

**NIHR Three Schools: Dementia Research Programme**  
**Improving the lives of people living with dementia and carers**  
**2021-2024**  
**Call for Research Proposals**  
**27 June 2022**

The NIHR 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 one-stage call for proposals. Proposals must be submitted by **16.30 on Wednesday 7 September 2022**.

Applicants are asked to provide an expression of interest by 16.30 on Thursday 18 August 2022. This is to support the Programme in estimating the number of applications and does not commit any individual or institution to submit an application.

## 1. Background

The NIHR Schools for Primary Care Research (SPCR), Public Health Research (SPHR) and Social Care Research (SSCR) ("three Schools") have joined together in a unique collaboration between leading academic centres in England on a programme of research and related work on dementia funded through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).

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. Since September 2021, we have funded nine research projects and 16 individuals are receiving career development awards.

The Three Schools' [Programme of Work](#) sets out further details and should be read prior to responding to this Call for Research Proposals.

## 2. The requirement

We are seeking to commission high-quality studies with the potential to improve the lives of people living with or at risk of dementia, family and other carers in England, or to reduce the risk of dementia, to ***start as soon as possible from 1 January 2023 onwards and must be completed by 31 March 2024. Project extensions beyond that date will not be possible.***

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).

The three Schools are committed to commissioning primary and secondary research across the spectrum of dementia-related practice and risk-reduction, 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, social care and other services. All applications must demonstrate relevance for, and potential to improve, dementia-related practice and outcomes for people in England.

Although this is an open call, we would particularly welcome proposals:

- focusing on post-diagnostic support and/or end-of-life care

- that explore equality, diversity and inclusion issues in dementia prevention, care and support, including in relation to the ‘oldest old’ and people with multiple long-term conditions
- where research will be carried out in localities that are not so well engaged in dementia studies.

Funding of research through this Programme requires collaboration between at least two members of different NIHR Schools, with partnerships across different universities. 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, in which case the proposal should give an indication of the likely trajectory of the research programme and the potential next steps for funding.

Applicants are advised to review Annex B of the accompanying document: 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 below).

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

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

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;
- relevance to dementia-related practice or risk-reduction;
- feasibility;
- methodological excellence;
- originality;
- collaboration across two or three NIHR Schools based at more than one university;
- value for money;
- understanding of, and commitment to, equality, diversity and inclusion and their relevance to research;
- strength of the research team, including appropriate involvement of service users/people with care and support needs/patients, carers and practitioners;
- clearly defined and costed plans for involvement (sometimes called ‘PPI’), well-defined pathways to impact (through engagement and dissemination, for example) and being as inclusive as possible of research participants;
- clearly defined and costed plans for meeting research ethics and governance requirements.

#### 4. Duration

For this round of commissioning, successful proposals can start on or after 1 January 2023. All research projects **must** be completed by 31 March 2024: no extensions beyond this date will be permitted.

#### 5. Funding available

The Three School's Dementia Research Programme has a total budget of £1,500,000 available for research and expects to commission **a range of projects** within this budget over 15 months.

The maximum budget for each proposal is £200,000.

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 one-stage call.

All proposals submitted by 7 September 2022 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 externally reviewed against the criteria set out in this research brief. Views will be sought from representatives in the field of dementia-related practice and lay perspectives.

Applicants will be sent reviewer comments as part of the commissioning process and provided with the opportunity to respond to this feedback in late September 2022.

Eligible proposals will be considered by the Programme's Commissioning Panel with applicants informed of the Panel's decision in early November 2022. Should further clarification be required for proposals recommended for funding applicants will be provided with time to respond to the Panel's queries in November 2022, 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

The proposal submission form and finance form are available at <https://www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk/funding/three-schools-dementia-research-programme-research-proposals/>.

Expressions of interest should be submitted using the “Expression of interest” form using this [link](#) by **16.30 on Thursday 18 August 2022**. This will enable us to plan our administrative work for processing proposals received through this call.

The deadline for full proposals is **16.30 on Wednesday 7 September 2022**. Completed proposals (including financial form) should be uploaded and submitted using this [link](#).

## 9. 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) regional **Research Design Services** (RDSs) offer advice to those applying for research grants from the NIHR. We strongly advise consulting your local RDS for advice, particularly methodological, before completing an application to this Programme.

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research-design-service.htm>

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.

<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 adult social care 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 recommend the UK Standards and supporting material to help plan this.

<https://sites.google.com/nhr.ac.uk/pi-standards/home>