

NIHR Three Schools: Dementia Research Programme
Improving the lives of people living with dementia and carers
2021-2029

Call for Research Proposals: Full Proposals

21 October 2024

The Three Schools' Dementia Research Programme invites full proposals from shortlisted applicants for research projects to address priorities for improving the lives of people living with or at risk of dementia, family and other carers. We are seeking innovative, original, high-quality proposals which represent good value for money.

This is two-stage call for proposals for research that can start from February 2025.

Full proposals are due by **16.00 on Wednesday 20 November 2024**.

1. Background

The NIHR Research Schools for Primary Care (SPCR), Public Health (SPHR) and Social Care (SSCR) ("three Schools") have joined together in a unique collaboration between leading academic centres in England to collaborate on a programme of work funded through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) on dementia.

The Three Schools' Dementia Research Programme aims to develop the evidence base for dementia-related practice in England by commissioning and conducting high-quality research. The Programme builds on research within each School and will carry out research to address key gaps in the evidence base working collaboratively across primary care, public health and social care.

Outline proposals received by 23 September 2024 were reviewed by the Programme's Commissioning Panel with decisions communicated to all applicants on 18 October 2024.

Feedback from the Panel for shortlisted proposals will be sent out in week beginning 21 October 2024.

2. The requirement

We are seeking to commission high-quality studies with the potential to improve the lives of people living with or at risk of dementia, family and other carers in England (directly or indirectly), to start from February 2025.

The core aim of this Programme is to carry out high-quality internationally leading research to produce new knowledge (including, where appropriate, reviews and syntheses of existing evidence) to improve the lives of people with, or at risk of developing, dementia, their families and other carers.

The three Schools are committed to commissioning primary and secondary research across the spectrum of dementia-related practice, across different groups, settings and using a range of methodologies. Research could involve any aspect of prevention, diagnosis, treatment, support or care, and related health and social care services. All applications must demonstrate relevance for, and potential to improve, dementia-related practice and outcomes for people in England, or strategies to reduce the risk of dementia.

Funding of research through this Programme requires collaboration between at least two members of different NIHR Schools. The Principal Investigator should be based in one of the core member university groups of the three NIHR Schools. This means an applicant must be a direct member of the School rather than having a tangential link. Applicants are advised to check with

the relevant School lead if they require further confirmation. Collaborators from outside the three Schools are allowed.

All applicants are required to set out how they responded to the Panel's feedback on their outline proposal in Part 3 of the full proposal form.

Applicants may wish to utilise the support available through NIHR for developing their proposal and, if needed, delivery of the research (see Annex I).

3. Selection criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- methodological excellence;
- collaboration across the Three Schools;
- potential to have an impact on the lives of people living with dementia and their carers;
- feasibility;
- originality;
- relevance to dementia-related practice;
- value for money;
- strength of the research team;
- contribution to the coherence of this Programme and to the work of the three Schools more broadly;
- clearly defined and costed plans for involvement, well-defined pathways to impact (through engagement and dissemination, for example) and being as inclusive as possible of research participants;
- clearly defined and costed plans for meeting research ethics and governance requirements.

4. Duration

Successful proposals can start from February 2025 but must commence no later than 1 June 2025.

Proposals can be between 12 and 47 months, although shorter durations (as appropriate to the research) are acceptable. All research projects must be completed by 31 December 2028.

5. Funding available

Following feedback from the Commissioning Panel on outline proposals, the Programme expects that there will be some variation in the budgets proposed between the outline stage and in the full proposal submission. However, any variation over 10% of the total budget must be justified in Part 6 of the full proposal form.

The maximum budget for each proposal is £500,000.

This Programme does not provide full economic costs. Universities, other HEIs and other applicants can request up to 30% of salary costs in overheads. All other costs can be included as direct costs for proposals as far as possible and fully justified.

6. Commissioning process

This is a two-stage call. [Information for Stage 1](#) was provided in June 2024.

