDS National Office

My name is Martin Williams and I am proud to be Director of the Research Design Service (RDS) National Office, chair of the RDS Strategy Group and to represent the RDS on NIHR's Strategy Board.

As you probably know, Research Design Service North West (RDS NW) is one of ten RDS across England all working hard to support people to win funding to test their ideas for better patient health and care. You will be pleased to know that the RDS is getting better at this every year and I was delighted to see that over 45% of applications supported by an RDS last year were successful. I would like to congratulate all the teams who won research grants and to acknowledge all the RDS advisers who worked hard to help them.

Part of my role is to coordinate the collective effort of RDS regions and to find ways of sharing good practice across the country. There has been many innovations in RDS NW, including in involving patients and the public in research, working closely with health and



Martin Williams, Director, RDS National Office

care practitioners and their organisations and in delivering valuable, interesting and varied workshops and events. I hope to see these innovations spread across the whole RDS so that all research communities can reap the benefits.

Funding focus



NIHR Research for Social Care

The NIHR Research for Patient Benefit programme (RfPB) has funded £2.5 million of new research into social care, bolstering NIHR's commitment to improving social care through high quality evidence and building capacity for research in this field.

The new funding was driven by RfPB's 2018 funding call for research focused on adult social care, which received a great response from the research community.

Following this successful call, the NIHR will be investing in future social care research with annual funding calls via the RfPB programme, under the banner of Research for Social Care (RfSC). The RfSC call, planned to launch in September, will have a budget of £3m.

[Read the full article and download the call specification on the NIHR website here.](#)

Launch events

The call will be supported by launch events for potential applicants hosted by the [NIHR Research Design Service](#) (RDS).

Location	Date	Registration and contacts
Bristol	30 September 2019	Bristol registration form rds.sw@nihr.ac.uk 01392 726724
Manchester	08 October 2019	Manchester registration form rds.nw@nihr.ac.uk 01524 593209
London	14 October 2019	London registration form info@rdslondon.co.uk 020 7848 6782
York	17 October 2019	York registration form rds-yh@sheffield.ac.uk 0114 222 0828
Birmingham	22 October 2019	Birmingham registration form rds@contacts.bham.ac.uk 0121 414 8533

#nhs wonderwoman

In the latest short film in their Wonder Woman Series by [NHS R&D North West](#), listen to Dr Marie Marshall, Consultant Nurse from Manchester University Foundation Trust, talk about her career, from making the decision to become a nurse, developing her passion for research and the challenge of her current role.

Marie wants to drive the research agenda forward for Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professions to create something different. She encourages us all to be confident in putting ourselves forward, to be bold and not to be afraid to ask for help! [Watch the film on You Tube here.](#)

Latest RDS Blog - Getting stuck into Co-Production

Ever wanted to see what Co-production would look like in practice? The RDS blog this month by Dr. Richard Holliday (researcher) and Roland Finch (patient representative) via RDS North East, is a superb example of how it is possible even when you start out as a novice in the process.

It was a grey October afternoon, when my (Richard's) inbox started filling up with messages from colleagues about a recently released research funding call in my subject area. Having spent the previous few years conducting a pilot study ¹, the timing of the call seemed almost ideal! I had about 10 months until the deadline and enthusiastically set off on the journey of pulling together the grant application. I had increasingly started to hear about 'co-production' in research and after some reading around, I decided to utilise this exciting but slightly mystifying approach.

I was a novice to co-production and there was a mine field of terminology to negotiate (co-initiation, co-design, co-decision, co-delivery, co-evaluation). I read several useful resources, such as those from NIHR [INVOLVE](#), which outline the key principles and features of good co-production in research. However, I was still left a little lost and ended up on a workshop in London hearing about different co-production approaches and examples. I soon realised that there wasn't a strict definition of co-production and definitely no step-by-step guide.

Our co-production process had four main elements: First, there was a condition-specific patient panel. Second, I visited a national public panel in Nottingham. Third, we (myself and other members of the research team) engaged with a wide range of non-patient stakeholders. Finally, we hosted a 'co-production grand session'.

