

Health and Care Research Wales Specialty Leads information pack

Background

Health and Care Research Wales funds an extensive research development and delivery infrastructure to support high-quality clinical research taking place in health and social care settings.

As part of that infrastructure, a Health and Care Research Wales Support and Delivery service provides a range of central (all-Wales) and local services to researchers.

Specialty Leads in Wales will provide important strategic support as part of the Support and Delivery Service, in the following therapeutic areas:

- Ageing
- Anaesthesia, Peri-operative Medicine and Pain Management
- Cancer (see note below)
- Cardiovascular
- Children
- Critical Care
- Dementias and Neurodegeneration
- Dermatology
- Diabetes
- Ear, Nose and Throat
- Gastroenterology
- Genomics and rare Diseases
- Haematology
- Hepatology
- Imaging
- Infection
- Mental Health
- Metabolic and endocrine
- Musculoskeletal and orthopaedics
- Neurological disorders
- Ophthalmology
- Oral and Dental Health
- Palliative Care
- Primary Care/General Practice
- Public Health
- Renal
- Reproductive Health and childbirth
- Respiratory
- Social Care (see note below)
- Stroke
- Surgery
- Trauma and emergency care

The **Social Care Specialty Lead** role is being considered as part of the wider discussion on support for social care research delivery in Wales. As timescales for these discussions haven't aligned, the Social Care/Residential Care Specialty Lead will be appointed for an initial one-year term only, with potential to extend.

The **Cancer Specialty Lead** role(s) and its relationship to other cancer clinical leadership roles in Wales is currently being agreed as part of the Tackling Cancer Through Research programme, and as discussions haven't concluded, the Cancer Specialty Lead role(s) will be appointed in a process that will follow.

While these specialties do not fully mirror the new NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN) specialties, UK engagement through membership of the NIHR RDN Specialty Groups is a key part of the Welsh Specialty Lead role. The groups co-ordinate and oversee activity at a UK level, providing a forum to share good practice, successes, opportunities and challenges, and helping to influence and shape the clinical research environment.

2025 recruitment process

The 2025 recruitment will cover all specialty areas, excluding cancer (which will be filled via a separate process). The role will be for three years (except for Social Care which will be one year) and fulfil the tasks/responsibilities and person specification below.

Applicants should complete the Specialty Lead Application Form 2025 and submit this by 17:00 on 31 January 2025 to SpecialtyLeadsSupport@wales.nhs.uk.

Person Specification 2025

Health and Care Research Wales Specialty Leads should be research-interested clinicians or clinical academics who are close to and active in the NHS in Wales and have standing and credibility with NHS colleagues.

As a Health and Care Research Wales Specialty Lead, you will understand the research needs and priorities of NHS Wales in your specialty area, and you will have the confidence, ability and experience to fulfil all the tasks and responsibilities outlined.

Joint applications, where two individuals wish to share the role, are permitted providing a strong case is made. Where this is the case, applicants can either adapt the application form to submit on a single form or can complete individual application forms – either way, all information including supporting documentation should be submitted as a complete package.

You must anticipate being able to provide continuity of service in the role for the appointment period (until end March 2028).

You must confirm support from your organisation before applying.

Financial Support

a) Sessional Time

Specialty Leads will likely need to devote 0.1fte/one session a week to the role.

Sessional time will be paid direct to the host organisation, profiled and ring-fenced within the NHS organisation's Support and Delivery funding allocations (or invoiced separately for HEI hosts).

b) Travel and subsistence (T&S)

Requests can be made on an ad hoc basis to Health and Care Research Wales central team, for additional costs incurred in arranging meetings (venue/hospitality) or for travel costs incurred and this can be requested as/when required (up to £1000 per year should be sufficient for most Specialty Leads to fulfil the expectations required). Travel and venues can be booked via the Health and Care Research Wales central team or locally – where booked

locally, payment to the NHS organisation will be adjusted via spending plan payments. Where possible these costs should be minimised by using existing NHS or Higher Education Institution (HEI) facilities.

Completing the application form

This section provides guidance, question by question, on how to complete the Specialty Lead application form.

To apply, the following should be submitted by email to SpecialtyLeadsSupport@wales.nhs.uk by 17:00 on Monday 31 January 2025

1. Completed application form
2. Applicant CV (Max two pages)
3. Confirmation email from NHS Research and Development (R&D) Director or Departmental Head
4. Confirmation email from Line Manager

Section A: Specialty

Please provide the name of the specialty you are applying for with reference to the titles on page one of this pack.

Section B: Applicant details

Please supply contact details. 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 identify the organisation that will act as host. This organisation must be your main employer where you hold a substantive contract.

The organisation will be the organisation with which the Welsh Government will enter a formal contract, should your application be successful.

Please include a supporting email from your Departmental Head, or R&D Director if employed by an NHS organisation, with the following wording:

“I support the application for Specialty Lead and confirm my organisation hosts the applicant. I confirm the costs provided in the application are correct and will ensure any funding is ring fenced for this purpose, should the application be successful.”

Section C: Activities plan (max 600 words total)

Please describe how active the research/research community in the specialty you have applied for is and describe the potential to increase this activity/research community in Wales. You may wish to refer to how engaged clinicians or social care staff are in the specialty, and how engaged organisations are. You may wish to describe how broad the research activities currently are – do they span the scope of the entire specialty, or does it vary by sub-specialty? How has the specialty profile developed in recent years?

Describe what you think is achievable within the next three years with reference to the roles/responsibilities listed above. This should be realistic (given the current state) but ambitious given the amount of time you are requesting. You may wish to highlight your aims, objectives and the expected benefits that will be delivered.

