

# Health and Care Research Wales

## Advancing Researcher Scheme overview and application guidance

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## Section 1: Overview

### 1.1 Introduction

The Advancing Researcher Scheme is a personal award which intends to advance research careers for health and social care researchers in Wales. It offers protected time to engage in developmental research activities and funding to allow for non-staff costs (such as travel and subsistence, public involvement costs and training costs). The scheme provides flexible and inclusive support for researchers in the middle stage of their research careers. All applicants are thus expected to clearly justify why the scheme is appropriate for them at their research career stage.

The Advancing Researcher Scheme has been developed to facilitate the progression of mid-career researchers as they transition and progress to the next phase of their health and social care research career. We recognise that, for some, research involvement may be non-linear. For this reason, we will consider proposals which lead to the submission of PhDs by Published Works to be eligible for this scheme if applicants have already completed a substantial element of the relevant research. We expect applicants to be able to demonstrate how the award of a PhD by Published Works will lead to further development in an individual's research career. The Advancing Researcher Scheme is open to mid-career researchers employed by Higher Education Institutes (HEI) or research active staff employed by NHS or social care organisations in Wales.

Successful applicants for this award automatically become members of the Health and Care Research Wales Faculty. Being a member of the Faculty means having access to a range of learning, development and networking opportunities that are intended to stimulate and grow the research community in Wales. All Faculty Personal Award holders will be expected to engage with the work of the Faculty. Applicants should detail how they will participate in the Faculty opportunities as well as how they will be supported by the host organisation.

Applicants must:

- meet all eligibility criteria set out in section 1.3 below;
- demonstrate the quality of the research activities in which they intend to engage;
- demonstrate a link with a high-quality research group such as:
  - a Health and Care Research Wales funded group;

- a Centre or Unit funded by a high-quality non-Welsh Government funder such as the Medical Research Council or the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR);
- a research group that has a proven track record of grant capture from high-quality funders such as the research councils, NIHR, or significant third sector research funders (such as the Wellcome Trust or Cancer Research UK);
- describe unmet need in their proposed area/s of activity and the potential impact and benefit to the public more broadly as well as patients, carers and service users in Wales;
- clearly justify why the specific scheme is appropriate for them at their research career stage;
- set out how they can dedicate the time for which funding is being sought to their research activities for the duration of the award in addition to any already funded or allocated research time.

Applicants can apply for protected research time of up to:

- 0.4 WTE for a **maximum** of one year. In addition, applicants can apply for up to £5,000 to cover associated activities such as travel and subsistence, PPI and training costs. This funding can be used to support attendance at Faculty events. The total award is not expected to exceed £50,000. If this is likely, please speak to a member of the Faculty team for guidance before submitting your application.

There is an expectation that successful applicants will, over the course of the award, seek out opportunities to apply for future research funding to sustain and develop their research activity beyond the award period.

**Please note:**

- This is a personal award, not a project grant. This means that the funder will not pay research costs as defined by the [AcoRD guidance](#). This provides guidance for attributing the costs of health and social care research and development. The Advancing Researcher Scheme will provide funding for reasonable non-staff costs such as travel and subsistence, training and development and costs for public involvement;
- The award does not qualify for automatic adoption to the Health and Care Research Wales [Portfolio](#). However, applicants may apply for the award and then consider whether any specific project on which they wish to work meets portfolio adoption criteria;

- This is a one-stage application process

## 1.2. What we will fund

Health and Care Research Wales will fund:

- time to allow you to engage in research development activity, including forming a hypothesis, identifying and prioritising research questions and research proposal and grant development work;
- time that allows you to develop and lead a research project/s (please note restriction regarding research costs) that will result in outputs that will progress future funded activities;
- time to develop outputs that will progress future funded research activities;
- time to undertake relevant training and development activities;
- reasonable (maximum £5,000) non-staff costs to support associated activities such as travel and subsistence, training and development and costs for public involvement. This funding can be used to support attendance at Faculty events.

This list is intended to be indicative rather than definitive.

