

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL CARE RESEARCH

Call for Proposals

July 2014

Research Brief for Full (single stage) Proposals

Reference for this call T14-035

The NIHR has established regional Research Design Services (RDSs) to offer advice to those applying for research grants from the NIHR. You might consider consulting your local RDS for advice, particularly methodological.

Details for the RDSs can be found here

<http://www.ccf.nihr.ac.uk/Pages/RDSMap.aspx>

Call for Proposals

Research Brief for Full Proposals

The NIHR School for Social Care Research (SSCR) invites full proposals for research projects to address themes identified as priorities for improving the evidence base for adult social care (see Section 3). SSCR is looking to commission research addressing the big questions for adult social care for the next 5-10 years. SSCR is seeking innovative, original and high quality proposals in response to one or more of these themes, which demonstrate relevance for, and potential improvements to, adult social care practice in England. All research we fund also has to represent value for money.

1. Background

Launched in May 2009, SSCR was funded by the National Institute for Health Research¹ for an initial five years (Phase I) and has now been re-commissioned for a further 5 years (Phase II). SSCR aims to develop the evidence base for adult social care practice in England by commissioning and conducting world-class research.

Directed by Professor Martin Knapp at LSE, SSCR is a partnership between the London School of Economics and Political Science, and the Universities of Bristol, Kent, Manchester and York.

SSCR has a portfolio of over 56 research studies, and numerous methods and scoping review papers, commissioned in Phase I. These may be helpful resources for applicants to this call. Further information about SSCR and current projects can be viewed at www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk.

As well as enduring issues in social care, the context now is one of continuing change and we are mindful that any research we commission needs to be relevant to this and how things will develop over the next few years. Some key features of this context are the continuing development of personalised care and support, implementation of the Care Act and seeking to deliver good excellent care and support, alongside partner organisations, families and communities, within more challenging budgetary constraints. Applicants may want to address some of these challenges directly in their applications.

2. Rationale

SSCR wishes to fund projects that are likely to influence and improve practice in adult social care in England. SSCR uses a broad and inclusive description of adult social care, encompassing the wide range of care and support that is available to and used by adults; the diversity of services and service providers of adult social care; and care and support provided through and with informal care, communities, self-care and self-funded care. We are interested in all aspects of this plurality of care and support

¹ The National Institute for Health Research provides the framework through which the research staff and research infrastructure of the NHS in England is positioned, maintained and managed as a national research facility. The NIHR provides the NHS with the support and infrastructure it needs to conduct first-class research funded by the Government and its partners alongside high-quality patient care, education and training. Its aim is to support outstanding individuals (both leaders and collaborators), working in world class facilities (both NHS and university), and conducting leading edge research focused on the needs of patients. <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/>

arrangements and how they are developing in the current climate of social care in England.

Following wide consultation, a review of commissioned SSCR work in Phase I, discussions with the SSCR's Advisory Group and User, Carer, Practitioner Reference Group, and responses to SSCR's open consultation, SSCR is seeking to commission a number of high-quality studies addressing the themes outlined in Section 3 of this Brief with the potential to influence and improve practice and shape policy.

3. The requirement

SSCR wishes to commission projects in the field of adult social care practice in England that specifically address one or more of the following themes:

i. Provision of care and support

- Research to help develop the evidence base for care homes;
- Evaluating the potential of emerging technologies to enhance adult social care;
- Understanding good pathways in adult social care;
- Ensuring most effective and cost effective social care support in end of life care;
- Modes of housing provision and their integration with and support to adult social care.
- How can the pursuit of wellbeing for people (as emphasised in the Care Act) be most effectively understood and addressed across the social care system?

