Version 3.0 – August 2022

Research Funding Scheme: Health Research Grants (HRG)

Guidance Notes for Applicants

These guidance notes apply to: Health Research Grants STAGE ONE

Research Funding Scheme: Health Research Grants

The Research Funding Scheme: Health Research Grant (HRG) award aims to support capacity and capability building in health research by funding high-quality research projects with clear relevance to the development of health research knowledge. These projects will provide robust evidence to support the development or appraisal of new treatments, interventions, service organisation and delivery innovations or other activities designed to improve the health and wellbeing of the Welsh population. The remit of the scheme includes prevention and population health research and health and social care service integration.

Further information about all research funding schemes run by Health and Care Research Wales can be found on the Health and Care Research Wales website.

Guidance for applicants

The HRG application process has two stages. These guidance notes contain information for applicants submitting a **STAGE 1** proposal to the HRG awards call.

Applications for funding are made online using the Health and Care Research Wales electronic Grants Application System (Health and Care Research Wales eGAS). You will need to register or log-in to Health and Care Research Wales eGAS to complete and submit your application.

Please read these guidance notes fully before starting your application.

Incorrectly completed applications may be rejected.

Application and assessment process

After submission, Stage 1 applications are checked that they are in remit and competitive. Applications passing this initial check will go on to be reviewed by the All Wales Prioritisation Panel (AWPP) and a Prioritisation Oversight Committee (POC) who make recommendations to Health and Care Research Wales based on review of the case made for prioritisation and the importance of the research to the public, policy and practice.

The All Wales Prioritisation Panel is a virtual panel made up of public and practice reviewers, and the Prioritisation Oversight Committee consists of practitioners, public, and policy representatives and, for continuity across stages 1 and 2, the chairs of the relevant Funding Board.

The AWPP and POC consider an anonymised extract of your application and **will only see***:

- Your **Project Summary** (minus host organisation details)
- **the Case for Prioritisation,** and
- **Uploads.**

Please note that Stage 1 applications are assessed only on **the importance of the research question**. The science, or the scientific merit, does not form part of the assessment at Stage 1.

(*Other information on the Stage 1 application is only needed for scheme management).

Applicants shortlisted by the POC are then invited to submit a **Stage 2** proposal, and the science and scientific merit of the proposal will be assessed at this stage.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We take seriously our duty under the Equality Act (2010) to offer and make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities applying to our research funding schemes, and to ensure that our Panel members are aware of our responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and thus the need to treat all applications fairly. If you would like to discuss reasonable adjustments to the application process, please contact wales@soton.ac.uk before the application deadline.

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Part 1: Background Information

1.   Introduction to the Call

The Research Funding Scheme: Health Research Grant (HRG) award aims to support capacity and capability building in health research by funding high-quality research projects with clear relevance to the development of health research knowledge. These projects will provide robust evidence to support the development or appraisal of new treatments, interventions, service organisation and delivery innovations or other activities designed to improve the health and wellbeing of the Welsh population. The remit of the scheme includes prevention and population health research and health and social care service integration.

While all applications meeting the general remit of the scheme are welcome, Health and Care Research Wales has additionally identified priority areas in which it particularly welcomes applications. Please see the priority areas described below.

1.1   Aims and Scope of Health Research Grants award call

The scheme will support translational through to applied research, including the early stages of intervention development, where knowledge obtained from these preliminary studies will provide the underpinning evidence for future pilot testing and evaluation and larger-scale research. Well-scoped applications that will produce findings to inform later, and possibly larger research funding applications are welcome, as are applications for projects which will produce 'impactful' findings in their own right.

All applicants, including those wishing to undertake earlier translational research, are required to state clearly the likely impact of their findings in the short to medium term and indicate how this will lead to improvements in healthcare and/or patient/public benefit.

Within the overall parameters of the call, applications of various length, size and cost are welcome. Applicants should be mindful that applications often fail at the assessment stage because they are considered overambitious.

For the avoidance of doubt, evidence syntheses and meta-analyses do fall within the scope of this call.

Health and Care Research Wales encourages collaborative projects with SAIL that explore the use of health and care data sets, particularly where they address the priority areas set out in this document. Any researcher wishing to collaborate with SAIL should engage with SAIL as early as possible in bid development. Please note that all SAIL-related research costs will need to be costed and fully incorporated in the Stage 2 (full application).

The HRG application process has two stages.

