



Health and Care Research Wales Centre for Adult Social Care Research

Brief and Guidance

Closing date: 17:00 Tuesday 20 September 2022

1. Summary of this call

Health and Care Research Wales wishes to work in partnership with a Higher Education Institute (HEI) in Wales to create and co-fund an Adult Social Care Research Centre.

Health and Care Research Wales will commit £2.5-£3m to this initiative over a 5-year period to fund a cluster of posts at a professorial and senior researcher level embedded in a supportive and attractive academic environment.

The successful HEI is expected to provide co-funding during the initial five-year period, and to have a sustainable plan for funding the posts beyond the term of Health and Care Research Wales investment. Interested HEIs should complete the Expression of Interest form that accompanies this brief.

2. Rationale for this call

Health and Care Research Wales has a strategic priority to work with Welsh universities, NHS boards and trusts, local authorities and care providers to **create and sustain the capacity and capability** in those organisations to lead, undertake and support health and care research.

Health and Care Research Wales also wishes to increase its investment in social care research and evaluation, and, indeed, has increased opportunities offered through its funding schemes and personal awards.

There has been growing recognition, not just in Wales but across the UK, of the importance of social care research in general, and adult social care research in particular, as issues related to an ageing population and an increase in demand for social care have gained a new prominence. This had led to an increased investment from a range of UK funders, including: the Economic and Social Research Council, with its support for the IMPACT programme led from Birmingham and the Sheffield-led Centre for Care; UKRI with its healthy ageing challenge programme; and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and National Institute for Health and Social Care Research (NIHR) in England, with new bespoke social care opportunities offered through NIHR research funding programmes.

However, while there are strengths related to children's social care research in Wales, notably through the CASCADE Centre at Cardiff University, adult social care research capacity remains limited and has arguably declined in recent years. This limited capacity has left Wales poorly placed to take advantage of these funding opportunities.

Health and Care Research Wales therefore wishes to work in partnership with a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Wales to create and co-fund an Adult Social Care Research Centre able to create a critical mass of researchers capable of winning research funding at a national and international level and contributing to the development of adult social care policy and practice in Wales.

There is much to be learned from our most successful centres in other areas of health and social care research in Wales. Most notably, perhaps, successful centres show strong and consistent academic leadership from individuals with strong national and international profiles and reputations.

Successful centres also typically have: a clear and well-thought-out strategy based on a knowledge of the wider landscape and a focus on areas of strength; good partnerships across the UK and internationally with other institutions who *want* to partner with them; a sustainable approach to leadership, staff development and growth; and a supportive HEI environment, with strong institutional commitment to investing from its own resources and embedding centres in wider HEI structures.

It follows that HEIs interested in the opportunity offered by this call will need to demonstrate:

- alignment with the strategic plans and existing research strengths of the HEI;
- a commitment to embedding the Centre in wider school or faculty structures in relation to both teaching and research;
- the ability to attract a strong director and senior staff, probably from elsewhere in the UK;
- evidence that all posts will be embedded within a supportive and attractive academic environment;
- the subsequent ability to attract and retain other researchers at all levels to build critical mass;
- the ability to form wider partnerships and collaborations, in Wales and the UK;
- the ability to take advantage of funding opportunities offered by other funders, such as NIHR and ESRC, and win competitive research funding at a national and international level;
- a resource commitment both during the period of Health and Care Research Wales investment and beyond;
- a credible strategy for long-term sustainability and growth.

3. Key features of this call

- Health and Care Research Wales will provide funding of up to £3m over 5 years (approximately £500-600k a year, though it may be profiled and phased flexibly over the grant period) to support joint-investment with one HEI to create an Adult Social Care Research Centre and build capacity in adult social care research.
- During the period, the HEI must recruit to a number of senior academic posts that will put the Centre in a strong position to seek and win additional research funding at a UK and international level.
- Health and Care Research Wales will provide funding for posts, *including on-costs*, and is seeking co-funding over the initial five-year period and assurances that posts will be made permanent beyond the initial five-year period.
- Health and Care Research Wales sees this as an infrastructure investment (rather than funding for research projects) and in recognition of the nature and partnership aspect of the investment, will not pay FEC overheads on these posts.
- Health and Care Research Wales will work with the successful HEI on the recruitment of the Centre director and senior team and on establishing the co-funding agreement.
- Applicants are asked to note that a period of discussion, assessment and iteration may be required before Health and Care Research Wales is in a position to issue a formal funding award.

4. How to apply

Interested institutions should apply by completing the Adult Social Care Research Centre expression of interest form that accompanies this brief.

Interested institutions *must* provide a *fully signed* electronic copy of the expression of interest form by **17:00 (5pm) on 20 September 2022**.

Shortlisted institutions will be invited to present to our external review panel in October 2022 (date to be determined).

While we do not require a hard (paper) copy of your form, *all* signatories *must* be copied in when you email us your electronic submission.

Please provide your completed form in Word *and* Portable Document Format (PDF).

Please email your completed expression of interest form to the Research and Development Division Grant Team mailbox:

healthandcareresearchgrants@gov.wales

Please mark your email for the attention of Michael Bowdery.

If you have any further queries regarding completion of the expression of interest form or the submission process, please contact the R&D Division in Welsh Government via our mailbox: healthandcareresearchgrants@gov.wales