Centre for Health Research and Innovation
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice and Guidance for Researchers

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Research Support

All projects that will involve Lancashire Teaching Hospital patients, their data or tissue, facilities or staff require NHS Permission in accordance with the NHS Research Governance Framework before they can be carried out on our site. Our Research Governance team can support you in the preparation and navigation of NHS approvals processes.

The research Process
The first question to ask when setting up a study is 'Is it research?'
The Health Research Authority (HRA) has issued guidance (Defining Research) on the categorising of research, clinical audit and service evaluation. All three types of study require the approval of host Trusts, however, systems for approval for each type of study vary and only research requires HRA including Research Ethics Committee (REC) review.

If your project is research then you will need to:

- write a **protocol**
- find **funding**
- obtain **sponsorship** and
- apply for **approval** to conduct your research
- gather the views of service users (patients and their relatives and / or carers)

Developing your idea
Developing a new study idea, looking for collaborators, applying for funding and navigating the approvals process can be daunting so please contact us at the earliest opportunity so that we can support you with this process. Please note, that grant applications often require both Research and Innovation and Finance sign off and to do this we need to ensure that, at the very least, the project is costed correctly and fully. Therefore if you are planning on submitting a grant through Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, or if the grant has Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust costs associated with it, please contact us at an early stage and *no later than 3 weeks in advance of the deadline*.

The Centre for Health Research and Innovation can facilitate access to methodological expertise to support your project development and grant application including statistical support for the design and analysis of funded research studies along with health economics, qualitative and quantitative methodologies expertise.

How to write a Research Protocol
A protocol is an essential starting point for high quality research and all research studies must be protocol based. HRA approval including Research Ethics Committee approval will only be granted to studies with a protocol.
A protocol gives written evidence for the necessity and feasibility of a research study and also provides a detailed plan of investigation. It also allows the peer reviewer, Research Ethics Committee or statistical advisor to make a judgement about the scientific aspects of the study. It can be used as a reference to answer any questions which are not immediately apparent from the IRAS (Integrated Research Application System) application form.
Guidance on writing research protocols can be obtained from the Centre for Health Research and Innovation.
The protocol often includes:

- The research idea
- Research Question
- Aims and Objectives
- Methodology
- Background information
- Sample population
- Analysis
- Dissemination
- Further work or details on how the results will be put into practice

Advice and support completing online HRA application (IRAS system)
The NHS Health Research Authority (HRA) has produced guidance to help you determine whether or not you require approved by an NHS Research Ethics Committee. Please note: Even if you do not require approval by an ethics committee you will still require HRA approval and Trust acknowledgement.

You will need to complete an online application using the IRAS (Integrated Research Application System) https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/ For guidance on the use and completion IRAS, please contact the department. We are happy to review applications and provide feedback on your application prior to submission.

Patient and Public Involvement
Increasingly, public involvement is a requirement of applying for research funding and is used by commissioners as an indicator of the quality of the research application. It is based on the view that members of the public can bring knowledge and experience of a particular condition or service relevant to:

- the research topic
- a public perspective

- Views about the best ways to involve other users and carers in research

Members of the public can help to:

- Improve the design and focus of the research
- Advise on 'best practice' for public involvement throughout research
- Advise on ethical issues.

Some links to further information about public and patient involvement can be found here:

- INVOLVE – Promoting public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research (http://www.invo.org.uk/)
- People in research (http://www.peopleinresearch.org/)

Training – Good Clinical Practice for Research (GCP)

Everyone involved in the conduct of clinical research must have training to ensure they are best prepared to carry out their duties. This is laid down in the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care 2005, covering all research in the NHS in England, and is law for those people working on clinical trials. The principles of GCP state that: Each individual involved in conducting a trial should be qualified by education, training and experience to perform his or her respective task(s). *2.8, E6 Guideline for Good Clinical Practice.*

GCP training can be accessed as either a taught course or online via the North West Coast Clinical Research Network (CRN). It is the policy of the Trust that all staff involved in research must complete GCP training, every three years. A refresher course is available for those who have already attended the full Introduction to GCP course.

- **Taught GCP courses**
  These workshops meet the needs of those people working at site to deliver research designed and managed by others. They are ideal for people delivering research in the NHS.
  NIHR CRN Introduction to Good Clinical Practice (GCP): A practical guide to ethical and scientific quality standards in clinical research
  This course is designed to provide a basic introduction to Good Clinical Practice (GCP) and the EU Directives, UK Regulations and Research Governance Framework requirements covering clinical trials and other NIHR Portfolio studies conducted within the NHS. The session has a practical focus with the key aim being that participants know what to do to practise excellent GCP when they return to their workplace to ensure that the rights, safety and well-being of patients are always protected.