Stage 1 applications are first checked that they are in remit and competitive. Applications passing this initial check will go on to be reviewed by the All Wales Prioritisation Panel (AWPP) and a Prioritisation Oversight Committee (POC) who make recommendations to Health and Care Research Wales based on review of the case made for prioritisation and the importance of the research to the public, policy and practice.

The shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit **Stage 2** (full) applications, which are checked for competitiveness, receive external peer review, and are considered for scientific merit by the Funding Board, who recommend funding of successful research proposals to Health and Care Research Wales.

Priority Areas

The Health Research Grants (HRG) scheme offers funding across a broad range of health, public health, and health services related research topics, as set out in the 'remit' section of the funding call documentation. As usual, however, Health and Care Research Wales has identified priority areas in which it particularly welcomes applications.

For the 2022-23 Health Research Grants call, Health and Care Research Wales particularly welcomes applications that:

- align with the healthcare well-being objective in the Welsh Government's *Programme for Government 2021-2026*; and/or

- address the challenges set out in *A Healthier Wales*, the Welsh Government's strategy for health and social care

- address issues related to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the context of these priority areas

Applications will be assessed in keeping with the standard assessment processes of the schemes. Applications that show clearly their relevance and importance to the priority areas are well placed to score well at Stage 1 assessment (which looks at the importance of the research question). Please note, however, that as Stage 2 assessment (peer review and Funding Board) is focused on the quality and scientific merit of the application, there is no ring-fenced funding at Stage 2 for projects addressing priority areas.

To help researchers develop and frame ideas that address the priority areas, some background and links to key documents are provided below.

1. *Alignment with the healthcare well-being objective in the Welsh Government's* Programme for Government 2021-2026

The Welsh Government's *Programme for Government 2021-2026* presents an ambitious set of commitments that the Welsh Government wishes to deliver in the sixth Senedd term. It incorporates a set of ten well-being objectives that the Welsh Government will use to maximise its contribution to Wales' seven long term well-being goals, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The ten well-being objectives include a healthcare-specific objective to 'provide effective, high-quality sustainable healthcare'. Areas of specific activity include, for example, primary care service reform, mental health service provision and redesign, and social prescribing, alongside commitments to tackle health inequalities, support health workers, deepen service integration and focus on prevention.

Applicants are invited to submit proposals aligned with the healthcare well-being objective. If your proposed research project has additional points of contact with the other well-being objectives, please reference this in your application.

Key documents:

Programme for Government 2021-2026: https://gov.wales/programme-for-government-2021-to-2026

Programme for Government 2021-2026 well-being statement: https://gov.wales/programme-for-government-2021-to-2026-well-being-statement

The Well-being of Future Generations Act: https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/

2. Addressing the challenges set out in A Healthier Wales, the Welsh Government's strategy for health and social care

'A Healthier Wales' is the Welsh Government's response to the Parliamentary Review report, 'A Revolution from Within: Transforming Health and Care in Wales', published in 2018. Although first published in the previous Senedd term, it continues to stand as the Welsh Government's strategy for health and social care and its delivery continues to be a Ministerial priority.

'A Healthier Wales' recognises the changing healthcare needs of a growing and ageing population, especially given advances in technology and medicine, and changing lifestyles and expectations. It strongly affirms a continuing commitment to 'prudent healthcare', with its central focus on 'do no harm'. It describes in detail a healthcare system providing the highest value, and delivering the greatest return, in terms of individual benefit and outcome for any given cost.

Key themes include:

- Supporting longer, healthier and happier lives;

- Shifting services from hospitals to community settings;

- Providing a seamless, whole system approach to health and social care, including more integrated health and social care services;

- Placing a greater emphasis on prevention, addressing factors which prevent ill-health and/or support wellbeing.

Applicants should be mindful of the four themes of the 'Quadruple Aim', as set out in 'A Healthier Wales', and the ten 'Design Principles' intended to help translate ideas into reality.

Key document:

A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care: A healthier Wales: long term plan for health and social care | GOV.WALES

1.2   Eligibility

Health and Care Research Wales would expect and encourage a range of applications (in terms of size, duration and scope) including those for **preliminary pilot, feasibility or review work** that might, for example, support a subsequent, larger application to a research funder. Please note that within the terms of the call, quality (not cost and duration) is the key measure of assessment. The maximum period for which funding can be sought is 24 months.

A total sum of approximately £1.5m is available for awards under this call. Health and Care Research Wales expects to fund 4-8 projects. Within the overall funding available, there is no limit on the upper or lower sizes of award, though applicants should be mindful of the total amount available and the expectations of Health and Care Research Wales regarding the number of projects it is likely to fund.

All applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

- Applicants must be based at an institution or organisation in Wales at the time of applying (*or be in receipt of a job offer such that they will be based in the host institution before the project starts*).

- Applicants must have a PhD, UK MD or other research-based professional doctorate in health-related research at the time of applying. (Applications will be accepted from those who have recently submitted their PhD thesis, or equivalent, to their institution for assessment, as long as the doctorate is awarded before the grant starts.)

- Applications must have the support of the host institution. If the application is successful, a contract for the delivery of the research will be placed with the host organisation and all funds for the research will be issued to that organisation.

- There are no restrictions on the experience of Lead Applicants, but, subject to quality thresholds being met, Health and Care Research Wales will ringfence funds to support at least one 'early-stage career researcher' award, where an 'early stage career researcher' is defined as an individual who has no more than 60 months active post-doctoral research experience (excluding, for example, career breaks, maternity/paternity leave and illness).

- Applications from early-stage career researchers **must** have Principal Co-applicant support from a senior researcher. **Failure to provide this will prevent your application from progressing.**

- Applications for projects of varying cost and length are encouraged, as long as a strong case is made for the value and quality of the work. The maximum period for which funding can be sought is 24 months.

An application can include an academic partner organisation from outside Wales, provided a strong case is made that the chosen partner is best placed to provide the academic input to the planned research.

1.3   Structure and Timetable

Applications must be completed and submitted online, using the electronic Grant Application System (eGAS) which Health and Care Research Wales uses to deliver the application process.

The assessment process is as follows:

- All applications are first checked to see if they are within the scheme and call remit and to identify any that are clearly not competitive*.

- Anonymised extracts of the applications are then assessed by the All Wales Prioritisation Panel (AWPP) based on the importance of the research to patients, service users, carers and/or the organisation and delivery of effective healthcare and social services in Wales.

- The assessed applications are shortlisted by the Prioritisation Oversight Committee, and successful applicants are invited to submit a Stage 2 application.

- Stage 2 applications are checked to identify any that are clearly not competitive.*

- Stage 2 applications will then be sent out for external peer and public review prior to being assessed by the Funding Board.

*Please note: 'Not-Competitive' means that a proposal is not of a sufficiently high standard to be taken forward for further assessment in comparison with other proposals received because it has little or no realistic prospect of funding. This may be because of scientific quality, cost, scale/duration, or the makeup of the project team.

Summary of the HRG award application and assessment timetable*: The key dates for applicants are provided in the table below. *Please note the deadline for submission of applications is **1pm**.	
Stage in Process	**Date**
Call Launch	1 September 2022
Stage 1 Submission Deadline	**20 October 2022**
All Wales Prioritisation Panel	November 2022
Priority Oversight Committee	December 2022
Shortlisted applications invited to submit a Stage 2 proposal	**December 2022**
Stage 2 Submission Deadline	**15 February 2023**
Funding Board	June 2023

*Please note: these dates may be subject to change

1.4   Shortlisting Criteria

The All Wales Prioritisation Panel (AWPP) see an anonymised extract of the Stage 1 application comprising the **Project Summary** (excluding the Host Organisation), **Case for Prioritisation, and Uploads**.

Stage 1 applications will be judged on the demonstrated evidence of importance and relevance in terms of the need for, likely health benefit and value for money of the research question posed. Decisions will be made based on the following criteria, so you should ensure these questions are considered when writing your application:

- Is there an important gap in the existing evidence?

- Will the research either benefit a large population or have an important impact on a smaller population?

- Does the research have the potential to influence current Welsh policy and practice?

- Will the research help decision-making in the NHS and/or other health and wellbeing settings?

Please note we provide the above criteria as a guide for assessment and the discussion will not be limited to these areas.

You should avoid including information about the scientific methodology and focus on the importance of the question to the public, policy and practice.

1.5   Criteria for Funding

For information, if you are successful at Stage 1 and invited to submit a Stage 2 application, the criteria for assessment at Stage 2 will include:

- Showing a clear potential benefit to patients and the public and active involvement throughout.

- Containing a clear statement of objectives and demonstrating that the design of the research is appropriate to meet those objectives.

- Indicating that the team is fully aware of relevant literature as well as any ongoing studies on the topic.

- Make a case for potential improvements in health and/or healthcare arising from the study and include a discussion of potential impact.

- Provide a justification for the research design, methodologies and techniques of data collection and analysis, demonstrating in as much detail as possible how the hypotheses or research questions will be addressed.