ii. The organisation of adult social care

- Supporting choice and making good choices in adult social care;
- Provision of information, advice and advocacy;
- Transitions in care, notably from young people's services and the implications for adult services;
- What are the most effective modes of delivering assessments and what are the implications for outcomes for service users of these modes?
- Portability of care assessments and care plans;
- Integration of adult social care with other services, notably health;
- The role of adult social care in supporting active citizenship;
- Adult social care working with communities and developing community capacity;
- The links between safeguarding, organisational and individual learning, and legislation in improving adult social care.
- How to deliver excellent care and support within tighter budgetary constraints.

iii. Prevention

- conceptualising and developing the evidence base for prevention in adult social care;
- this can encompass notions of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

iv. People

- developing an effective workforce in adult social care;
- delivering effective leadership throughout the system;
- models of co-production and their impact on social care outcomes;

- providing best care and support for carers.

v. *Public awareness & attitudes*

- what is the awareness amongst the public, and their attitudes towards, adult social care and what are the implications for improving care?

Proposals outside of the above themes but relevant to adult social care practice in England will be considered.

While we have not specified any client groups/needs, such as dementia, mental health or learning disabilities, within these themes, applicants may decide to focus their proposal on specific areas of need.

Organisations/institutions/individuals can submit more than one full research proposal addressing these themes. Each proposal should be submitted as a new and separate submission via the online BravoSolution system.

SSCR asks that all applicants consider the following points:

- Proposals will need to demonstrate the relevance and strong potential of the research to improving practice for adult social care in England. Proposals may draw on expertise or on adult social care outside of England, but the research findings must be relevant to practice *in* England.
- NIHR SSCR is keen to improve the capacity for undertaking excellent social care research. Not every proposal has to aspire to do this, but if your proposal contains plans to improve research capacity please make this clear and demonstrate how this will be done in a robust and well supported way.
- Applicants should consider for their proposals:
 - outcomes for people who use social care services and for carers
 - conceptual clarity
 - cost-effectiveness analyses
 - generalisability beyond specific research sites/contexts
 - transferability of findings into recommendations for practice and having a clear impact on improving adult social care
 - an understanding of longer-term sustainability
 - appropriate involvement of/partnerships with people who use social care services, carers and practitioners in the proposed research
 - SSCR's commitment to reflecting the diversity of people who use adult social care services and the diversity of carers as individuals with differing roles and needs.
- Proposals should identify the specific groups(s) of people who use social care that potentially could experience improvements as a result of the research.
- Proposals should provide a clear description of the overall research design and the methodological approach to be employed. Applicants should explain and justify the choice of methods to be employed. Applicants should give full details of the study design including, for example, the number of groups, number of participants, sample size, selection and exclusion criteria where applicable and the proposed means of collection and analysis for qualitative and quantitative data. Please note that we do not consider it as always necessary to do a full

literature search before every study. Applicants planning to undertake an extensive analysis of the literature need to ensure this is fully justified.

- Applicants should consider the ease or difficulty of obtaining the relevant data, including any relevant research ethics and governance considerations, and outline the steps planned in order to overcome any anticipated difficulties in data collection and analysis. Please be aware of the growing pressures on councils and on providers of services when designing studies; the demands from the research proposals on councils, providers and individuals should be thought through very carefully. For example, we do not consider it always necessary to undertake a national survey of local authorities. It is a demanding and resource intensive exercise for research teams and local authorities. Applicants proposing any such large scale survey should ensure that this is justified and suitably resourced. Similarly, applicants requiring data or support from local authorities or other organisations should plan carefully for the time and resources this will require.
- We do support projects that want to analyse relevant secondary datasets, either as part of the project or as the sole method.
- In setting out considerations about research ethics and governance, applicants should demonstrate that they have considered what are likely to be the main ethical issues in the study and how they would be managed, and not only the processes they will go through to obtain ethical and governance approval.
- Proposals should represent original research, and may include secondary analysis of existing data or information.
- SSCR considers it vital that research we commission is as inclusive as possible. This is not to say that every project has to address all or any specific aspect of inclusiveness, such as particular ethnic minorities. However, we want applicants to consider that their research proposal is as inclusive as possible and is appropriately costed to deliver that level of inclusion. SSCR will, for example, fund appropriate additional work for translation or addressing other communication needs, or for including people who lack capacity to consent (within the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act).
- Proposals should reflect the ways in which adult social care is organised, including, as appropriate to each study, the diversity of providers, individuals and communities.
- Requested resources for the whole proposal should be appropriate to the proposed research, fully justified and reflect good value for money.
- Proposals may be of any size, and of any duration providing the research project will be completed at the very latest by February 2019. Proposals laying foundations for more longitudinal studies, such as recruiting people to be followed in further research beyond February 2019 will be considered, as long as there is some relevance to, and likelihood of having an impact on, improving adult social care practice from the SSCR funded study.
- All applicants are required to set out their plans for maximising the impact from their proposed project on improving adult social care in England. Recognising that impact is not immediate and can take time to be evidenced,

