

Research Capability Funding (RCF) Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) for Fellowship applications

Supporting research in primary care,
community care, public health & social care

Guidance for Applicants

Version: Autumn 2026-2027

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PPI for Fellowship Applications

There will be three application reviews per year, January, June and October. Exact dates will be advertised on the ICB website.

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) for Fellowship applications

Colleagues from our partner Universities, the ICB and the Wider Health and Care Organisations within our ICS can apply for up to £1,500 to cover Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) and associated community engagement costs that are needed to make a strong application for a Fellowship award.

These do not have to be NIHR Fellowships but do have to be within the remit of the ICB research team, i.e. primary care, community care, Integrated Health System, strategic commissioning, population health management, public health, residential care, social care and/or voluntary and charity social enterprise (VCSE) health and care provision.

This guidance refers to Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) for Fellowship applications, there are separate guidance documents on our website for Early Ideas (Type 1) and NIHR Grant Preparation (Type 2) RCF applications.

Please note that this is a competitive process with limited funds available.

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) for Fellowship applications

There are two different types of application we will accept:

- An application relating to a **specific project**.
- An application from a **university department/centre** to use the funding for Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) for multiple Fellowship applications.

Each application can apply for up to £1,500.00.

There are different application forms to complete depending on which type of applicant you are:

Individual:

The application involves a short form, with applicants asked:

- To explain the area of health they wish to research
- To outline your plans for Patient and Public involvement activities
- To explain how your fellowship contributes to University department, and the Integrated Care Board's aim of Health and Care Research that makes a difference to those who need it most

University department:

The application involves a short form, with applicants asked:

- To outline the health and care focus of your department, and how the department intends to develop and support academics careers.
- To outline the departments plans for Patient and Public Involvement activities to support fellowship development.
- To explain how you will ensure these funds contribute to the Integrated Care Board's aim of Health and Care Research that makes a difference to those who need it most

Fellowships available:

Please see below some possible Fellowship schemes to apply for (Links embedded).

Please be aware there are more fellowships schemes available than those listed below.

- [NIHR Predoctoral Fellowship](#)
- [NIHR Development and Skills Enhancement Award](#)
- [NIHR Doctoral Fellowship](#)
- [NIHR Postdoctoral Fellowship](#)
- [NIHR Professorships and Senior Investigator Award](#)
- [Health Foundation Fellowship](#)
- [Wellcome Trust Fellowship Awards](#)
- [UKRI Fellowship](#)

ICB Priorities



Integrated Care Strategy on a page

5 Opportunities

- 1** We need to **tackle inequalities**
- 2** We can **strengthen the building blocks** of good health and wellbeing
- 3** Wherever possible, we need to **prevent illness and treat people earlier**
- 4** We need to work alongside communities to support **healthy behaviours**
- 5** And once people are ill, there are **conditions** that we could manage better

Our Commitments

Key things that will benefit people across the life course:



Invest in the first 1,001 days of life

Early identification and support for people experiencing anxiety and depression



Support people to be a healthy weight

Reducing harm from tobacco



Reduce harm from drugs and alcohol

Improved prevention, detection and treatment of cancer



Tackle cardiovascular disease

Better support for people with painful conditions



Support for older people towards end of life

How we will deliver



Faster access to care and support for vulnerable groups



Use VCSE expertise to identify and support people most at risk



Increase our financial commitment to prevention



Change our decision making to actively reduce health inequality



Recognise and rectify historical injustices



Build a workforce who are supported, skilled and healthy



Embed trauma informed practice



Create a network of volunteer and staff prevention champions



Develop community strengths and assets that support everyday health and wellbeing



Use purchasing and employment to support better health and wellbeing

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Areas of Research Interest

Areas of Research Interest (ARIs) are specific topics or issues that the government is interested in.

They are a way for government organisations to indicate that they're keen to hear research evidence or insights related to that area.

ARIs are wide-ranging and can cover anything from economic and social policy to international relations and national security. By identifying ARIs, the civil service can ensure that research efforts are targeted where evidence is most needed to inform policy decisions and improve government performance.

[ARI Database | Search, browse or analyse Areas of Research Interest \(ARIs\) from UK governmental bodies.](#)

References

References can be supplied, either embedded into the answer, added as a list to the end of the application or as a separate document.

Review

Our aim is to ensure that our RCF investments compliment health and care priorities, and that the resultant submissions are strong and have a good chance of being approved for funding by the various fellowship schemes available.

Process

Step 1 Remit Check

The ICB Research Team reviews to ensure that the topic is within the ICB's remit and completes a search for existing literature and research funding that would make the RCF application unlikely to secure NIHR funding.