- Make reference to any anticipated difficulties of access to respondents and/or data and how these will be overcome.

- Show that current research governance frameworks and procedures for ethical approval have been followed.

- Give a full justification for the duration of the research and financial support requested, demonstrating that the objectives are achievable within the resources and timescales proposed and justifying the time inputs of members of the research team (including for any public involvement team members).

- Indicating how dissemination of results will be handled and how action plans might follow.

- Be costed in line with the Health and Care Research Wales expectations that a range of projects will be submitted, in terms of cost and duration, within the maximum 24-month duration.

All Lead Applicants will be expected to report on findings in such a way that the research outcomes are open to critical examination by peers. Outputs from the scheme are likely to take the form of end of award reports, academic publications and other innovative methods designed to reach wide practitioner, public and policy audiences so as to influence the ways in which health services are delivered.

1.6   Data Protection Statement

We have an obligation to keep data secure and to use it appropriately. To fulfil our obligations under law and as a result of our contract with the Welsh Government, the School of Healthcare Enterprise and Innovation (SHEI), University of Southampton adopts various procedures to use and protect data. This will impact on how we deal with you as an applicant and your Co-applicants.

Privacy Notice

The Welsh Government Grant Privacy Notice states how the Welsh Government will use the information provided at application stage. It is available here: https://gov.wales/privacy-notice-welsh-government-grants

Data Security – Data About You

Personal information will be held on a database in the School of Healthcare Enterprise and Innovation password protected network that is available only to School of Healthcare Enterprise and Innovation staff. Your details and those of your Co-applicants will be retained in order to facilitate the running of the Health and Care Research Wales funding schemes at the School of Healthcare Enterprise and Innovation. If your application is successful at any stage of our process, your name and organisation details may appear on the Health and Care Research Wales website.

In addition, once funding has been agreed and the contract signed, your details may appear in other Health and Care Research Wales literature as a grant holder and will be passed to the Health and Care Research Wales, Welsh Government for inclusion in any of their publicly available databases of research projects. Your name and those of your Co-applicants will be added to our mailing list. This means that you may be sent updates on Health and Care Research Wales funding schemes and related information. If you have any questions, or if you would prefer not to receive routine and/or general communication, please contact us as: wales@soton.ac.uk

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ   Email Address: Data.ProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF   Telephone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113
            Website: www.ico.gov.uk

2. Getting Started and Using the Form

Applications for funding are made online through the Health and Care Research Wales Grant Application System (Health and Care Research Wales eGAS) wales.soton.ac.uk

You must register or log-in to the Health and Care Research Wales eGAS to complete and submit your application.

2.1 Electronic Application Form

To assist you with completing the application form an in-form learning guide can be accessed at the top of each page of the application form, under the 'Instructions' heading. The learning guide aims to explain each section and provide guidance as to what information is required.

There is also a '**FAQ**' section available on the left-hand navigation menu of the application form screen.

2.2 To Access the Application Form

Use the following the link: wales.soton.ac.uk

You will need to either register (one off process) or log-in using your registered email address (your user ID) and password. To apply for a specific call, click on the 'Apply for Funding' button where you will be taken to a list of available funding opportunities. Applying for a funding opportunity creates a task called **'Stage 1 Application'**. This task will be available on your home page for you to complete until **1pm on the closing date**, as indicated on the research call and on your task.

See the screenshot example below:

Clicking on the **'Stage 1 Application'** link takes you to the Stage 1 Application main page where you can complete your application information (clicking on this link will **not submit** an incomplete application).

This task will be available for you to complete until **1pm on the closing date** as indicated on the research call and on your task.

Seven days prior to the closing date you will receive an email reminder that you have an open application (*i.e.,* not submitted). Additional guidance will be available on most screens as you progress through your application.

2.3   To Submit an Application

In order to submit a Stage 1 application to the programme you must:

- Complete all mandatory fields as indicated with a red asterisk *. The final review and submit page of the application provides a final check of the mandatory fields as well as providing reminders about optional entries.

2.4   Saving your Form and System Time-out

As you work through the application form, you are asked to save each page. This will save all the information you have entered so far. You can save the form at any point and leave the application prior to submission. The save button is located either at the bottom of each page of the application form or if you are working on large text areas this will have its own save button beside it. The application task will remain on your home page until complete and submitted or the deadline for the application has passed.

It is important to remember to SAVE each section as you go through the form before navigating away from the page.