SSCR requires applicants to set out their pathways to impact covering all knowledge exchange activities throughout their proposed projects with appropriate costings. SSCR welcomes use of new and innovative methods, as well as tried and tested methods for the sector, but expects to see justification for the plans set out and why they are appropriate to the particular project being proposed.

4. Selection criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- proposed research that is likely to have impact on improving adult social care practice in England, including that it will be timely research
- research with a clear focus/question, and aims, objectives and appropriate methodology to achieve these
- value for money
- understanding of, and commitment to, equality issues and inclusion and their relevance to research
- a commitment to impact and high-quality communication of research, through all appropriate means including traditional publication routes and directly to audiences of policymakers, practitioners and service users and carers
- appropriate involvement of users, carers and practitioners in the proposed research and/or outputs
- appropriate ethics and research governance measures
- a team with relevant expertise and experience for the proposal
- appropriate consideration of the requirements set out in Section 3.

SSCR requires all commissioned research to be conducted in accordance with Department of Health guidance *Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care* (www.dh.gov.uk/research) and in accordance with guidance from the National Social Care Research Ethics Committee (www.scie.org.uk/networks/screc/index.asp) and the Health Research Authority (<http://www.hra.nhs.uk/>). The guidance on these websites is helpful in preparing for an ethics application and before commissioning a project we may ask for reassurance that the lead applicant has read them and is fully prepared for an application for ethical scrutiny and approval from a national research ethics committee (as appropriate to each proposed study).

Guidance about involving users and carers in research can be sourced from INVOLVE (www.invo.org.uk)

5. Funding available

SSCR has budgeted for £2 million to be available for this call, and expects to commission a range of projects (around 8 in total) in terms of size and budget, with a maximum budget of £1m for any individual project. Value for money will be an important criterion in judging proposals.

Applicants should request resources appropriate to the proposed research provide full and detailed justification and reflect good value for money.

Universities, HEIs and other applicants can only request up to 25% of salary costs in overheads. All other costs should be included as direct costs for proposals as far as possible and fully justified.

6. Eligibility

This call is open to organisations meeting the criteria set out in Part 2 of the full proposal form. Proposals submitted by organisations not meeting these criteria will not be taken forward for consideration under this call. SSCR welcomes proposals led by academic researchers, practice researchers, professionals, people who use services and/or carers.

Applicants should demonstrate effective links to, and understanding of, social care practice in England and reflect this in their research proposal(s).

7. Commissioning process

The application process is in one stage and full proposals are invited.

All proposals submitted by the deadline for this call will be considered in five stages:

Stage 1: All proposals will undergo an initial screening to ensure that they (i) meet the requirements of Part 2 of the full proposal form; (ii) are complete, with all sections of the full proposal form filled in and returned as required; and (iii) have clearly and appropriately addressed one of the themes set out in Section 3 of this Brief.

Stage 2: All proposals that meet Stage 1 requirements will be externally reviewed against the criteria set out in Section 4. Reviews will be sought from representatives in the field of social care research and user, carer, or practitioner perspectives.

