

**ARC Wessex Pre-Application Support Fund Award
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):**

1. What is the award for?

The award is aimed at releasing time for individuals to prepare a larger application for an NIHR career development scheme, or equivalent. Through providing additional funding, the Pre-Application Support Fund aims to enhance the opportunities available to those that otherwise would not have sufficient support to apply for NIHR postdoctoral career development funding including increased protected time to develop a competitive application (1-2 days over 12 months) and support bespoke training, collaborations, PPIEP development work and dissemination.

2. Who should apply for the Pre-Application Support Fund?

The Pre-Application Support Fund is there to provide support to those who need it to enhance their chances of making a successful application to an NIHR career development scheme in the future.

The scheme is open to individuals who completed their PhD (or near completion) that meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme, We do particularly encourage applications from groups and professions under-represented within the NIHR Academy.

Under-represented groups and professions

Through the scheme we aim to make a positive impact on groups and professions identified as under-represented within the NIHR Academy. As a result, we particularly encourage applications from:

- regulated healthcare professionals (nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, pharmacists and healthcare scientists)
- social work and public health professionals
- researchers in methodology
- applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds
- applicants who are disabled.
- applicants with caring responsibilities
- applicants who have had a career break

3. Do I need to have a PhD?

Yes, you must hold a PhD qualification or equivalent to apply.

4. Do I need to be employed within Wessex?

Yes, you should be employed in the Wessex region.

5. How much funding can I apply for?

We are offering up to £40,000 per award to cover salary, training, and PPIEP expenses.

6. How long is the award for?

The award will support you 1-2 days/week over twelve months.

7. I work part-time, rather than backfill my currently hours can I apply for this to fund additional hours?

Yes, as long as we have confirmed support with your line manager that they will increase your contracted hours to match the additional funding.

8. Does the named research supervisor need to be attached to a university?

It is highly recommended to have at least two named supervisors/mentors including a clinical mentor if you are a clinician or practitioner mentor if you work in social care and/or a local authority.

In your application under the section that requests details of your supervisor(s) please indicate how and when you will meet with them. For example, 1 hour per week face to face / virtually and / or email discussion as required.

9. What costs can I include?

Salary Costs

A contribution to the salary of the applicant to buy out the necessary time to prepare and submit a competitive application for an NIHR career development scheme.

Please clearly state the length of time and whole time equivalent (WTE) that will be used to prepare an application.

Training and Development

Training and development costs, including conference costs, up to £2,000 may be requested, providing access to necessary training resources that will benefit the planned application. This includes travel and subsistence related to training and development.

In addition to Training & Development application development support costs up to £1,000 may be requested, including Mentorship/Supervisory or Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) costs to prepare an application.

Other Costs

We understand there may be additional support required to submit an application that extends beyond the categories outlined in the cost headings above such as, but not limited to:

- support towards additional care costs (for you or any direct dependents) to provide time and opportunity to submit an application for NIHR career development funding including attendance at conferences or training courses that are directly related to the project.
- costs relating to additional support required to remove barriers you would otherwise face as the result of a disability or health condition.
- support for applicants with a disability to enable attendance at training courses or events related to their planned application.
- assistive software packages for applicants who are neurodivergent.

It is expected the total value of other costs requested will not exceed £6,000.

Please note, you cannot claim childcare costs associated with your normal working pattern, and overheads and publication costs are not eligible costs for the Pre-Application Support Fund.

10. How could I identify my training and development needs and formulate a training plan?

You need to discuss your training and development needs with your proposed supervisors. You can use frameworks such as the Vitae (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/>)

to help you identify any gaps and areas for improvements in your research and leadership skills. Your training plans should also be aligned with your proposed research activities and any future plans for further funding applications. For example:

- Your training and development plan should clearly align with the step change you are proposing to make in progressing your research plans.
- Include detail on how your proposed training and development will enhance your chances of achieving your career goals?
- You should explain how you identified your training needs. For example, use of frameworks such as Vitae (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/>), 360 review.
- You should justify each aspect of the training and development you will undertake as part of the award.

11. What needs to be included in the detailed justified spending plan for the award period?

A GANTT chart and a table with a breakdown for what you will be spending and why and that this should be completed with the Research and Development finance department at your host organisation.

12. Do I need to refer to and cost for Patient and Public Involvement, Engagement and Participation PPIEP?

Yes, please see question 8 for further details.