What we will **not** fund:

- As noted above, we will **not** pay research costs as defined by [AcoRD guidance](#) as it applies to externally-funded research projects as these should be covered by the project funder and not supplemented or replaced by resources from this scheme;
- The award will not fund and is not to be used to fund existing projects or additional research time on existing projects;
- The award will not fund any research time covered by current arrangements specified within existing employment contracts;
- The award is not intended to cover the time used to supervise a PhD student. This is a personal award which aims to progress the personal career trajectories of applicants rather than to support the development of others, such as PhD students.

## 1.3 Eligibility criteria

Applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

- applicants must be employed by Welsh Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), NHS Wales, Local Authorities (adult or children's social care services), or be based in

independent health and social care provision such as primary care, community pharmacy, adult or children's residential care, or domiciliary care based in Wales. HEI employees must have the relevant support and hosting mechanisms in place with a Welsh HEI for the duration of the award;

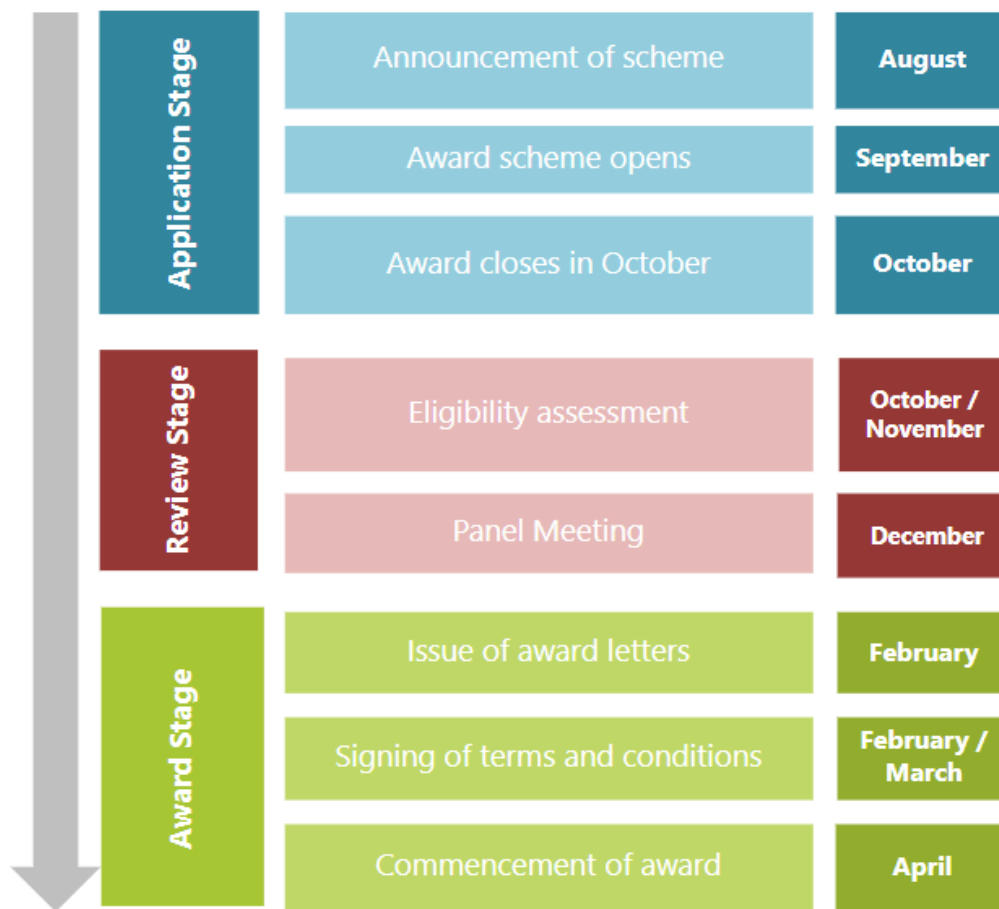
- applicants from HEIs who are employed on a Directly Allocated salary basis will need to justify why their salary should be covered. Applicants from HEIs who are employed on a Directly Incurred basis will need confirmation from their host HEI that a contract of employment covering the whole period of the award will be arranged should they be successful;
- ideally, applicants must be in a position to commence activities by **1 April 2025** (*deferral of this date may be considered in exceptional circumstances, such as the employing organisation having difficulty in back-filling the post*);
- applicants must have the support of both their Line Manager and Head of Department, Director of R&D or relevant equivalent signatories of their contracting organisation;
- applicants must have a named Research Supervisor(s) or Mentor(s).