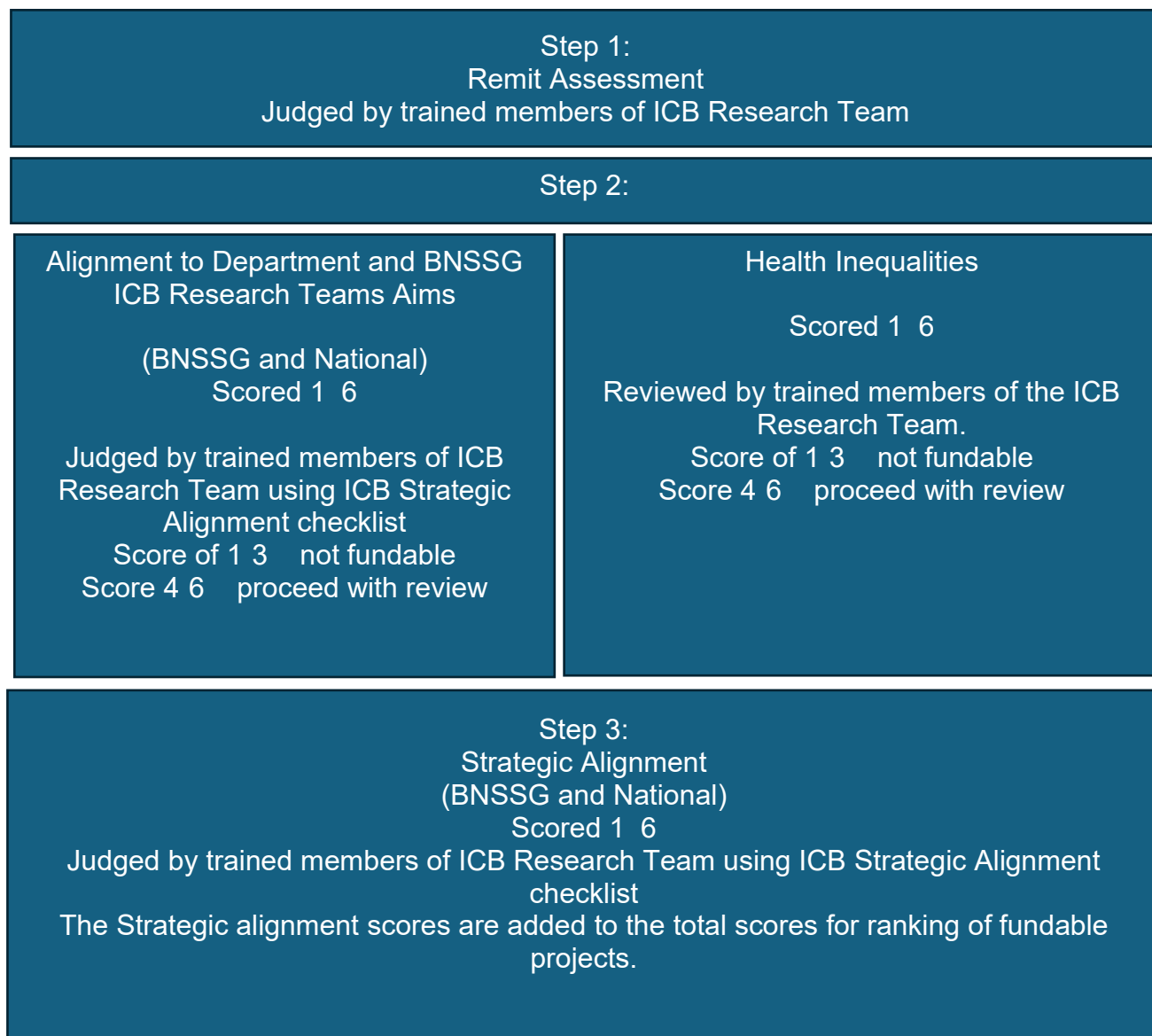
The review also confirms that the project is research. The term research means different things to different people, but for Research Capability Funding purposes, research is defined by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as "The attempt to derive generalisable new knowledge by addressing clearly defined questions with systematic and rigorous methods." We are not able to award funding for evaluations, audits or service improvement projects for existing services.

For further information please see the [NIHR Glossary](#)

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Step 2 Review

Applications are assessed on the factors below: Remit assessment, Health Inequalities, Alignment to Department and BNSSG ICB Research Teams Aims and Strategic alignment.



Scoring will be between 1 and 6, from 2 assessors per criterion.

Score	Definition
6	Excellent
5	Good
4	Minor weaknesses/concerns
3	Moderate weaknesses/concerns
2	Significant weaknesses/concerns
1	Severe weaknesses/concerns

The average scores from the Health Inequalities reviews must score 4 or above for the application to be deemed fundable.

If the application scores below 4, or if the application receives a score of 1 from any reviewer, it will not be approved for funding.

The Average Strategic alignment scores are added to the total scores from the Health Inequalities & Alignment to department and Research Team Strategy and Research Aims review for ranking of fundable projects.

If there is not enough budget to meet all recommended applications, they will be ranked according to their score and the ICB will award as many as is possible.

