

NIHR SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL CARE RESEARCH

Call for Applicants for Individual Research Career Development Awards in Adult Social Care

1 March 2021

The NIHR School for Social Care Research (NIHR SSCR) invites proposals to support individuals to develop their careers in adult social care research in England. This is part of NIHR SSCR's commitment to build research capacity in adult social care.

Applications received by **16.30 on Wednesday 2 June 2021** will be considered by the Capacity Building Management Team of NIHR SSCR Executive Group. Institutions are not limited to one application.

Applicants are asked to provide an expression of interest by **16.30 on Wednesday 12 May 2021**. This is to support NIHR SSCR in estimating the number of applications and does not commit any individual to submit an application.

1. Background

Launched in May 2009, NIHR SSCR is funded by the National Institute for Health Research until April 2024 (Phase III, 2019-24). NIHR SSCR aims to develop the evidence base for adult social care practice in England by commissioning and conducting high-quality research.

Over the last 11 years the School has commissioned research studies, and numerous methods and scoping review papers across the scope of adult social care. Further information is available on our [website](#). Our business plan for this third phase can be found [here](#).

We are developing a programme to build research capacity in adult social care in England. Details of our activities can be found on our [website](#). Our first call was launched in 2019; details of successful awards can be found on our website.

We use a broad, inclusive description of adult social care, encompassing the wide range of care and support 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 unpaid care, communities, self-care and self-funded care. We are interested in all aspects of this plurality of care and support arrangements, and their development in the current context of adult social care in England. Areas of overlap and/or integration with other sectors also fall within our remit.

2. The requirement

With support from the Department of Health and Social Care and NIHR Academy, we are seeking high-quality applications for research career development awards from individuals who have a commitment to developing the evidence base to improve adult social care practice in England.

This may include individuals already working in social care in research, education or practice, or people with research expertise in an aligned sector, topic area or discipline who wish to bring their skills and experience to adult social care. We are keen to support professionals working in adult social care who wish to develop their research capacity, as well as individuals who are already in research careers.

Applicants will need to make a strong case to NIHR SSCR for the proposed plan for their career development with a *clear commitment to establishing a long-term career in adult social care research*, including the organisational support they will receive, any training they will undertake as part of their workplan, and how this package will help them take the next steps in their research career or develop their research capacity.

Applications should fit with the remit of NIHR SSCR and show evidence of engaging with our priorities, as set out in our [business plan](#). Elements of comparative work and career development with other UK countries may be considered, but the focus of the research capacity development is on England.

These awards focus on individual career development and are not suitable for research projects. Awards may cover, for example, support to:

- Dedicate time to focus on a research project or fellowship application to a significant funder of social care research.
- Undertake a personalised training and development plan which is clearly cemented into a research career.
- Undertake a formal qualification relevant to social care research.
- Enhance research skills to support evidence-informed practice.
- Transition from a social care professional career to be active as a researcher in adult social care over the longer term.
- Adapt expertise in an area outside adult social care to apply skills in adult social care. This, for example, may be to explore applying existing methodological expertise in adult social care.

In all cases, applicants should clearly set out how their plans align with their future research career trajectory, and the next steps following their proposed activities linked to this, and provide a detailed and robust training plan to support their career development plans.

Where applicants are applying for support to develop fellowship or research grants, the intended target funding stream, deadline for the application and broad topic area would need to be specified in the application for this award. A brief justification is required for why the topic chosen is a priority for adult social care and the targeted funding body. The preparation work that this award would support also needs to be clear in the application.

Research career developments awards will need to be hosted by an appropriate organisation. This may be the applicant's current organisation (such as a university, local authority or service provider), or it may be elsewhere; this should be set out in the application form and confirmation of relevant organisation support provided. Awards can be held jointly (for example, if the applicant is a professional with one employer but the award will be held by another such as a university, or vice versa). NIHR SSCR will be

reviewing the strength of the support provided by the hosting organisation as part of the review process. The School will also be considering how planned activities through an NIHR SSCR award add value to existing institution support and time allocations for research (e.g. as part of lectureship positions or research study sabbaticals), and this should be explained in the applications and institutional support statement.

Successful applicants will be required to participate in the life of NIHR SSCR, including attending our annual conference and participating in bespoke training meetings. Each successful applicant will be supported by a senior member of the School.

3. Selection criteria

Applications will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Strong individual applicant
- Clear alignment with the remit of NIHR SSCR
- A strong case for personal development through this award linked to the development of a research career in adult social care
- A proposal clearly in line with the applicant's current career stage
- Clear training/development plan that is integral to the award
- Clear end-point and objectives for the research career development award
- A long-term commitment to a research career in adult social care
- Strong and appropriate support in the applicant's environment that will be sustained beyond the award to continue to help establish the applicant's research career
- Value for money.

4. Duration of awards

The School will consider awards of up to 32 months in duration. The duration of the award should reflect the nature of the development plan and be fully justified.

Successful applications can start on or after 1 July 2021 but must commence no later than 1 October 2021. Awards must finish no later than 28 February 2024.

5. Funding available

Funding is available for awards of up to £50,000. Applications applying at the higher end of these awards will need to make a strong case for this level of funding. We expect to make awards across this range and do not anticipate making all awards at the higher end. (The School recognises that salaries for individuals at mid- or higher-level positions may be at the higher end of the budget available.)

Costs for the applicant's salary, training (formal or short) courses and events, direct costs linked to the Fellowship are eligible. NIHR SSCR does not fund supervision costs. It is for the applicant and relevant host organisation to determine whether to apply overheads. NIHR SSCR will only fund up to 25% of staff costs as overheads. These will be

included as part of the budget requested.

Funding will be paid to the host organisation.

6. Application process

Expressions of interest should be submitted using the “Expression of interest” form on the School’s website [here](#) by **16.30 on Wednesday 12 May 2021**. This will enable us to plan our administrative work for processing the award.

The deadline for full applications is **16.30 on Wednesday 2 June 2021**. Completed applications should be uploaded and submitted through the School’s website [here](#).

For queries about these awards please email sscr@lse.ac.uk and the most appropriate person will reply as soon as possible.

Declarations on the application form need to be signed by the main host organisation. Applicants should submit the form electronically - electronic signatures are acceptable. Where the declarations are signed in hard copy, a scanned version of these should be submitted alongside a PDF of the final application (scanned versions of the full PDF should not be submitted as they are not easily readable).

7. Commissioning process

All applications will be initially assessed to ensure that they are within the remit of this call, meet required criteria and that the form has been fully completed. All applications successfully passing this triage will be reviewed by the NIHR SSCR Executive Group and assessed by the Capacity-Building Management Team.

Applicants will be informed of the School’s decision in late June 2021.

A contract for successful awards will be issued by LSE to the main host institution for the award based on standard NIHR SSCR terms.

8. Future calls

We anticipate issuing two further annual calls for individual capacity development awards in October 2021 and October 2022. Unsuccessful applicants in this round will receive feedback to support future applications to the School or NIHR Academy.