There is a security time out set on eGAS so that after 60 minutes of inactivity, the user will be logged out of eGAS. It is advisable therefore to save your work at regular intervals using the save button. The Health and Care Research Wales eGAS will give you a warning that you are due to be timed out 10 minutes before this happens. If this message is displayed, you should close the pop-up screen and save the task that you are carrying out.

There is a left-hand navigation menu in the application form so that you can select specific parts of the form to complete, however you should always ensure that you save any information entered on your page before using this left-hand menu.

2.5   Browsers that Best Support eGAS

The Health and Care Research Wales eGAS will operate successfully across a wide range of browsers and operating systems. However, we recommend that you use the following:

- Windows users - Internet Explorer (versions 7, 8, 9 and 10), Firefox and Google Chrome.

- Apple users - Safari.

- Linux - Opera.

2.6 Spell-checking

The system does not have a spell-checker. We would advise you to complete large amounts of text in Word first and then cut and paste them into the relevant screens in the Health and Care Research Wales eGAS.

If you paste content that is longer than the character limit it will be cut off, so please check the content after you have pasted it.

Spell checking and text box entry resizing is available in eGAS for users using Chrome, Firefox, Safari and Opera web browsers. **This functionality is provided by the browser not the eGAS application.**

2.7 Giving Others Access to the Form

Use the following the link: wales.soton.ac.uk

Please note: A Microsoft Word version of the application form is available through the Health and Care Research Wales webpage. This document can be used to share information with your Co-applicants but will not be accepted as an application form.

The Lead Applicant can nominate someone in an administrative role to fill in some of the form.

This can be activated via the Research Team page by adding a Supporting Role of Administrative Contact and giving them the permission level of 'Edit All'. Please ensure that before adding these individuals you check to ensure they are not already registered on eGAS. If they are not registered, you will be required to accurately complete their contact details, specifically their email address. As a result of the nomination, your Supporting Role will be invited via email to login to eGAS, accept their role and complete their application contribution.

2.8 Leaving the Application Task

You can leave your application task at any time, but you must save any new information you have entered on the page you are working on first.

2.9 Printing your Form

You are able to print your form at any time by clicking on the 'Review and Submit' button in the left-hand menu and choosing the 'View PDF' button, this will generate a pdf of your application that you can then print.

2.10 Technical Support

If you encounter any problems with the Health and Care Research Wales eGAS system, you should refer to eGAS FAQs available on the following web page, or by calling the HRG helpline 023 8059 1925. If you leave a message a member of staff will return your call as promptly as possible.

2.11   Space Restrictions when Entering Text

You should be aware that there are character limits set for each text box within the application form. For larger text areas these are indicated with 'Limit' and 'Remaining' at the bottom of the text entry box. Carriage returns and spaces are counted as characters. The characters available will be slightly less than that of a Microsoft Word character count.

The form counts all blank spaces as a part of the content of each box, so if you are short of space it will help if you delete extra carriage returns and place any bulleted lists into paragraph format.

If you paste content that is longer than the character limit it will be cut off, so please check the content after you have pasted and saved it.

2.12   Use of Non-Standard Characters

You are advised not to use any non-standard characters in your text; in particular, you may experience a technical difficulty that affects the use of these characters '<' '>' '≥' and '≤'. The system will currently strip these characters out of the content of the text without warning. If you need to use these symbols, then please replace them with words (*i.e.,* less than or greater than, or less than or equal to or, greater than or equal to). It is advisable that you should either type text directly into the form or ensure these characters are not included in any text that you copy and paste from other documents.

2.13   URL Links

You may wish to include URL links to your application or refer to URL links in the body of your text. You are advised not to use any URL shortening service such as '*tiny.cc*' when completing your application. These types of shortening services are associated with hacking and spamming (as it promotes the sending of links that are unclear where they are pointing).

Part 2: Guidance for Completing your Electronic Application Form

Please note, the information in this section is presented in the way the application will be compiled in PDF form. The question order in the online form may vary due to technical restrictions.

Please note: Any sections labelled 'To be seen by the panel' **must** *be anonymised.* **Identifying information will be redacted** *and this may affect how well your application is understood.*

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3. Project Summary

To be seen by the panel – you must anonymise this section

Please ensure that you read the relevant documentation thoroughly before starting your application.

Project Reference

When you start an application a randomly generated 4-digit number will be assigned to your entry online. You should note this 4-digit identifier, which can be found in the top right-hand side of the screen in Project Information, as well as on the task on your home page, as you will need it for any enquiries prior to completing your submission.

