NIHR | National Institute for Health Research

Your Research Design Service journey

You have a research idea
What next?

Supporting researchers at all stages of preparing funding applications

What is the Research Design Service (RDS)

The Research Design Service (RDS) supports researchers to develop applications to the National Institute for Health Research and other national funders of applied health and social care research. If you have a research idea, we can offer free advice and support to develop your idea into a competitive funding application.

Whether you are at the very beginning of your research design journey (if you are looking for a suitable funding stream, for example), or if you are one click away from submitting your funding application, we are here to support you.

Contacting us in the early days of your application writing is preferable, but we will endeavour to help you towards a successful award regardless of where you are in the application process.

Continue through the leaflet to see the stages you can expect to come across on your research funding application journey and where we at the RDS can help.

Perform a literature review, develop a research question and start your public involvement consultation

Search electronic resources for completed and ongoing systematic reviews, primary studies, guidelines and policies

➜ **We can advise on the literature review (search and appraisal)**

Outline what is known/unknown about the problem; use the evidence to ensure novelty, refine and justify the question, inform methods and describe current practice/pathways

➜ **We can help you to translate an idea into a focused question**

Developing your research question: Ensure your idea is academically sound, important and will work within the health and social care system

➜ **We can consider whether the question is presented as novel, adequately justified, ethical, and whether it is feasible to address within the proposed time period**

Present a strong case for the research drawing on service user experiences and needs

➜ **We can help you to plan and facilitate public involvement activities and identify individuals and groups to work with**

Consider the funding programme, build the team and alert organisations

Read research programme webpages, directors' messages and look for relevant webinars and guidance

➜ We can advise on the most suitable funding programmes

➜ We can check the proposed study is within scope of the targeted funding programme, or help to identify an alternative

➜ We can advise on the requirements of funding programmes , including fellowship awards

Form a team with the relevant breadth of expertise, taking into account funding limits

➜ We can identify gaps in the team and help source potential co-applicants

Liaise early with departments impacted by research and with organisations responsible for costings, sponsorship, study planning and support

➜ We can signpost to organisations that will provide essential support

Decide on study design, develop methods

Consider where the project sits in the developmental pathway
(e.g. intervention development, feasibility study, pilot followed by full-scale study)

Consider practical, ethical and regulatory aspects

Consider methods
(e.g. sampling, recruitment, outcome measures, analysis, process evaluation)

➜ **We can provide guidance on methods and signpost to an array of methodological resources**

➜ **We can point you to regulatory resources such as the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency guidance on Clinical Investigations of Medical Devices**

Develop a public involvement plan, agree role descriptions

➜ **The RDS can help you to develop your plans for continued public involvement throughout the lifespan of the project; this is essential for developing a study that is inclusive, practical to deliver and clearly described**

Plan inventive ways to disseminate research findings

➜ **The RDS can help you explore novel ways to disseminate your research findings to different audiences**

Write the research proposal

Look at successful applications

Follow the application guidelines carefully

Create a Gantt chart

➜ **The RDS can review drafts at any stage and inform you about other peer-review opportunities**

Ensure co-applicants comply with any requirements e.g. providing online CVs

➜ **The RDS can attend and offer advice at research team meetings**

Submit the research application

If successful, respond to committee's feedback

➜ **The RDS can go through the committee's feedback with you and help to plan a way forward and help shape the full application to time and cast a critical set of eyes over the final document**

➜ **The RDS can arrange a mock interview if required**

If unsuccessful, consider next steps

➜ **The RDS can go through the committee's feedback with you and help to plan a way forward**

Post-award support

Should your project receive funding, we are available post-award to direct you to further resources that will help you throughout your research project. If your project does not go exactly to plan, we will be there to help tweak the design of your study to address any unforeseen difficulties.

Contact your Research Design Service regional office

North East and North Cumbria

📞 0191 208 7000

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🐦 @NIHR_RDSNENC

Not local?
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