

NIHR SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL CARE RESEARCH

Call for Applications for Practice-Based Research Leaders Awards in Adult Social Care

22 August 2022

The NIHR School for Social Care Research (NIHR SSCR) invites Stage 1 applications to support senior individuals in social care practice roles to develop team or organisational-level research skills and/or capacity as *practice-based research leaders*, and by doing so to become research champions within the adult social care sector. This is part of NIHR SSCR's commitment to build research capacity in adult social care.

Stage 1 Applications received by **16.30 on Monday 3 October 2022** will be considered by the NIHR SSCR's Commissioning Panel. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a Stage 2 interview and presentation in late November 2022.

Applicants are asked to indicate their intention to submit an application by completing a short form (see below) by **16.30 on Thursday 22 September 2022**. This is to help NIHR SSCR estimate 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 and Care Research until April 2024. The School's third phase of funding runs from 2019 to 2024. 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 13 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](#).

Information on our programme of work to build research capacity in adult social care in England can be found on our [website](#).

We recognise that there are challenges in attracting colleagues from practice backgrounds into research or supporting practice leaders to develop and sustain a research culture across practice settings. Our individual career development awards have supported social care professionals to develop their research skills.

The ***Practice-Based Research Leaders Award (PBRLA) Scheme*** aims to provide tailored and targeted support for individuals or teams in positions of responsibility who have the ability and influence to develop research skills and/or capacity within their organisations (or across organisations). This is particularly where resources would help accelerate progress in developing team or organisational research capacity.

For the purposes of this Scheme, practice organisations are those commissioning and/or providing adult social care services including local authorities, charities and the third sector.

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 PBRLAs from individuals or teams who have a commitment to developing the evidence base and using this to improve adult social care practice in England.

The PBRLA Scheme is targeted at individuals or teams in positions of responsibility working in adult social care, social work or public health who are well-positioned, not only to support the development of research cultures in their own organisations, but also to encourage other leaders to support research cultures across adult social care practice.

The PRLA Scheme would not fund an individual to develop their own individual career in research if this does not benefit the overall research culture within their organisation. The Scheme is specifically to support individuals to develop ways in which they can - at an individual level or through their organisation - effectively champion research within adult social care practice and/or policy.

Applicants will need to make a strong case to NIHR SSCR for the proposed plan for their award with a *clear commitment to developing their position as a practice-based research leader and research champion in adult social care*.

The support required is expected to be specific to each applicant/team. The use of funding is to be determined by the applicant with their organisation to ensure it is tailored to their needs. Awards may cover, for example, support to:

- undertake research leadership training and support
- undertake training which would allow them as research leaders to better support a research culture in their organisation
- develop research processes and structures within the organisation / with other organisations, including preparation or collection of data for research purposes
- employ an individual to lead research engagement initiatives
- pilot research approaches within the organisation
- develop secondment or training schemes for individuals to learn from research groups within universities.

In all cases, applicants should clearly set out how their plans align with their organisation's current and future research development plans and describe the steps they would expect to take following the award.

PBRLAs aim to support organisational-level research capacity. It is therefore expected that the organisation will host and support the application. NIHR SSCR will be reviewing the strength of the support provided by the hosting organisation as part of the

commissioning process.

Successful applicants will be required to participate actively in the life of NIHR SSCR and wider NIHR activities to build capacity in adult social care research.

3. Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

- Strong applicant or team well-positioned to develop their organisational research capacity
- Clear alignment with the remit of NIHR SSCR
- A strong case for development through this award, linked to development as a research leader in adult social care
- A proposal clearly in line with the team's or organisation's current research position and plans for development
- Relevant and clear training/development plan that is integral to the award
- Clear endpoint and objectives for the award
- A long-term commitment to developing research capacity within their team or organisation
- A long-term commitment to championing research in adult social care
- Strong and appropriate support from the hosting organisation that will be sustained beyond the award to continue to develop research capacity for the individual applicant(s) and organisation
- Value for money.

4. Duration of awards

Successful applicants can start from December 2022 but must commence no later than 1 February 2023. Awards must finish no later than 31 March 2024.

The duration of the award should reflect the nature of the development plan and be fully justified.

5. Funding available

Funding of £200,000 is available for this Call; we expect to fund 3-4 applications.

Direct costs relating to proposed activities during the PBRLA are eligible, including salary costs, training (formal or short) courses and events, and other direct costs. It is for the applicant(s) and hosting organisation to determine whether to apply overheads. NIHR SSCR will only fund up to 25% of staff costs as overheads. These should be included as part of the budget requested.

It is anticipated that senior practice leaders, such as those at director level positions, will not require salary funding for themselves but would use this investment to support activities to foster or develop their organisational research culture, as well as coming together as a cohort with other key sector leaders to support greater use and

involvement in research. However, where necessary a case for such funding can be made.

Funding will be paid to the host organisation.

6. Commissioning process

This is a two-stage process: a summary application form (Stage 1), followed by an oral (presentation and interview) application (Stage 2) for shortlisted candidates.

Intentions to submit should be completed using the “Intention to Submit” form on the School’s website [here](#) by **16.30 on Thursday 22 September 2022**. This will enable us to plan our administrative work for processing the award.

Stage 1

The deadline for Stage 1 applications is **16.30 on Monday 3 October 2022**. Completed applications should be uploaded and submitted through the School’s website [here](#).

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 Commissioning Panel for these Awards.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their Stage 1 proposal in mid-October 2022.

Stage 2

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an application meeting with the Commissioning Panel which will include a presentation and discussion of their application.

Applicants will be required to submit their presentation to NIHR SSCR one week in advance of the meeting. Further details will be provided to shortlisted applicants.

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

7. Queries

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

Should an applicant wish to do so, a meeting can be arranged with a member of the School to discuss their application prior to the Stage 1 submission deadline.

8. Future calls

This is a pilot scheme and we do not currently anticipate issuing a further call for practice-based research leaders awards. Unsuccessful applicants in this round will receive feedback to support future applications to the NIHR or NIHR Academy.