## 1.4 Process and timetable

The application window for these awards will open on **05 September 2024** with a deadline for submission of **16:00 on Thursday 10 October 2024**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

An indication of the timelines for the process are given in the diagram below.

**Advancing Researcher Scheme Route Map 2024/25**



**Please note:**

- Applications will first be assessed for their eligibility by Health and Care Research Wales officials in line with the eligibility criteria.
- Applications deemed eligible will then be assessed by a panel consisting of representatives from Health Boards, social care organisations, academia and public members.
- The panel will make funding recommendations to the Research and Development Division in Welsh Government.
- The Research and Development Division in Welsh Government will make the final funding decision, taking into account available resources. These decisions are final and are not open to appeal.
- Final decisions will be announced and award letters and contracts issued in February 2025.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be given feedback which will be provided as a courtesy. Please note Health and Care Research Wales will not be able to enter into any discussions regarding the feedback provided.

- You must inform Health and Care Research Wales of any related applications for funding which, if successful, would affect either your ability to take up, or your need for, this award.

To apply please complete the Advancing Researcher Scheme application form available on the Health and Care Research Wales website.

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 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 [Research-Faculty@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Research-Faculty@wales.nhs.uk) before the application deadline.

We ask that all applicants complete an [Equality Monitoring Form](#) online. More information on how we will handle the data is provided in the form.

Completed application forms must be emailed to [Applications.Faculty@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Applications.Faculty@wales.nhs.uk). We will acknowledge receipt of successfully delivered emailed applications by reply.

## 1.5 Selection process

The panel will assess each application based on the following criteria:

- the research experience and interests of the applicant demonstrates their potential to develop further as a researcher;
- the clarity and purpose of the proposed research and training activities;
- the potential impact and added value of the proposed research and training activities on the research career trajectory of the applicant;
- the clarity and purpose of plans beyond the term of the award;
- the description of unmet need in the areas of specified activity and the potential impact on the services delivered to the public, patients, service users and carers;
- the full consideration of public involvement within the application;
- the support of the Line Manager and employing organisation (for example HEI Head of Department, R&D Director or relevant equivalent) both during and after the term of the award;
- the quality of the research environment, Academic Collaborator/s and Research Supervisor or Mentor, within the context of the proposed plan.



## Section 2: Guidance

This section provides guidance on how to complete the Advancing Researcher Scheme application form. Before completing the application form you should also read the **Overview** (Section 1 above).

### Word limits

Please note that some questions on the application form have specified word limits. Words exceeding the limit will be redacted and will not be assessed. **Please include word counts in these sections.**

### Section A: Applicant details

Please supply your title, name, work contact address, other work contact details, your current job title, profession, research area and specialty area. Contact between Health and Care Research Wales and the applicant will usually be by email, so please ensure you provide a current and regularly accessed email address.

Please refer to research areas listed below:

- Underpinning research
- Aetiology
- Prevention of disease and conditions
- Detection screening and diagnosis
- Development of treatments and therapeutic interventions
- Evaluation of treatments and therapeutic interventions
- Management of diseases and conditions
- Health and social care services research

Please refer to specialty areas listed below:

- Ageing
- Adult Social Care
- Anaesthesia, Perioperative Medicine and Pain Management
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular Disease

- Children and Young People
- Children Social Care
- Critical Care
- Dementias and Neurodegeneration
- Dermatology
- Diabetes
- Ear, Nose and Throat
- Gastroenterology
- Genomics and Rare Diseases
- Haematology
- Health Services Research
- Infection
- Kidney and Urinary Tract Disorders
- Liver
- Mental Health
- Metabolic and Endocrine Disorders
- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Neurological Disorders
- Ophthalmology
- Oral and Dental Health
- Primary Care
- Public Health and Prevention
- Reproductive Health
- Respiratory Disorders
- Social Care
- Stroke
- Surgery
- Trauma and Emergency Care
- Other

Please provide your employing organisation name and your highest academic qualification.

The employing organisation will be the organisation with which the Research and Development Division in Welsh Government will enter into a formal contract should your application be successful. Please confirm the type of contract you hold with them (fixed term or permanent) and the email address of the Line Manager, Head of Department, NHS R&D Director or relevant equivalent signatories. Please include the contact details of the relevant Finance Officer or equivalent (e.g. Contracts Manager) within the employing organisation.