If your application is successful, this unique reference number will stay with the research for its lifetime. Please note that this reference number is not filled in by the applicant and will be generated automatically.

3.1 Research Title

(Limit: 200 characters)

The project title should clearly and concisely state the proposed research. Any abbreviations or acronyms **must** be spelled out.

3.2 Project Start Date

Please note this should be the 1st of October whether this is a working day or not. Alternative start dates will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Health and Care Research Wales is committed to timeliness of research and rapid initiation of studies following funding board assessment.

Please note that should you be successful with your full proposal we will expect your project to commence on the 1st October 2023.

3.3 Project End Date

Your project should be a maximum of 24 months duration, shorter projects are also encouraged.

3.4   Total Research Costs Requested

At this point in the process only estimated costs are required. Please select the appropriate funding band for your project. Heath and Care Research Wales is interested in funding projects from the whole range of bands.

- Under £75,000

- £75,000 - £150,000

- Over £150,000

You may wish to use the detailed Budget and Justification spreadsheet here to assist you in estimating the total research costs requested, however, you are not required to upload a detailed budget as part of the Stage 1 application process.

You may wish to begin to gather the information you will need for NHS research costs (if your project will incur these), as you will be required to ensure your NHS research costs have been approved if you are invited to complete a Stage 2 proposal.

Please note, applicants wishing to collaborate with the SAIL database should **ensure they engage SAIL sufficiently in the development of their application**. You should cost in the necessary data analyst or training time as a specified direct cost. **This point also applies if you are planning to engage with Trials Units or health economists.**

3.5   Application Type

(Limit: 50 characters)

Please state whether your application is for primary or secondary research.

Please also state if your application is for a feasibility or pilot study.

A feasibility study is designed to answer the question 'Can this research be done?'

A pilot study is a smaller version of a planned larger trial and is used to refine the processes and components of an anticipated main study.

4.   Remit

This section is not seen by the panel but is needed for remit and competitiveness checks

4.1   How does this project fit the remit of the funding scheme?

(Limit: 3500 characters)

Your response to this question is not seen by the panel, so you may wish to repeat this information when responding to the questions in the Prioritisation section.

Please explain how your proposed research meets the general remit of the HRG scheme. You should include a clear explanation of the main (single) research question and ensure that you cover the following points:

- Population or problem - What are the characteristics of the population? What is the problem you are interested in?

- Interest or intervention - What is the defined event, activity, experience or process that you are researching?

- Context or comparison – What is the setting, or what are the distinct characteristics? What will you be comparing it with? What are the possible outcomes?

You do not need to describe methodology at this stage, but please give a brief explanation of how or in what ways the research design constitutes a clinical trial or evaluation study. You are welcome to also highlight any other aspects of the design that you would like to bring particular attention to, in order to explain how the research proposed is within remit.

4.2   Lead Applicant's Profession

Please select the relevant profession from the list available.

4.3   Lead Applicant's Place of Work

Please enter the Lead Applicant's place of work stating which university, organisation or institution.

4.4   Are you an early career researcher?

An early career researcher is a person who has no more than 60 months active WTE post-doctoral research experience (excluding career breaks, maternity/paternity leave and illness).

As noted in the eligibility criteria, subject to quality thresholds being met, Health and Care Research Wales will ringfence funds to support at least one 'early-stage career researcher' award and knowing whether early career researchers are applying to the scheme helps Health and Care Research Wales evaluate how well this scheme is helping to build the research community in Wales.

5.   Case for Prioritisation

To be seen by the panel – you must anonymise this section

Please note the All Wales Prioritisation Panel (AWPP) and Prioritisation Oversight Committee (POC) will use this section of the form to assess the importance of the proposal to policy, practice and public in Wales.

As your response to the remit question is not seen by the panel, you may wish to repeat that information when responding to the questions in the Prioritisation section.

> *You must complete all the questions in section 5 in an anonymised format, i.e., there must not be any information that enables any individual, team or institution associated with your application to be identified. Any identifiable text will be redacted before it is assessed, and this may have an effect on how well your application is understood.*

All answers to the questions in these sections should be written in plain English. A number of people will be using this to inform their assessment of your funding application. They include practitioners and researchers who do not have specialist knowledge of your field as well as policy makers and members of the public.

Guidance on writing in plain English which you may find applicable is available online at Involve Make it Clear http://www.invo.org.uk/makeitclear/how-to-write-a-summary/

5.1 What is the research question?

(Limit: 2000 characters)

Please include a statement and clear explanation of the main (single) research question. You may wish to re-use some of the content from your answer to section 4.1, as that will not be seen by the panel.