Following submission, full proposals will be externally reviewed against the criteria set out in this research brief. Views will be sought from representatives in the field of dementia care research and user, carer, or practitioner perspectives.

Applicants will be sent reviewer comments as part of the commissioning process on Monday 9 December 2024 and provided with the opportunity to respond to this feedback by 16 December 2024.

Full proposals submissions and reviewer comments will be considered by the Programme's Commissioning Panel.

Decisions and feedback are expected to be sent out by late January 2025. Should further clarification be required for proposals recommended for funding, applicants will be provided with time to respond to the Panel's queries in January/February 2025, with a view to finalising projects for contracting processes soon after.

7. Contractual arrangements

The NIHR Three Schools' Dementia Research Programme is managed by the NIHR School for Social Care Research on behalf of the three NIHR Research Schools. Phase IV of SSCR is led by the University of York.

Research commissioning processes for this Call are being managed by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

Research agreements will be between York on behalf of the three NIHR Schools and the host organisation. The NIHR Three Schools' Dementia Research Programme's terms and conditions will apply.

In submitting their full proposals, applicants are agreeing that their proposal submission documents, and all relevant personal data provided as part of this commissioning process to LSE, will be shared with York.

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.

Ethics

Applicants are required to demonstrate they have fully considered potential ethical issues and ethics approval processes relevant to their proposal. This includes a realistic timetable for any necessary ethical approvals to ensure a prompt start and end to the proposed project. Full details are required in the application.

Research funded by this Programme falls under the scope of the [UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research](#) and, as such, plans for ethics and governance approval need to be in line with its requirements.

Where ethics approval is required for any/all activities within the proposal, please be aware that we can only release funding for those activities once ethics approval has been provided by an appropriate research ethics committee. Funding can be released for activities not requiring ethics approval where these are stand-alone activities (such as secondary data analysis) with independent outputs. Funding cannot be provided for preparatory activities for ethics applications.

Data

We are committed to making data as openly available as possible, and for data to be re-used and archived where appropriate. All proposals will be required to demonstrate they have fully

considered potential data management and archiving possibilities in their proposals. Specific arrangements will form part of research study agreements.

8. Application process

Full proposals should be submitted using the “Full Research Proposals” form and submitted using this [link](#) by 16.00 on Wednesday 20 November 2024.

9. Queries

Please email sscr.dementia@lse.ac.uk and the most appropriate person will reply as soon as possible.

+++++

Annex I: NIHR support for the development of proposals

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) regional **Research Support Services** (RSSs) offer advice to those applying for research grants from the NIHR. We strongly advise consulting your local RDS for advice, particularly methodological, before completing an application to this Programme.

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research-support-service/>

Studies funded by through this Programme are eligible to access **NIHR Research Delivery Network** (RDN) support, which is provided to social and health care research teams both in and outside the NHS. Where appropriate we expect you to apply for NIHR RDN support and subsequent inclusion in the NIHR RDN Portfolio of studies to fully benefit from the support that the RDN offers through their Study Support Service.

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/clinical-research-network.htm>

Guidance from the **Health Research Authority** is helpful in considering ethical issues and scrutiny processes. To help avoid unnecessary delays in starting projects, before commissioning a project we may ask for reassurance that the lead applicant understands this and is fully prepared for an application for ethical scrutiny from a national research ethics committee (as appropriate to each proposed study).

<https://www.hra.nhs.uk/>

All commissioned research is required to be conducted in accordance with the **UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research**.

<https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/uk-policy-framework-health-social-care-research/>

The **UK Standards for Public Involvement** are a framework to help in planning how the public (i.e. in ASC people needing support and care, their carers, and practitioners in the sector) will be involved in research. The Three Schools are committed to the highest standards of involvement and recommends the UK Standards and supporting material to help plan this.

<https://sites.google.com/nihr.ac.uk/pi-standards/home>