

**NIHR Three Schools: Dementia Research Programme**  
**Improving the lives of people living with dementia and carers**  
**2021-2029**  
**Call for Research Proposals**  
**14 August 2023**

The Three Schools' Dementia Research Programme invites full proposals 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 a two-stage call for proposals for research that can start from January 2024.

Outline proposals should be submitted by **16.00 on Friday 22 September 2023**.

For shortlisted proposals, full proposals will be due by **15.30 on Thursday 9 November 2023**.

## **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.

## **2. The requirement**

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 dementia, their families and other carers in England, as well as risk-reduction for the population, communities and individuals. We are seeking to commission high-quality studies to start from January 2024.

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 proposals must demonstrate relevance for, and potential to improve, dementia-related practice and outcomes for people in England.

Funding of research through this Programme requires collaboration between at least two members of different NIHR Schools. The Principal Investigator must be based in one of the university members of the three NIHR Schools. Collaborators from outside the three Schools are allowed.

Proposals in response to this Call may be developmental applications for longer-term plans for dementia research.

Applicants are advised to review [Annex A of the Three Schools' Dementia Research Programme of Work](#).

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

### **Encouraging and supporting new and developing principal investigators**

We welcome proposals that encourage new and developing dementia researchers to lead studies, as well as proposals led by practice-based researchers, professionals (including GPs, managers and commissioners), and people living with dementia and/or carers, as well as researchers.

Research proposals will need to meet our selection criteria and new/developing principal investigators should demonstrate appropriate methodological understanding/support and strong organisational support for their proposal.

### **3. Selection criteria**

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- potential to have an impact on the lives of people living with dementia and their carers;
- potential for reduction of risk in populations, communities or individuals of development of dementia
- feasibility;
- methodological excellence;
- originality;
- relevance to dementia-related practice;
- collaboration across at least two of the Three Schools;
- 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 with a wide range of characteristics;
- clearly defined and costed plans for meeting research ethics and governance requirements.

### **4. Duration**

For the first round of commissioning, successful proposals can start from January 2024 but must commence no later than 1 June 2024.

Proposals can be for studies lasting between 12 and 60 months, although durations of less than 12 months are acceptable if appropriate to the research question or design (e.g., to fund a scoping study). All research projects must be completed by 31 December 2028.

### **5. Funding available**

The Three School's Dementia Research Programme has a total budget of £4.4 million allocated for this call and expects to commission *a range of projects* within this budget. There will be at least one further call, probably for projects to start in 2025.

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 25% 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.

Outline proposals received by Friday 22 September 2023 will be reviewed by a Commissioning Panel.

Outline proposals that are within the remit of the Three Schools' Dementia Research Programme and meet required selection criteria set out above will be provided with feedback by 9 October 2023 and invited to submit a full proposal.

Full proposals submitted by 9 November 2023 will be considered by the Programme's Commissioning Panel with relevant peer-review processes implemented.

Decisions and feedback are expected to be sent out by early December 2023. Should further clarification be required for proposals recommended for funding, applicants will be provided with time to respond to the Panel's queries in December 2023, with a view to finalising projects for contracting processes soon after.

## **7. Contractual arrangements**

Research agreements will be between LSE on behalf of the three NIHR Schools and the host organisation. The NIHR School for Social Care Research's terms and conditions will apply.

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**

Outline proposals should be submitted using the "Outline Proposals" form and submitted using this [link](#) by **16.00 on Friday 22 September 2023**.

Full proposal documents and guidance will be made available shortly and will be due by **15.30 on Thursday 9 November 2023**.

## 9. Future calls

A further call for proposals will be launched in summer 2024 for projects to start in 2025.

## 10. Queries

Please email [sscr@lse.ac.uk](mailto:sscr@lse.ac.uk) and the most appropriate person will reply as soon as possible.

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### Annex I: NIHR support for the development of proposals

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) **Research Design Service** (RDSs; soon to be replaced by the Research Support Service (RSS)) offers advice to those applying for research grants from the NIHR. We strongly advise consulting the RDS/RSS for advice, particularly methodological, before completing an application to this Programme.

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research-design-service.htm>;  
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/nihr-announces-research-support-service-to-establish-new-pre-and-post-application-support-for-researchers/33826>

Studies funded by through this Programme are eligible to access **NIHR Clinical Research Network** (CRN) 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 CRN support and subsequent inclusion in the NIHR CRN Portfolio of studies to fully benefit from the support that the CRN offers through their Study Support Service.

From April 2024, the current NIHR Clinical Research Network will be changing to become the NIHR Research Delivery Network.

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