As before ensure that you cover the following points:

- Population or problem - What are the characteristics of the population? What is the problem you are interested in?

- Interest or intervention - What is the defined event, activity, experience or process that you are researching?

- Context or comparison – What is the setting, or distinct characteristics? What will you be comparing it with?

Please note that you do not need to describe methodology at this stage.

Outcomes do not need to be included in this section as they are dealt with further in another question.

5.2 Please explain how you have you considered equality and diversity in formulating your research question?

(Limit: 2000 characters)

It is a requirement of Welsh Government grant terms and conditions that funded organisations apply a policy of equal opportunities as employers, as users of volunteers, and as providers of services, regardless of race, gender/gender identification, sexual orientation, religion and belief, age or any disability. Please confirm that your organisation operates such a policy which you will implement in all your research project activities, should it be funded.

Additionally, under the Equality Act (2010) the Welsh Government has a public sector equality duty to ensure that due consideration is given to groups with 'protected characteristics' across its policies. Protected characteristics include: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Please use this section to indicate the relevance of your research proposal to the protected characteristics and/or the thought you have given to equality and diversity in framing your research proposal.

5.3 Why is the research important?

(Limit: 3000 characters)

Please provide evidence explaining why this research is important, for example from the perspective of public and patient need, health service or public health policy or practice, including the size and nature of the problem to be addressed.

5.4 If the research will address one of the priority areas highlighted in the call guidance, please explain how.

(Limit: 2000 characters)

Please refer to the areas highlighted in the call document.

5.5 Who and what sources have you drawn upon in order to identify and develop this research question?

(Limit: 2000 characters)

Part of determining importance is ensuring that the question posed addresses areas of proven uncertainty. Please explain how the need for the research is known to be substantive:

- How have you demonstrated that there is a gap in the evidence, for example through a brief literature review, and what did it show? If appropriate, please also reference previous or ongoing work relating to that proposed. (Applicants should be aware of ongoing research in the area related to the question, and comment on any other research which might be deemed to overlap with the contents of the proposal).

- Have you spoken to stakeholders such as practitioners and policymakers, or other sources about the evidence gap? Please include any support that you have from stakeholders, such as those who may participate in, or use the results of your research. (Public/patient/service user involvement is addressed in the next question).

As the applications are anonymised for the AWPP and POC, your own expertise will not be readily apparent to them. If your own role and expertise are relevant to defining the research need, you may want to also include information here about your part in developing the question. (For example, if you are a clinician, your own experience would be relevant to a research project looking at the way a clinician would assess a patient).

5.6 How were public research partners, for example, service users or patients, involved in defining the question and outcomes?

(Limit: 2000 characters)

Health and Care Research Wales expects the active involvement of the public in the research it supports and recognises that the nature and extent of active public involvement is likely to vary depending on the context of each study or award.

Applications which have emerged from interaction with public research partners, which relate, for example, to patient and service user experience, and which have been drawn up in association with a relevant group of service users will be particularly welcome. The potential trajectory to public and patient benefit will be a major selection criterion.

Health and Care Research Wales believes that public involvement and engagement have a key role to play in improving the quality, relevance and utility of research. As such we are committed to the implementation of the UK Standards for Public Involvement in Research. Our focus is on supporting meaningful public involvement and engagement activity that makes a difference to the quality and impact of research.

For health research, by 'public' we mean patients, potential patients, carers and users of health and social care services or more broadly members of the general public who will benefit from population or public health research.

Health and Care Research Wales has issued guidance on public involvement in research and the paying of service users actively involved in research.

Please note that this section of the application relates to the *involvement* of members of the public and **not** to the *recruitment* of members of the public as participants ('subjects') in the research.

In this section please:

- Describe how you have involved public partners in the development of your application and the benefits you expect this to bring.

- Provide descriptions of the experience, or area of activity individuals or groups are involved in. It is not necessary to anonymise information regarding charities/public involvement groups who are involved.

- Outline the activities in which they have been involved.

- Outline the reasons for taking this approach.

- Explain how this involvement has, or has not, influenced or changed this research application.

If members of the public were not actively involved in identifying the research topic and preparing this application, or if there are no plans for active involvement, please explain why it is not thought necessary.

5.7	Outcomes to be measured:

(Limit: 1000 characters)

Please list your primary and any secondary outcomes you will be measuring.