## Section B: Employment history

Please give the details of your current job and previous employment history **relevant** to this application.

## Section C: Research achievements, skills and experience

This section is based on the Royal Society's [Résumé for Researchers \(Résumé for Researchers | Royal Society\)](#) narrative CV format. It is aimed at providing the panel with an overview of your achievements, skills and experiences within your current clinical or practice role and in relation to four domains relevant to developing a research career, namely contributions to (1) personal statement; (2) contributions to the generation of new ideas; (3) contributions to the development of others and (4) contributions to the broader research and innovation community and society.

### **Personal statement**

Summarise what you do and your overarching goals and motivation for the activities in which you have been involved. You can mention career breaks, secondments, volunteering, part-time work and other relevant experience (including in time spent in different sectors).

### **Contributions to the generation of new ideas**

How you have contributed to the generation of new ideas relevant to your clinical or practice area and the key skills you have developed in that process, any relevant training or development (including placements or work-based activities) you have undertaken in the last two years to progress your research skills and experience or specific research expertise, how you have communicated about these ideas both written and verbally, any funding you have won and any awards that you have received, relevant selected outputs (explaining why they are of relevance) for example clinical or practice developments, publications, educational products, policy publications, evidence synthesis pieces and conference publications.

### **Contributions to the development of others**

Any expertise you have provided which was critical to the success of an individual, team or project including project management, collaborative contributions, and team support.

### **Contributions to the broader research and innovation community and society**

Any engagement with the public/key stakeholders (including engagement and knowledge exchange at local, national or international level).

You can use sub-headings (personal statement, new ideas, development of others, broader contributions) to structure this section but it is not mandated. You should also include a brief personal statement.

Do not include details of your current job and previous employment history as this is covered in Section B of the application.

**(Maximum: 1,000 words)**

## Section D: Proposed award plan

**For section D1**, please describe the research activities you will be involved in if you are awarded this funding, highlighting your aims, objectives and the expected benefits that will accrue. Section 1.2 above sets out the kind of activities we expect to support. You may find it helpful to refer to this list when completing this section.

**(Maximum: 1,000 words)**

**For section D2**, please describe the training and development activities you plan to undertake in order to develop your research skills. This can include a wide range of both formal and informal activities from classroom training courses to self-study, coaching and mentoring, work shadowing, networking and peer support. Please also explain why your chosen Research Supervisor(s) or Mentor(s) is best placed to support your plans and how they will contribute to your development. For example, how many similar awards they have previously supported.

**(Maximum: 750 words).**

Please ensure that this section has been reviewed thoroughly with your Research Supervisor(s) or Mentor(s) prior to submission.

**For section D3**, please describe the relevance of your research activities as well as the likely impact it will have on the needs of the public, patients, service users and carers in Wales highlighting the potential benefits and the expected timescale for when the benefits might be realised. Please include an overview of any proposed public, patient and service users involvement work that you plan to undertake as part of your funded award. [New UK Standards for Public Involvement](#) were launched in March 2018, applicants are encouraged to reference the standards in their answers.

Welsh Government as funders approve and recommend the use of the [Public Involvement in Research Impact Toolkit \(PIRIT\)](#). We encourage researchers to incorporate use of the PIRIT tools in their work, not only to support the planning of effective and meaningful public involvement in research in line with the UK

Standards for Public Involvement, but also to help track activity and showcase the impact that public members have on research.

**(Maximum: 500 words)**

**For section D4**, please provide an overview of your research career ambitions, why this award is justified (why this award is the right award for you at this point in your career) and how it will enable your development as a researcher.

**(Maximum: 500 words)**

The purpose of this section is to find out where you currently see yourself on a research career pathway, where you will be by the end of the award and how you plan to continue to develop your research skills, experience and career after your award has come to an end. Please give details of your plans/ambitions and please explain why this award is the appropriate one for you at your current stage of research career.

You may find it helpful to consider the range of funding opportunities currently offered by [Health and Care Research Wales](#) or our partner funding schemes.

**For section D5**, the purpose of this section is to understand how you will utilise the support and opportunities offered by the Faculty to develop your research skills, experience and career. Please use this section to tell us how you will work with the Faculty to ensure your own research development (and the development of others) as a member of the research community in Wales.