- **Online GCP Course**
  The course has been specifically designed to focus on the practical application of Good Clinical Practice (GCP) in the conduct of research in the NHS and is aimed at people who are recruiting participants and gathering study data in local research sites. The content will be useful to those people who are involved in other aspects of research, such as designing and managing studies and those with Sponsor or Chief Investigator responsibilities, but it will not prepare you specifically for those roles. The content of this e-learning course is based on the successful and well-established taught Introduction to GCP workshops. It is designed to blend with locally delivered taught courses including the GCP Refresher.

- **Specialist GCP courses**
  In addition to the Introduction to GCP, there are also a number of specialist courses aimed at staff who work in pharmacy and paediatrics.

To access the courses, you can register online via: https://learn.nihr.ac.uk/ or contact the department for further information.
Once you have finalised your course, you must send a copy of the certificates to:
Heather.Adams@lthtr.nhs.uk

Research Governance

Research Governance is the name given to the management, standards of conduct, processes and systems related to research. Research Governance is not a single process; many activities and concepts are encompassed within it. The main things to consider when conducting research in the NHS is that research must be:

- Ethical - with the rights and wellbeing of participants at its heart;
- Of high scientific quality and relevance;
- Conducted within all appropriate guidelines and legislation;
- Conducted by qualified professionals who agree to discharge their responsibilities in agreement with their research partners, within organisations that promote a quality research culture;
- Open to monitoring and inspection.

Guidance for standards and processes that constitute good research practice in the NHS were brought together and documented in the 2001 Department of Health publication, "The Research Governance Framework for Health & Social Care". A theme running through Research Governance is the need for the protection of patients' rights, dignity and safety. A risk to these elements can result from loss of confidentiality and exposure of participant identities if effective systems to protect personal information are not in place.

NHS Permission

The Centre for Health Research and Innovation is responsible for the operation of a number of systems to ensure that research conducted within the Trust conforms to all necessary legal, regulatory and ethical requirements.

Research Approval covers all activities relating to the setting up and starting of research projects within the Trust. This includes:

- Research notification and approval
- Feasibility
- Honorary Research Contracts and Passports
- Quality Assurance
- Sponsorship

Delivering clinical research to time and target

In March 2011, the government published its Plan for Growth which included specific aims and incentives to improve efficiency in the initiation and delivery of clinical research. From 2012, the National Institute for Health research (NIHR) have published metrics to measure those efficiencies including a benchmark of 70 days or less from the time taken for a valid research application to be processed to first patient recruitment. Within the Centre for Health Research and Innovation we have updated our processes with the aim of achieving the 70 day target, but we need your cooperation.

So what does this mean for those working in research and how will it affect current and future research applications?

For those thinking about starting a research project, please contact the Research Governance team who can offer advice and support regarding the information and documents that will be required for a research application. If you are an investigator of a study or have been asked to head up a study from an external organisation, again please seek advice from the Research Governance team.

Health Research Authority (HRA)

There must be documentary evidence that a favourable opinion has been obtained before research can commence.

The requirement for a favourable HRA opinion of research also applies to student research projects and research that has been approved by commercial companies' ethics committees, even if they do not require review by the National Research Ethics Committees.

Research ethics refers to the protection of individuals involved in research and the quality, validity and relevance of the research itself. NHS Research Ethics Committees are convened to review research projects and to ensure that the rights, wellbeing and dignity of research participants will be protected and that the research itself meets minimum scientific standards. This process now sits within the broader HRA approval.

The permissions or approvals required will depend on the type of research you are undertaking.
Permissions may include:

- HRA approval
- NHS Research Ethics Committee
- NIHR Portfolio Adoption
- Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority (MHRA)
- Local R&I acknowledgment

For general information on all of the above permissions see: http://www.hra.nhs.uk/research-community/applying-for-approvals/hra-approval/

The HRA process is accessed via the online integrated research application System (IRAS) – https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/. For support in completing your IRAS application and for further details of what

documents will be required prior to making a submission to ethics and R&D please contact the Research Governance team for further information.

Integrated Research System (IRAS)
All research applications can be made via the (IRAS) system http://www.myresearchproject.org.uk**.**
IRAS was developed to bring all the research regulatory application forms together in one place. By completing a checklist of questions, the system will generate the forms you need to complete based upon your responses including the:

- Portfolio Adoption Form (PAF) – if your research is funded externally it may be eligible for portfolio adoption, which will bring additional funding into the Trust to support the delivery of research.
- IRAS Form
- MHRA application

NIHR Portfolio Adoption
If your research study meets the criteria for portfolio adoption, it is important to submit the PAF form at an early stage (prior to the IRAS Form).

On the filter page of the IRAS application you can choose to have your project assessed for NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) support and inclusion in the NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) Portfolio.
Research studies funded by NIHR and NIHR partners are eligible to be adopted on to the NIHR Portfolio. A portfolio adoption form (PAF) should be completed and submitted via IRAS. One application is required for the entire research project from the lead site, where the Chief Investigator is based. For more information visit:
https://www.crn.nihr.ac.uk/can-help/funders-academics/nihrcrn-portfolio/

R&D Trust Acknowledgement
In the past following ethical approval, local Trust R&D approval was required. This process of approval has changed, and now following HRA approval, the local Trusts, need to confirm their capacity and capability to carry out the research and provide an email acknowledgement before the Sponsor provides the green-light to recruit.
We ask that you contact the Centre for Health Research and Innovation as early in the process as possible, to provide the team with time to carry out feasibility.

We ask for copies of all documents sent to HRA, plus a copy of the ethics committee approval and GCP certificates. Please contact the Research Governance Team for a list of documents required.

Additional approvals
Additional approvals may be required for projects involving ionising radiation, devices, drugs, or human tissue. Approval from the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is required for studies that are investigating the efficacy or safety of medicines, or research involving medical devices that are not CE marked, or when devices are used outside their intended purpose. Contact the Research Governance team to discuss your project in more detail.

Audit & Monitoring
To comply with the Research Governance Framework, NHS Trusts are required to ensure all research involving their staff or patients is adequately monitored. The Trust has a Research Audit policy to ensure that informed consent and other procedures in the research protocol approved by the research ethics committee are being adhered to, within Good Clinical Practice guidelines. Currently 10% of all non-commercial projects are randomly selected for audit inspection by the R&D Department each year.

Funding

The world of research funding is highly competitive and applications have to stand out from the competition in order to be successful. Funding may come from the National Institute for Health Research, Medical Research Council or topic and disease specific charity funding.

If you require funding for your research project, please contact the Innovation and Ideas Facilitator about funding and collaboration opportunities. There are a wide number of funding schemes available, many of which are supported by the Department of Health. We can assist you in finding the right funding stream for your project, help to facilitate your project idea, and support you through the funding application process by providing NHS costs.

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)
The NIHR's main priority is to make sure that funding for research is focused where it is needed and provides quality outputs and value for money through a totally transparent and accountable system. There are a number of different streams with different scopes and eligibility. Further details can be found on the NIHR website. http://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding-opportunities/

NIHR Research Programmes
The processing of research funding applications and the commissioning of research are currently co-ordinated and managed by the:
NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF)
NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC).

Programme Grants for Applied Research are prestigious awards of up to £2m over a period of three to five years, directed towards leading researchers who can demonstrate an impressive track-record of achievement in applied health research. Each programme funds a series of related projects, which form a coherent theme in an area of priority or need for the NHS. Nested with Programme Grant programme is the **Programme Developments Grant** scheme. This initiative offers investigators the opportunity to undertake preparatory research that will position them to submit a competitive Programme Grant for Applied Research application.

Research for Patient Benefit Programme is a national response-mode programme for high quality investigator-led research projects that address issues of importance to the NHS. It funds research into everyday practice in the health service. Applications are assessed and processed by Regional Committees.

Invention for Innovation (i4i) Programme aims to support and advance the development of innovative medical technologies for the benefit of patients in the NHS in England and Wales.

Health Technology Assessment (HTA) programme funds research to ensure that healthcare professionals, NHS managers and the public and patients have the best and latest information on the costs, effectiveness and impact of developments in health technology. The programme accepts both researcher led applications as well as commissioned themes.

In addition there are numerous charities that provide funding within their specific clinical areas. Some of them are also eligible to be part of the NIHR Portfolio.

Some key points to consider when preparing a grant application:

- Read the grant application guidance - ensure you meet the eligibility criteria and follow the guidance.
- Find out as much background information about the funding body as possible so that you can tailor the proposal to the aims of the funding body and therefore increase the likelihood of your project being funded.
- Give yourself time to write the proposal, obtain input from colleagues, reviewers and statisticians, to prepare a detailed budget and obtain organisational sign-off.
- Ensure you have completed a thorough literature review – explain why your proposal is novel.
- Explain the need for the research, impact and outcomes and ensure you demonstrate value for money.
- Ensure that the appropriate methodology is used, the study is adequately powered and there is a clear plan for the analysis of data. Seek input from a statistician or specialist with expertise in the methodology you intend to use
- Ensure you involve patient and public in the design of your study to ensure the study meets the needs of the beneficiaries.
- Demonstrate why you are best placed to undertake the research – that you have the 'dream team' with the necessary expertise and strong track record in research.
- Include a clear plan for the dissemination of findings, including conference presentations, peer reviewed publications, newsletters for participants, websites.
- Ensure timetable for research is realistic and achievable
- Provide a realistic budget for the project (see below)

Costing a Research Proposal
It is imperative that all research is costed accurately and that the costs of conducting a research trial are recovered fully. Any health research study will have associated costs. These can include the cost of a study drug, the contribution of a member of staff to a study, the funding required in order to submit a research application to an approvals body, and additional patient and

administration costs. When considering the costs which are involved in setting up and undertaking a study, it is important to ensure that funding is in place for any research work that will be carried out at.

Costing Research projects can be complicated, especially when determining if costs are research, NHS Support or Treatment and excess treatment costs. The Trust must ensure that all research is costed accurately. All departments and specialties must play their part to ensure that costs are covered. This ensures that the research activity does not place an additional financial burden on existing NHS services.
Attributing the costs of health and social care Research and Development (AcoRD) establishes a mechanism from the Department of Health and Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) to meet some of the costs of charity funded research in the NHS. Public funders – the government, through the National Institute of Health Research and Research Councils – and medical research charities working together with the private sector, make the NHS one of the world's leading organisations for hosting clinical and applied health research. Through the AcoRD guidance the Department of Health has recognised that charities are a special case because their funds come from donations by patients and the public.

The AcoRD guidance clarifies the distinction between the three categories of costs associated with non-commercial research studies:

- Research Costs
- NHS Support Costs
- Treatment Costs.

For further information or support in costing a research project, please contact the Centre for Health Research and Innovation.

Support with Grant Applications
The Centre for Health Research and Innovation can provide support with Grant applications. Please contact the Innovation and Ideas Team for further information.

We are a member of the Lancaster Health Hub which was established in 2010 to enable an increase in NHS / University / Industry collaborative research in health and medicine across Lancashire and Cumbria. The Hub enables collaboration between colleagues in NHS Trusts and researchers at Lancaster University in the development of high quality, clinically relevant research. This close cooperation facilitates growth in research activity, training and infrastructure with the aim of underpinning the development of locally led research.
http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fhm/health-hub/

Lancashire Clinical Trials Unit, University of Central Lancashire.
The Lancashire Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) originally formulated in 2012, has been set up to manage health related trials for UCLan and external organisations. The Lancashire CTU team has accrued many years of experience in the skills required to develop, manage and analyse clinical trials with a growing specialisation in trials of complex interventions, in particular feasibility trials.
http://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/explore/groups/ctu.php

Additionally the Research Design Service for the North West (RDS NW) also offers advice for researchers developing funding applications for eligible funding bodies. http://www.rds-nw.nihr.ac.uk/

The support available includes all aspects of research design and conduct including:

- How to formulate a research question,
- Research design for quantitative studies – including advice on randomised controlled trials, ethical issues in study design, feasibility issues, blinding and allocation to trial arms; power calculations and other underpinning statistical advice including analytical strategies,
- Advice for observational and quasi-experimental studies,
- Advice on economic aspects of studies,
- Research design for qualitative studies, including sampling strategies, data collection methods, and analysis techniques,
- Advice on how to identify and apply to appropriate funding schemes,
- Public involvement in research design and conduct,
- Advice for contacting appropriate collaborators in research.

These services are available face to face and are supported by telephone and e-mail contacts.

Research in Progress

The Health Research Authority (HRA) along with NHS Research Ethics Committees (RECs) are required to monitor research that has received a favourable opinion. A progress report should be submitted to the REC which gave the favourable opinion (the 'main REC') 12 months after the date on which the favourable opinion was given. Annual progress reports should be submitted thereafter until the end of the study.

Notification of Amendments

Amendments are changes made to the research after a favourable ethical opinion has been given. They can be 'substantial' or 'non-substantial'.

A substantial amendment is defined as an amendment to the terms of the application, or to the protocol or any other supporting documentation, that is likely to affect to a significant degree:

- the safety or physical or mental integrity of the subjects of the trial;
- the scientific value of the trial;
- the conduct or management of the trial; or
- the quality or safety of any investigational medicinal product used in the trial.