13. How does my employer (host organisation) receive the award funds?

The full funding award amount is paid to your employer either at 50% mid-way through the project and 50% upon completion or 100% upon completion. Your employer/finance department is responsible for then paying invoices/costs for supervisory fees, training courses etc.

The applicant, if successful, in collaboration with their Host Organisation finance team, will be responsible for overseeing and administering the budget as per their proposed spending plan.

ARC Wessex Pre-Application Support Fund Award Guidance

Eligibility criteria:

- You will need to explain what additional support you need to prepare an application for NIHR career development funding.
- Your proposed host must be an English HEI, NHS body, social care organisation or other provider of health and/or care services.
- Your proposed application for an eligible NIHR career development scheme should be within the [NIHR remit for Personal Awards](#). Eligible NIHR career development schemes are outlined below.
- You will need to meet, or expect to meet at the time of application, the eligibility criteria for the NIHR career development scheme you would use the fund to apply for. If applying for a post-doctoral level award, you must hold a relevant PhD or MD,

or have submitted your thesis for examination before your Pre-Application Support Fund start date.

- You must not have submitted a Pre-Application Support Fund application in the previous submission window.
- The Pre-Application Support Fund may not be held alongside another NIHR career development award. If you have recently had an NIHR award, including NIHR infrastructure clear justification will be required as to why further support from the Pre-Application Support Fund is needed.

Eligible NIHR Career Development Schemes

You can use the fund to prepare a future application for one of the following NIHR career development schemes.

Please note, the Pre-Application Support Fund should not be used as bridging funding between the submission of your application and the start of an award for NIHR Career Development Funding.

NIHR Fellowship Programme

- Advanced Fellowship
- Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME) and Advanced Fellowship (EME-AF)
- Population Health Career Scientist Award (PHCSA)
- Research Professorship
- Advanced Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship (ACAF)
- Senior Clinical and Practitioner Research Award
- Advanced Local Authority Fellowship (ALAF)

NIHR Local Authority Academic Fellowship Programme

If you are currently applying to another NIHR Career Development Scheme alongside the Pre-Application Support Fund, please state this within your application.

Please note, a successful Pre-Application Support Fund application does not guarantee eligibility for the NIHR Career Development Scheme which you are applying to. Please ensure your project proposal is within the [NIHR Remit for Personal Awards](#). If you have any questions about the remit of your proposal, please contact the programme team responsible for the NIHR Career Development Scheme you plan to apply to by emailing academy-awards@nihr.ac.uk.

Host and Partner Organisations

All applications must propose a Host Organisation that will be the contractor if the award is funded. The Host Organisation must be capable of fulfilling the role of research sponsor as set out in the UK Policy Framework for Health & Social Care Research. Further guidance on the roles and responsibilities of a research sponsor can be found on the Health Research Authority's (HRA) website.

Applicants may choose to be employed by the proposed Host Organisation or to be employed by another suitable organisation (as detailed below) for the duration of the award. If the applicant will be employed by an organisation that is not the Host Organisation, the employing organisation must be named as a Partner Organisation in the application and the applicant must ensure they will hold an honorary contract for the duration of the award with the proposed Host Organisation.

This means, for example, if an applicant is currently working in a clinical/practice setting e.g. NHS Trust, and the proposed Host Organisation is a HEI, then the applicant can choose to continue to be employed by the NHS Trust or move employment to the HEI, however there

must be an honorary contract in place for the duration of the award with whichever organisation is not the substantive employer.

Suitable Host and Partner Organisations:

- A recognised HEI based in England
- an NHS body based in England
- an English provider of publicly funded health and/or social care services
- a provider of third sector publicly funded health and/or social care services (for example, a commissioned social enterprise, local authority or hospice)

The decision on where to host a personal award and the subsequent employer for the duration of the award is down to the applicant in discussion with their supervisors, line managers and mentors. The decision should be made based on what is best for the applicant, their career development and the research and training they are proposing to undertake. Please view this guidance on selecting your [Host Organisation for an NIHR Personal Award](#).

Assessment of applications

Following the submission deadline, all applications are sent to the ARC Wessex Academic Career Development group for review and then discussed at a panel review meeting.

The outcome of these reviews are agreed at the panel review meeting and outcome letters are sent to applicants.

Some outcome letters may be conditional and ask for further information before confirming the award. Details of this further information and submission deadlines will be included in the letters.

Outcome letters for successful applicants will include details of next steps, a start date and any conditions of the award.