**(Maximum 500 words)**

## **Section E: Statements of support from employer and research supervisor(s) or mentor(s)**

It is a requirement of the award for your Line Manager to outline the support they will provide for you during the term of the award **including confirmation of back-fill of the relevant sessions of your post where appropriate**. They should also provide a statement of continuing support for your development as a researcher beyond the term of the award.

**(Maximum: 250 words each).**

Please supply the details of your Research Supervisor(s) or Mentor(s) and the high-quality research group with which you will work (please see Section 1.1 above which sets out what is meant by the term 'high-quality research group').

Please ask your Research Supervisor or Mentor to complete the relevant section, explaining how they, and the research group with which you plan to work, will

support you over the term of the award. Please note that if you identify the need for joint Supervisors or Mentors that you should seek a supporting statement from each of those individuals.

**(Maximum: 250 words)**

## Section F: Costs

Please enter your current grade, spine point and hours worked, along with the Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) at which you wish to undertake your award. The protected time offered is up to 0.4 WTE. It is expected that the total costs for the award will not exceed £50k.

Please also add the expected start date of 1 April 2025, and the length of the award period for which you are applying, which can be up to 1 year. If exceptional circumstances mean that you cannot start on this date, please contact Health and Care Research Wales Faculty ([research-Faculty@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:research-Faculty@wales.nhs.uk)) to discuss in advance of your submission.

You should provide details of your expected salary costs (including on-costs) for the whole term of your award and your expected WTE costs (including on-costs) in the appropriate row. This can include salary increments where relevant. **Please note that you must include on-costs associated with your salary at this stage as it will not be possible to add them later.**

You should provide details of requested non-staff costs to cover, for example, travel, subsistence, training costs or costs for public involvement of up to a total of £5,000 for the term of the award.

This section should be signed by your organisation's finance contact.

## Section G: Declarations

To confirm that you have completed the online [Equality Monitoring Form](#) and all relevant individuals have read and understood the application form and guidance notes, and have agreed to support the application, signatures are required in this section from the following people:

- Applicant
- Head of Department, NHS R&D Director or relevant equivalent

## Section H: Submitting your application

The Application Form should be submitted *electronically* with all required authorised signatures (scanned or electronic) included. All signatories should be copied into the email.

(Please include a Word version of the application – which does not require signatures, if they have already been provided by a PDF. This is to give the secretariat the ability to redact the application for the different review stages, which is not always possible with a PDF.)

Please do not send additional information as this will not be assessed.

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please contact Health and Care Research Wales Faculty team using the email address below. The Application Form should be submitted electronically (scanned or electronic) to [applications.faculty@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:applications.faculty@wales.nhs.uk) by **16:00 on Thursday 10 October 2024**.

**Please note:** Applications without the appropriate signatures on the application form or without signatories copied into the e-mail will be automatically rejected.

### Contact us

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please contact [research-Faculty@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:research-Faculty@wales.nhs.uk)

## Section I: Checklist

### Checklist

To check	Complete
All sections of the application have been completed	
Ensure word counts on application are within limits	
Obtained correct authorisation on application	
Application to be submitted with relevant signatures and signatories to <a href="mailto:applications.faculty@wales.nhs.uk">applications.faculty@wales.nhs.uk</a>	
<a href="#">Equality Monitoring Form</a> submitted online	

## Section J: Privacy Notice – Welsh Government Grants

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 partnership with the Welsh Government, Health and Care Research Wales 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.

### Data Security – Data About You

Personal information will be held by Health and Care Research Wales in a network that is available only to Health and Care Research Wales 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. 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 Welsh Government for inclusion in any of their publicly available databases of research projects. If you have any questions, please contact us at: [Research-Faculty@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Research-Faculty@wales.nhs.uk)

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

Data Protection Officer:  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
CARDIFF  
CF10 3NQ

Email Address: [DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@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.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

### **How to find out more**

The Privacy Notice will be effective from 25 May 2018 and you can view it at Privacy notice: Welsh Government grants | GOV.WALES. The Grants Privacy Notice makes sure we continue to comply with privacy law and regulation.

If you have any question or require any further help please contact us at [DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales)