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# **Health and Care Research Wales Integrated Funding Scheme**

## **Guidance Notes for Applicants**

**Stage 1 applications**

# Contents

1	Application Summary information .....	4
1.1	Host Organisation .....	4
1.2	Application Title .....	4
1.3	Research Type .....	4
1.4	Research Duration (months) .....	4
1.5	Total Funding Requested (not including NHS support and treatment costs). 4	
2	Research Team.....	4
2.1	Details of Lead Applicant .....	4
2.1.1	Role in this project .....	5
2.1.2	%FTE Commitment.....	5
2.1.3	Are you an Early Career Researcher? .....	5
2.2	Joint Lead Applicant.....	5
2.2.1	Role in this project .....	5
2.2.2	%FTE Commitment.....	5
2.3	Primary Co-applicant.....	5
2.3.1	Role in this project .....	6
2.3.2	%FTE Commitment.....	6
2.4	Co-applicants .....	6
2.4.1	Role in this project .....	6
2.4.2	%FTE Commitment.....	6
2.5	Public Research Partner Co-applicants .....	6
2.6	Administrative Contact .....	7
3	Application Details.....	7
3.1	Plain English Summary .....	7
3.2	Research Plan.....	8
3.2.1	Importance of the research to health, social care or public health in Wales .....	9
3.2.2	Demonstrate gap in research evidence.....	9
3.2.3	Demonstrate that the methodology is suitable to answer the research question	
	10	
4	Uploads.....	10
4.1	Mandatory .....	10
4.2	Non-mandatory .....	11
5	Acknowledgement and Conflicts .....	11

5.1	Potential Conflicts .....	11
5.2	Agreement to Terms and Conditions.....	11
5.3	Privacy Notice .....	11

# Guidance for completing Stage 1 applications

## 1 Application Summary information

### 1.1 Host Organisation

Provide details of the organisation who will be the contractor if the project is funded. The organisation or institution must be based in Wales. The lead applicant should be employed by the host organisation submitting the application or have an honorary contract. If you have any queries, please contact [projectgrants@researchwales.info](mailto:projectgrants@researchwales.info) before submitting your application.

### 1.2 Application Title

Limit 300 characters

The study title should state clearly and concisely the proposed research. Any abbreviations should be spelled out in full. The title should also reflect the study design.

### 1.3 Research Type

Select the appropriate research type. If your proposed study includes any element of primary research, please select 'Primary Research'. If you are carrying out a new analysis of existing data, select 'Secondary Research'. If you are not sure which category to select, please choose 'Other', and briefly specify the type of the research.

### 1.4 Research Duration (months)

Ensure you include sufficient time to complete all aspects of the research including applications for regulatory approvals (where required) and the final report. This is up to a maximum of 24 months. Applicants should note that applications for calls launched in September need to start 1 October of the following year. Those for a March call launch need to start 1 April of the following year.

### 1.5 Total Funding Requested (not including NHS support and treatment costs)

Enter the total amount of research costs requested (not including NHS Support and Treatment costs). At Stage 1 this only needs to be an estimate and can be altered at Stage 2, when the full costs breakdown is required.

## 2 Research Team

### 2.1 Details of Lead Applicant

Complete your name, contact details and other requested information.

### **2.1.1 Role in this project**

Limit 100 words

Explain in addition to your role as Lead Applicant, the role that you will be undertaking in the research, for example coordination and project management, analysis, methodological input.

### **2.1.2 %FTE Commitment**

This refers to the percentage of your time that you will commit to this project. If you are funded as part of other projects that will be running concurrently, your time must not exceed 100% overall.

### **2.1.3 Are you an Early Career Researcher?**

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

Applications from early-stage career researchers and those who have not led research before but who are looking to build research portfolios and gain experience of leading research are welcome.

When the lead applicant is an early career researcher, a senior researcher, acting as the Primary Co-applicant, must support the Applicant. The role of the Primary Co-applicant is to advise the Applicant at the application stage and to provide assistance and supervision throughout the duration of the research project if the grant is awarded.