In cases where two applications are scored equally, they are separated by ranking on their individual factor scores, in the following order of priority:

1. Health Inequality score
2. Alignment to department and Research Team Strategy and Research Aims score.

Panel

The panel for **Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) for Fellowship applications** consists of members of the ICB's Research Team.

Timings

We will review applications three times a year, with deadlines in January, June and October.

We will confirm outcomes as soon as possible, we aim to confirm outlines within 6 weeks. We will release all outcomes on the same day.

Eligibility

Applications will be eligible if all criteria below are met:

- The lead applicant must be working for an organisation supported by the BNSSG ICB Research Team:
 - Higher Education Institution (HEI)
 - A member organisation of the BNSSG ICS
- The project must be in the area of primary care, public health, community healthcare, social care and/or strategic commissioning.
- The plan is to develop an application for a research fellowship award.

We strongly encourage applications that have the patient perspective as a clear priority.

Please contact the ICB Research Team directly at bnssg.research@nhs.net if you need support for a Fellowship application.

Context of RCF

NIHR Research Capability Funding (RCF) is a research funding stream made available by the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR) to help research-active NHS organisations attract, develop and retain high-quality research, clinical and support staff.

This scheme will not fund any activities that do not directly contribute towards a Fellowship application.

Constraints on award

Timing

The NIHR RCF is intended to be used within the financial year in which it is issued.

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Therefore, we prioritise applications for funding to support work which will start within four months of the submission deadline. The work does not need to have concluded within this same financial year.

Award amount

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) for Fellowship Applications can be up to £1500 for individuals, or a set award of £1,500 for a university department/centre.

Eligible Costs:

Please see below a list of eligible costs that RCF from the Public and Patient Involvement Costs to Support Career Fellowship can be used for.

- Activity
- Payments to Patient and Public Involvement collaborators (@£27.50/h)
- Travel costs
- Carer's costs
- Room hire
- Catering costs
- Cost of translation

Transparency

The spending of government funds must be transparent, and we promote and encourage genuine collaboration and sharing of information.

In line with this, all RCF applicants agree upon submission that if their application is awarded, their name, job title, place of work and a plain English summary of their application will be published on the BNSSG ICB website. This provides transparency on the RCF applications approved by the panel, enables other potential applicants to see what is within our remit, and gives opportunity for potential collaborators to see what work is going on locally.

We will not share the details of unsuccessful applications, but in order to help future applicants, we do publish a list of reasons for rejection provided by the panel.

If you have special circumstances which would make such a publication difficult, please indicate this clearly when submitting your application.

All RCF awardees will need to report on their spend to the ICB. We will contact recipients for our annual reporting period, and at the end of their RCF duration.

The ICB reports all names and salary details of all RCF recipients to the DHSC as part of our annual finance reporting. This is completed using secure data sharing methods and is a condition of RCF awards.

Training obligations

BNSSG ICB is proud to be a leading a Research Engagement Network, which is committed to increasing the diversity of participants in research. We have learned a lot from our local community members, and as part of a national peer network led by NHS England.

One clear need is that all researchers working with communities need support to be “community ready” and for our research to make the impacts we all want to see, we need to ensure research is developed with equality, diversity and inclusion at the forefront of activities, as well as colleagues supported to understand anti-racism and cultural humility.

As such, all recipients of RCF will be expected to undertake training on these elements, or to show evidence of having been on training within the preceding 24 months.

- [Trauma Informed](#)
- [Cultural Competence](#)
- [Health Inequalities](#)

Evidence of completion (or equivalent training) will be required for the final payment of the RCF award.

Project Reporting and Performance Management

All projects funded through this call will be supported and monitored by the ICB Research Team.

The ICB Research Team approach is that we are partners working to support RCF recipients to maximise their chances of success in their fellowship applications. Whilst we will work with you to make progress, as guardians of NHS funds the ICB retain the right to withdraw or curtail funding if progress is not satisfactory.

At the end of the financial year of award being given, a report will be required of each recipient of RCF. This information will contribute to the ICB's report to the DHSC on our RCF spend.

All RCF recipients will also be required to produce a final report at the end of their funding.

We would welcome all subsequent NIHR grant applications resulting from work funded by this scheme **to be submitted with NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB named as grant Host (contracting organisation).**

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Work funded by ICB RCF should start within 3 months of notification, and if the project has not started within 6 months, funding may be withdrawn.

You can contact the ICB Research Team at any time if you have any queries or would like some support with any aspect of preparing a grant application (bnssg.research@nhs.net). We encourage all RCF recipients to contact us as soon as there is a query or issue. Because we work on so many grant applications, the query or issue is often something we have dealt with several times previously.

Deadlines

Electronic submission of form (email attachment) to bnssg.research@nhs.net will be accepted throughout the year.

We will acknowledge receipt of your email.

See our [website](#) or the latest information on deadlines.

We plan to hold panel reviews in June, October and January each year. These timings are depending on available budget.

Contacts

We are always happy to speak through any questions applicants may have. Please email the BNSSG ICB Research Team: bnssg.research@nhs.net