You may find it useful to take a look at the [COMET (Core Outcome Measures in Effectiveness Trials) Initiative](#) when thinking about what outcomes may be relevant to your research.

5.8	Anticipated impact:

(Limit: 2000 characters)

You should use the questions in this section to articulate:

- Likely benefits of the proposed research to the public, policy or practice.

- Implications for the further development of health, care or public health practice.

- Potential impact on local decision-making and improvements in service delivery.

- The benefits of the project to the NHS, Social Care, or Public Health and how it will support capacity and capability development. You should consider this in terms of capacity and capability building; skill level of staff; staff development; research findings and outcomes.

- Potential impact on future research.

6. Lead Applicant Information

This section is not seen by the panel but is needed for scheme management

6.1	Email

Please check your email address.

6.2	Address

Please provide a postal address.

6.3   Phone

Please provide a contact phone number.

6.4   Job Position

Please provide your job title

6.5   Organisation Affiliations

Please select the appropriate affiliation provided in the drop-down box, and provide all applicable information on this screen.

7.   Research Team

This section is not seen by the panel but is needed for scheme management

You must complete personal details for everyone involved and state their role in the proposed project. (You should speak to them first, as they will be automatically emailed to confirm their involvement when you enter this data.)

You must also list any groups or organisations you will be working with, for example Charities.

8.   Conflicts

This section is not seen by the panel but is needed for scheme management

(Limit: 1500 characters)

Please declare any conflicts or potential conflicts of interest that you or your Co-applicants may have, including any facts that, should they come to light at a future date, could lead to a perception of bias or embarrass either the programme, Health and Care Research Wales or the individual who withheld the fact (*e.g.,* if a member of the team holds a patent or has a financial interest within the research area).

Please include any relevant personal, non-personal and commercial interest that could be perceived as a conflict of interest, examples include (this list is not all encompassing), secondary employment, consultancy, financial or commercial gain (pensions, shareholdings, directorships, voting rights, honoraria, etc.). In a case of commercial sector involvement with the application or the study, please clearly state the relationship to ownership of data, access to data, and membership of project oversight groups. If in doubt, you should err on the side of disclosure.

9.   Uploads / Supporting Documentation

Seen by the panel – you must anonymise this section

As this section is seen by the panel ONLY upload documents that are anonymised. Do not include letters of support as these will be removed.

For some documents there is a **maximum upload limit of 16MB per document**. You will not be able to proceed with the upload if your document exceeds this size limit stated on the

Upload Checklist. If this is the case, you should reduce the file size as much as possible before trying to upload the document again.

9.1   References

List all references cited in the application, using either the Vancouver or Harvard referencing conventions. References should be uploaded as a separate document.

10.   Agreement

In confirming your role as Lead Applicant in this application you confirm that:

- **that the information given in this form is complete and correct;**
- **that you have spoken to your co-applicants and gained their agreement to participate in a Stage 2 proposal if shortlisted;**
- **that you take full responsibility for the accuracy of this submission;**
- **that you shall be actively engaged in, and in day to day control of, the project.**

Ticking this box constitutes an electronic signature of the Lead Applicant with regard to this Stage 1 proposal application.

No original (wet or ink) signatures are required for this application.

11.   Review and Submit

Please ensure that before you submit your application, you have completed the required fields and saved a version of your form. The application form can be viewed by clicking *View PDF.* Please note that the form will not be appear in the same order in which you have completed it.

You must submit your application form by the stated deadline before 1pm.

We will not enter into negotiations for extensions and the deadline will be strictly observed. You should therefore plan your application carefully.

All proposals must be submitted electronically.

Submit your application using the Review and Submit button on the last page of the application form.

Submit your application using the Review and Submit button on the last page of the application form. Please note that the Submit button will not appear unless all necessary sections have been completed. Warning signs (⚠) may appear to indicate you may have omitted some information but this sign indicates the information is not mandatory and you can submit without it.

✓	Complete	The section/form has been filled out correctly
X	Incomplete	Mandatory information has not been provided and the task cannot be submitted until this has been completed
⚠	Attention	This section has not been completed but is not mandatory

12.1   Submission Checklist

☐   Electronic form completed with no sections showing red crosses.

☐   References are attached in an accepted format (doc, docx, pdf)

12.2   Un-submitted Applications

Seven days prior to a funding opportunity application submission deadline you will receive an automatic email reminder.

If you no longer wish to submit your application you do not need to do anything, however, you will not receive another reminder for this application submission.