The co-production process was a lot of hard work. There were several late nights doing everything from pulling presentations together to making name badges. However, it was fully worth it! I'm really pleased with the resulting research proposal which, if funded, should deliver a study that works well for patients, practitioners and researchers. I was kindly supported by the Research Design Service (RDS) Public Involvement Fund (for the patient/public aspects) and by my local academic unit (School of Dental Sciences, Newcastle University). As well as providing access to funding our local RDS was a great resource of information, advice and support during this process – definitely talk to your RDS early on! In conclusion, I was pleasantly surprised by the co-production process.

This is an edited version. [The full blog can be found here.](#)

NIHR news in brief

[Announcing the launch of the new NIHR website](#)

On 15 July 2019 the NIHR launched its new website. The site navigation is built around our key audience groups and we've worked closely with users to ensure that the site provides clear user journeys to enable you to find the information you need more quickly.

[NIHR Training Advocate Recruitment](#)

The NIHR Training Advocates promote research training opportunities to non-medical clinical professions in order to support the NIHR Academy in developing research capacity.

[First global and first European patient successes](#)

NIHR specialties have recently achieved a first global or first European patient being recruited into research studies.

Find out more about Clinical Research Networks



In this article we find out more about one of RDS NW's partner organisations who are also part of the NIHR; CRN Greater Manchester and CRN North West Coast.

The [NIHR Clinical Research Network](#) (CRN) provides practical support to allow high-quality clinical research to take place in the NHS and the wider health and social care environment.

This allows the gathering of evidence that leads to new and better treatments for patients.

The Network:

- helps researchers set up clinical studies quickly and effectively
- matches patients with potential studies and delivers studies to time and target
- holds intelligence about patient populations and care pathways
- supports the life-sciences industry to deliver clinical research programmes
- provides health professionals with clinical research training
- works to involve patients and the public, making research more relevant and bringing it in line with the public's interests and concerns.

The CRN's operate across England through a national coordinating centre and 15 local branches delivering research across all therapy areas. They help to increase opportunities for patients to take part in clinical research, ensuring that studies are carried out efficiently, and are supportive of the Government's Strategy for UK Life Sciences by improving the environment for commercial contract clinical research in the NHS.

NIHR CRN's are passionate about the contribution clinical research makes to patient care and work collaboratively to translate that passion into the effective delivery of studies.

Find out more about the CRN in the North West:

- [CRN Greater Manchester](#)
- [CRN North West Coast.](#)

The RDS NW advisers work closely with the CRN locally to ensure that your research can be carried out effectively within the NHS.

Events



[NIHR Research for Patient Benefit \(RfPB\) social care funding road-show event](#)

08 October 2019 - Manchester

[RDS NW - Developing Funding Proposals in Applied Health and Social Care: NIHR Funding Programmes](#)

30 October 2019 – UCLan, Burnley Campus

[MRC: How to be a good Chief Investigator Workshop](#)

19 November 2019 - Liverpool

Funding Deadlines

[NIHR Public Health Research Programme: researcher-led](#)

Closing date - 19 November 2019

[NIHR Research for Patient Benefit Programme: competition 40](#)

Closing date - 20 November 2019

[NIHR Health Technology Assessment: new commissioned calls](#)

Closing date – 4 December 2019

[NIHR Health Technology Assessment: new commissioned calls](#)

Closing date – 22 January 2020



And finally

You may have noticed that our newsletter has had a refresh. As part of a rebranding exercise by the NIHR, the RDS network and all RDS NW branding has changed to reflect this significant change to the look and feel of the organisation.

RDS NW has a smart new logo and we are working to update our website and printed resources during the remainder of this year. We are working on improving the accessibility and useability of website and online resources.

Please get in touch, rds-nw@lancaster.ac.uk, for new copies of our poster and leaflets.

Our new Twitter feed launches soon [@NIHR_RDSNW](https://twitter.com/NIHR_RDSNW).