Section D: Job plan

Please confirm how much time you are applying for – this should be up to 0.1fte/one session a week.

Start date will be the 1 April 2025, please confirm this or state where a delayed start date would be needed (all start dates must be

Please also provide a summary of your current and proposed job plan showing the Specialty Lead time. We recognise this may vary week to week, so a general plan is acceptable. The proposed job plan should not exceed 12 sessions.

Please include an email from your line manager with the following wording:

“I confirm I am the line manager of the applicant, and I have agreed the job plan with protected time for the Specialty Lead role as outlined in the application form, should the applicant be successful”

Section E: Finance

Please complete the finance table. You should provide your expected salary costs (including on-costs) for the next three years and your expected WTE costs (including on-costs) in the appropriate row. 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. No overheads will be paid.

Please include your expected travel and subsistence costs for each year of the award.

Section F: Declarations

Submission of this application form by email confirms you understand and commit to undertaking the role as specified above. Confirmation emails are also required from your Department Head or NHS R&D Director and your Line Manager. No separate signatures are required.

Health and Care Research Wales Specialty Leads - Key tasks and responsibilities 2025-2028

Working with the Health and Care Research Wales central team, and the nominated Specialty Operational Delivery Lead, the Health and Care Research Wales Specialty Lead tasks and responsibilities are:

1. **Engage and support a network of researchers** within the relevant specialty area, by:
 - 1.1. Leading peer support events/seminars/meetings for the network of principal investigators (PIs) and the wider community of potential investigators (at least one per year)
 - 1.2. Supporting the maintenance of an up-to-date All-Wales register of PIs
 - 1.3. Providing signposting, advice, and mentoring for people who want to become PIs and otherwise engage in research
 - 1.4. Working to help increase the number of non-medical PIs across Wales
2. **Proactively encourage NHS participation in portfolio studies**, thus enhancing opportunities for patient participation in research in Wales, by:
 - 2.1. Contributing to the maintenance of an up-to-date capability/non-capability statement for the relevant specialty area
 - 2.2. Assist in the identification of sites and PIs making the best use of data combined with an understanding of health and social inequalities to inform placement of studies
 - 2.3 Advise on study deliverability and undertake deliverability assessments when requested, including giving consideration to equitable community-wide access/areas of high patient need
 - 2.4 Supporting projects led by Health and Care Research Wales as required to facilitate coordination and management of Expressions of Interest in the specialty
 - 2.5. Actively promoting the uptake of studies at suitable sites in Wales, including as part of the Health and Care Research Wales Expression of Interest/site identification processes (commercial and non-commercial research)
 - 2.6. Identify and address impact on regional health and social inequalities at all stages of research delivery within the Specialty.
 - 2.7 Establishing and maintaining a specialty point of contact/local champion in each NHS organisation, and/or other mechanisms to ensure opportunities for research participation are cascaded and fulfilled where relevant to specialty
 - 2.8 Initiating, facilitating and promoting regional cross-specialty and cross-setting collaborations for improved research delivery.
3. **Provide strategic oversight of the study portfolio** for the Specialty
 - 3.1 Support the successful set-up and delivery of research studies across Wales within the relevant specialty
 - 3.2. Promoting and implementing 'One-Wales' approaches for research delivery where appropriate – encouraging coordination across teams/study set-up and delivery
 - 3.3. Maintaining high-level oversight of the delivery performance of studies within the specialty using tools such as the Specialty Leads business intelligence dashboard
 - 3.4. Supporting the identification, addressing and unblocking of systemic and specific barriers to delivery of the specialty portfolio (escalating to the National Director of Support and Delivery and local NHS R&D Director as necessary)
 - 3.5. Reporting and promoting achievements in research delivery for the specialty
 - 3.6. Working with Health and Care Research Wales Heads of Research Delivery

4. **Embedding research**, engagement and delivery into the NHS and wider care environment by:

- 4.1. Raising the profile of research in relevant NHS and social care environments and services for example at clinical and management meetings, in the development of services within the specialty
- 4.2. Act as a Health and Care Research Wales Research Ambassador – providing media interviews in discussion with Health and Care Research Wales Communications team, to promote research in Wales
- 4.3. Connect with NHS R&D Directors and Health Board non-executive leads for research, to collaboratively support a positive research culture

5. **Be an active member of the relevant NIHR-led UK National Specialty Group**, by:

- 5.1. Attending and representing Wales at each UK Specialty Group meetings (three to four each year)
- 5.2. Reporting to the UK Specialty Group on the performance of all portfolio studies with sites in Wales
- 5.3. Raising awareness to the NIHR and affiliated networks of research expertise and capability in Wales
- 5.4. Raising awareness within the NIHR and wider of the potential for Welsh NHS engagement in UK portfolio studies
- 5.5. Sharing good practice with NIHR colleagues and developing responses to challenges
- 5.6. Feeding back to Health and Care Research Wales on the contribution made/gained
- 5.7 Reporting updates from NIHR and wider UK networks to the specialty community in Wales

6. **Provide reports on research** within the relevant specialty area, by:

- 6.1. Submitting personal activity reports to the national Director of Support and Delivery on a bi-annual basis
- 6.2 Meeting one to one with National Director of Support and Delivery/National Head of Research Delivery Operations to agree specialty specific objectives and progress
- 6.2. Contributing to national disease delivery plans and/or networks and other national policy where relevant
- 6.3. Attending all-Wales specialty leads meetings (3 times per year)

7. **Work with national processes**, the Health and Care Research Wales Support and Delivery Centre and NHS R&D Offices to deliver the responsibilities above.

These responsibilities will be subject to review during the period of appointment.

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