## **2.2 Joint Lead Applicant**

Where appropriate and justified it is acceptable for the application to be led by joint Lead Applicants. Where this applies, please complete your name, contact details and other requested information.

**Note:** For application/contracting purposes, the joint lead applicant will be counted as a co-applicant.

### **2.2.1 Role in this project**

Limit 25 words

Justification should be given to demonstrate why more than one person would be required to lead this research and how this brings added value to the application. Please also provide a brief overview of their role in the proposed research.

### **2.2.2 %FTE Commitment**

This refers to the percentage of your time that you will commit to this project. If you are funded as part of other projects that will be running concurrently, your time must not exceed 100% overall.

## **2.3 Primary Co-applicant**

The Primary Co-applicant should only be included if the Lead Applicant is an early career researcher and their role to provide guidance and mentorship should be clearly defined. It should be noted that it is **mandatory** for an application from an early career researcher to include a Primary Co-applicant. Where this applies, please complete your name, contact details and other requested information.

NOTE: the Primary Co-applicant will need to register on the system before the application can be submitted.

### **2.3.1 Role in this project**

Limit 25 words

The Primary Co-applicant should only be included if the Lead Applicant is an early career and their role to provide guidance and mentorship should be clearly defined. Please also provide a brief overview of their role in the proposed research.

### **2.3.2 %FTE Commitment**

This refers to the percentage of your time that you will commit to this project.

## **2.4 Co-applicants**

Add details of all co-applicants and their specific role in the programme. Do not include collaborators, who should be mentioned (if necessary) in the Research Plan section of the form.

Co-applicants are those individuals who are involved in the research project (for example the day-to-day management and delivery of the project, leading role on the specific workstream, advising on some aspects of the project) and can include public research partners. Co-applicants, including public co-applicants, are considered part of the project team and are expected to share responsibility for its successful delivery. In contrast, collaborators normally provide specific expertise on particular aspects of the project but do not share in the responsibility for the delivery of the project.

Allow sufficient time for your co-applicants to complete their sections of the online form before the application deadline. Note that all co-applicants will need to register on the system before the application can be submitted. **A maximum of 10 co-applicants is permitted including any other applicants (e.g. Lead applicant and Joint Lead applicant).**

### **2.4.1 Role in this project**

Limit 25 words

Please provide a brief overview of their role in the proposed research.

### **2.4.2 %FTE Commitment**

This refers to the percentage of their time that they will commit to this project.

## **2.5 Public Research Partner Co-applicants**

Limit 150 words

We encourage the inclusion of public research partners as co-applicants, where appropriate. Please include a clear description of the public research partner role and the reasons why a public co-applicant is joining the team.

Public research partners are not obliged to complete a standard CV but are required to provide a summary of any knowledge, skills and experience relevant to their role in the application in a separate text box. This appears when a co-applicant selects 'yes' to indicate that they are a member of the public.

We recognise and value the varied perspectives that public research partners, including patients, service users, carers and those with lived experience bring to a project as co-applicants. In this section, please provide a summary of any relevant knowledge, skills and

experience that you will draw upon to contribute to this project. This could include information about:

- Previous or present work (paid or unpaid) with any relevant organisations
- Links with any relevant groups, committees, networks or organisations
- Experience of particular health conditions, treatments, use of health or social care services - or as a member of a particular community
- Knowledge and experience of research including previous research undertaken
- Knowledge and experience of public research partners including previous involvement activities
- Skills from any other roles that are transferable
- Relevant qualifications, training and learning

The bullet point list above is not exhaustive. Please include anything else that is relevant to the application.

For further information please access the [Public Co-Applicants in Research guidance](#)

Applicants may also wish to consult the [Health and Care Research Wales guidance: Public Involvement in Research Impact Toolkit \(PIRIT\)](#).

## 2.6 Administrative Contact

Please provide the details of an administrative lead as a secondary point of contact for any queries. The Lead Applicant must submit the completed application and will still receive all emails automatically generated through the system.

**Note:** This person does not need to be a co-applicant.

## 3 Application Details

### 3.1 Plain English Summary

Limit 450 words

A plain English summary is a clear explanation of your research. Please be aware that this summary or part of this summary may be published online.

A good quality plain English summary providing an easy-to-read overview of your whole study will help:

- those carrying out the review (reviewers and board and panel members) to have a better understanding of your research proposal;
- inform others about your research such as members of the public, health and social care professionals, policy makers and the media;
- the research funders to publicise the research that they fund.

If it is felt that your plain English summary is not clear and of a good quality, then you may be required to amend it prior to final funding approval.

It is advisable to involve a public research partner in the development of your plain English summary.

When writing your summary please include the following information (where applicable):

- Aim(s) and objective(s) of the research
- Background to the research, specifically what is the problem being addressed and why is this research important
- What you hope to discover
- How public research partners have and will continue to be involved in the research
- How the findings are expected to make a difference, how they will be communicated and to whom

The plain English summary is not the same as a scientific abstract - please do not cut and paste this or other sections of your application form to create the plain English summary.

Further guidance on writing in plain English is available online at [plain English summaries](#).

## 3.2 Research Plan

Limit 3000 words

Using **all** of the headings in the order presented below, please use this section to clearly explain your proposed research. Schematics, tables, illustrations, graphs, and other types of graphics can be embedded to clarify the research plan, but they should not clutter the central narrative. Images do not count towards the overall word count but inclusion of them to overcome word limits is not permitted. Images may only be included within the 'Research Plan'. Images included in other sections will be removed from the application and not seen by reviewers.

**As this is the main part of your application which will be considered by the reviewing panel, you should ensure that the information is accurate, succinct, and clearly laid out.**

Applicants should ensure that they organise their response to this question under the three main headings below. Applicants should ensure they respond to each sub-point under those headings. It is recommended that applicants should aim to use a third of their total wordcount on each section.

1. Importance of the research to health, social care and public health in Wales
2. Demonstration of a gap in the research evidence
3. Demonstration that the methods proposed are suitable for answering the research question.

Applicants are reminded that Stage 1 applications are assessed and prioritised on the basis of the importance of the question and will need to demonstrate, in a succinct manner, that the methodology is sufficiently robust.

Please note, at the end of this section include a short paragraph explaining why you are applying for this scheme. Where the proposed research falls within the scope of any of the NIHR programmes open to the devolved nations, researchers will be required to explain and justify why they are applying to Health and Care Research Wales at this stage and not NIHR. Researchers wishing to undertake late-stage laboratory or early-stage translational research in the translational and clinical research arm should explain and justify why they are applying to Health and Care Research Wales at this point and not the Medical Research Council (MRC).



### 3.2.1 Importance of the research to health, social care or public health in Wales

- Provide a clear description of the health/public health/social care/wellbeing need that the research is addressing and provide justification of the importance of that need, in terms of the scale of the problem and/or likely impact on those with the health or care need;
- Describe how the research proposed aligns with Welsh Government priorities and/or policies, or practice context, for example the [Programme for Government](#), and [A Healthier Wales](#).
- Describe how the research question was identified and developed and by whom. How have public research partners such as patients/service users and/or carers been involved in defining questions and outcomes?
- Outline how equality, diversity and inclusion have been taken into consideration when formulating the research question, and how the project address or contribute to equality, diversity and inclusion issues.

Please note, whenever possible, research should take account of age, disability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture, religion and the other protected characteristics listed below in its design, undertaking and reporting. The body of research evidence available to policy makers should reflect the diversity of the population. Applicants are advised to indicate how they have considered the relevance of diversity in their proposed research, where appropriate.

Helpful link: [NIHR's promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in research webpage](#)

### 3.2.2 Demonstrate gap in research evidence

Explain why this research is needed now, both in terms of time and relevance. We will only fund primary research where the proposed research is informed by a review of the existing evidence.

Briefly describe:

- the research gap in this area, drawing particularly from systematic reviews (including NHS Wales, public health or social care context and relevant literature), and the rationale for the particular lines of research you plan to pursue
- past and current research that justifies the proposed research and shows that it will add distinct value to what is already known, or in progress
- work undertaken previously by the research team which has led to the proposed project (e.g. describe any pilot or feasibility data).

Applicants should be aware of ongoing research in this area and comment on any other research which might be deemed to overlap with the contents of the proposal. Applicants are advised to use both PubMed Central and Europe PubMed Central for recent material on the relevant topic area(s).

Any applications that include primary research should include reference to the existing evidence and explain how this evidence has informed the proposed research. Where a systematic review already exists that summarises the available evidence, this should be referenced, along with any relevant literature published subsequent to that systematic review. Where no such systematic review exists, it is expected that the applicants will undertake an appropriate review of the currently available and relevant evidence (using as appropriate a predetermined and described methodology that systematically identifies, critically appraises and then synthesises the available evidence) and then summarise this in

their proposal. All applicants must also include reference to relevant ongoing studies, e.g. from trial registries such as the International Standard Randomised Controlled Trial Number (ISRCTN) registry, ClinicalTrials.gov and the European Union Clinical Trials Register.

### **3.2.3 Demonstrate that the methodology is suitable to answer the research question**

- Clearly state the research question, aims and objectives.
- Briefly outline the project plan and methods. Provide a justification for the research design, methodologies and techniques of data collection and analysis, demonstrating how the hypotheses or research questions will be addressed. Applicants should note that for pilot or feasibility studies, clear progression criteria to the substantive study should be provided, including identification of the potential funder of the substantive study.
- Provide brief overview for how public research partners (e.g., patients / service users and / or carers) will be involved over the course of the project. Health Care and Research Wales expects appropriate and well-designed involvement of public research partners in the research it supports, please refer to the [UK Standards for Public Involvement in Research](#). In the Stage 1 application, it is essential to show your plans for involving public research partners at each appropriate stage of the research project life cycle. For example, sitting on oversight committees, being a member of the research team involved in activities such as recruitment, data collection, analysis, producing study materials and sharing findings. You should also outline how public involvement has informed the development of the project so far. For example, the involvement of patients/service users, carers or the public in shaping the research question and study design. These activities could include the development of feasible, relevant and acceptable recruitment plans, data collection tools, information materials, outcome measures, follow-up, intervention design and delivery.
- Anticipated impact: Please provide an outline plan for the next steps, including any further research needed, for the pathway to impact for the proposed research. Provide information on the potential impact that the project might have. We acknowledge that defining impact can be challenging and paths to impact are complex with many steps beyond your control. We therefore define impact broadly as the contribution, effect on, or benefit that excellent research makes to knowledge, people, health and care, the NHS, health and care services, society or the economy. We wish to understand the ways in which the proposed research will change activity, attitudes, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, decision-making, practice or processes. Impact can also result from new understanding that benefits individuals, population, organisations, communities, constituencies or the nation.
- Dissemination: Please describe the main knowledge products or outputs from your research and how they will be presented, disseminated and used.

## **4 Uploads**

### **4.1 Mandatory**

One single-side A4 page, listing references used throughout your proposal.

## 4.2 Non-mandatory

If required, an additional supporting (single side of A4) document can be submitted with your application form (e.g., a flow diagram illustrating the study design and the flow of participants, Gantt chart, diagrams, pictures etc.). If submitting a flow diagram, applicants should also describe complex interventions and controls as accurately and fully as possible within their diagram. If proposing an RCT you may find the [EQUATOR](#) Network website useful. The PDF file should be submitted along with your application form.

## 5 Acknowledgement and Conflicts

### 5.1 Potential Conflicts

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. 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 state clearly the relationship to ownership of data, access to data, and membership of project oversight groups.

### 5.2 Agreement to Terms and Conditions

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

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

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

### 5.3 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://www.gov.wales/privacy-notice-welsh-government-grants>