The review bodies that originally provided a favourable opinion of the research must authorise any substantial amendments to the study. For further information about what constitutes an amendment, please look at the HRA website (http://www.hra.nhs.uk/research-community/during-your-research-project/amendments/).
If the study is a Clinical Trial of an Investigational Medicinal Product, the MHRA as the competent authority under the Clinical Trials Regulations, must authorise the amendment.
Please forward a copy of the protocol amendment to the Sponsor of the study. If the Trust is acting as the sponsor for the study, please forward this report to the Centre for Health Research and Innovation - see R&I Requirements below for further information.

Research and Innovation Requirements

If there is any proposed change to a study protocol that will have an impact on Trust resources, R&I acknowledgment is required for the proposed change. The Sponsor is responsible for sending us the amendment pack. If we accept the amendment, an email is sent to the research team and Sponsor acknowledging the amendment. If we are unable to accept the amendment, dialogue with the Sponsor would be started.

Changes to the Research Team

If the Chief Investigator (CI) or local Principle Investigator (PI) is changed, please contact the HRA to establish their requirements for reporting a change to CI or PI. Changes to the research team other than the CI and PI are NOT considered substantial changes and do NOT need to be reported to the HRA. If the study is a Clinical Trial of an Investigational Medicinal Product, the MHRA as the competent authority under the Clinical Trials Regulations, requires notification of change of Chief Investigator as named on the Clinical Trial Authorisation. Please inform the Sponsor of changes to the Chief Investigator (CI) or local Principal Investigators (PIs). This will allow the Sponsor to ensure that appropriate agreements, allocating responsibilities for the study can be put in place with the new CI or PI. Where the Trust is the Sponsor, please inform the Research Governance team of the change.

Please notify the Research Governance team of any changes to the local Research Team named on the original HRA / IRAS application forms. Please NOTE that honorary contracts / research passports may be required for new members of the research team.

Completed Research

How to declare the end of a study

The end of the trial is normally defined as the last visit of the last participant, unless otherwise specified in the protocol. There are different processes to go through depending on whether you are undertaking a Clinical Trial of Investigational Medicinal Products (CTIMPs) or undertaking any other research. For all research studies other than CTIMPs, it is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to notify the HRA that gave a favourable opinion of the research, the Sponsor and Centre for Health Research and Innovation of the end of the study. The end of the study is defined as the final date or event specified in the protocol, not the completion of data analysis or publication of the results.

The Chief Investigator should complete a Declaration of the end of a study form available from HRA and send it to:

- The Research Ethics Committee that originally approved study;
- Research Sponsor: where Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is the Sponsor, please send documents to the Research Governance team;
- Please send copies of the End of Study form to the Governance team in the Centre for Health Research and Innovation

For a CTIMP the end of the clinical trial must be formally defined in the research protocol. It is a legal requirement of the current regulations that the competent authority (MHRA) and main REC are notified that the clinical trial has ended. For CTIMPs, this responsibility is often delegated by the Sponsor to the Chief Investigator for the clinical trial. The Chief Investigator (CI) is responsible for submitting the Clinical Trial Report to the MHRA no later than 1 year after the end of the trial.

Funding Body Requirements

Funding bodies require a final report outlining how their funds have been used and the outcomes of the study.

Dissemination of research findings

Health and social care research is conducted for the benefit of patients, users, care professionals, and the public in general. Therefore, all those pursuing health and social care research must open their work to critical review through the accepted scientific and professional channels. The obvious route to inform the research community is through publication in scientific journals. Dissemination strategies can include: Publication in scientific journals; presentation at local, regional and national conferences and meetings; informing research participants of research findings and informing service users of findings.

Archiving of Research Documents

Following the close of a trial it is necessary to archive all trial related documentation to ensure that all study documentation are:

- Stored correctly and confidentiality maintained;
- Not passed on without the appropriate consent;
- Accessed in-line with Trust policies and procedures;
- Only used for the defined purpose;

and to ensure:

- Patient safety in using and recording information;
- Up-to-date information is stored;
- Staff awareness of responsibilities and accountability;
- Information is accessible when required;

Storage of personal data is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 and, in clinical trials, the applicable elements of the UK Clinical Trial Regulations.

Please contact the Centre for Health Research and Innovation regarding the procedure for archiving all study documents for research studies that are sponsored by or hosted by Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The length of time for archiving is dependent upon each individual protocol and/or guidance from the commercial sponsor.

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