Research proposals and reviewer comments will be considered by SSCR's Selection Panel and *assessed against the criteria set out in Section 4 and all other guidance for this brief*. The Panel will consider whether a proposal should be considered for funding, and if so whether any clarifications or revisions are required in order for funding to be made available for the proposed study.

Applicants will be informed of the Panel's decision in **early December 2014**.

Stage 3: Principal applicants of proposals that are being considered for funding and require further clarification or revision will be notified of the detailed requirements recommended by the Selection Panel in **early December 2014** and will be expected to respond by **early January 2015**. All shortlisted applicants will be provided with an opportunity to discuss the required clarifications/revisions with a nominated member of the Selection Panel over this period if they wish to do so.

Stage 4: All applicants from Stage 3 will be sent a draft of a contract for their project for review as soon as possible from mid-January 2015. Any clarifications raised about the terms and conditions for our contracts will be discussed at this point with a view to finalising the terms of the contract by **the end of February 2015**. This does not guarantee funding for any applicant, but will ensure that if funding is awarded

contracts can be exchanged as soon as possible for projects to start as soon as possible once final decisions have been made.

Stage 5: The Selection Panel will consider the revised shortlisted proposals and responses to their requested clarifications. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their full proposal by **mid-January 2015**.

8. Contractual arrangements

For successful applicants SSCR wishes to sign and exchange contracts by **the end of February 2015** with successful projects to start on or before 1 April 2015 at the latest (allowing for ethical approval processes as required), although the exact project start date is a matter for negotiation between SSCR and the successful applicant. Contracts will be between the London School of Economics and Political Science on behalf of SSCR and the successful applicant's organisation. SSCR is bound by [NIHR's Terms and Conditions](#), and any queries should be raised before the proposal submission deadline.

Successful applicants will be required to provide evidence of their organisation's employer's liability and professional indemnity insurance and a letter from their project sponsor as part of the contractual process.

9. Application process

In order to submit an application, applicants will be required to register with the LSE's Bravo Solution e-tendering system <https://lse.bravosolution.co.uk/lse>. Once registered, applicants will be able to download the documentation which forms this call for proposals.

The completed full proposal form and resources request form should be submitted via the London School of Economics and Political Science's Bravo Solution system (<https://lse.bravosolution.co.uk/lse>)

Please contact Bravo Solution helpdesk with any queries about using the Bravo Solution system help@bravosolution.co.uk tel: 0800 368 4850

Applications should be submitted via the system by **16.30 on Monday 29 September 2014**. No applications can be accepted after this deadline.

The Bravo Solution website may be busy on the closing day for applications. Applicants are strongly advised to submit their application **as early as possible**. Once the 16.30 deadline has passed, the system will automatically reject any applications, and we will be unable to consider your application. Applicants experiencing technical difficulties in uploading their documents should **let us know immediately**, and in good time **before 16:00** on the closing date.

In order for applications to be accepted all of the required information should be submitted. All sections of the full proposal form are mandatory and failure to complete the form will result in applications being rejected.

Information on using the Bravo Solution system is available by clicking on the Help option in the left-hand menu on the site.

Any enquiries should be directed via the Bravo Solution message function. Any additional information related to the call will be shared with all tenderers via Bravo Solution.

There are 2 forms in the one document to download and complete.

Form 1. A full research proposal form to be submitted via the Bravo Solution system by **16.30 on Monday 29 September 2014**

Form 1 signature pages: Pages requiring signature within the full research proposal should be signed, scanned and uploaded to the Bravo Solution system by **16.30 on Monday 29 September 2014**

Form 2. A financial resources form to be submitted via the Bravo Solution system by **16.30 on Monday 29 September 2014**

A scanned copy of the completed and signed form should be uploaded to Bravo Solution by **16.30 on Monday 29 September 2014**

CHECK LIST

Element	Deadline	Route
Full proposal form Part 1 and Part 2 & Financial Resources Form	4.30 pm. 29th September 2014	Bravo Solution online system