

Taken from the National Institute for Health Research website <http://www.nihr-ccf.org.uk/site/programmes/rfpb/default.cfm>.

The Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) programme

The Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Programme is a nationally co-ordinated funding stream for regionally commissioned research. There are ten regional funding committees to commission local health service research. Budgets are in proportion to the regional population. Appointed as Programme Director is Professor Celia Davies. The programme is run by the Central Commissioning Facility (CCF) to ensure there is parity between the regions. The CCF co-ordinates the application process and acts as secretariat to the regional funding committees. The national budget is £25 million per annum. Individual research projects can last for up to 36 months with a budget of up to £250,000.

Aims

The main aim of the RfPB programme is to support projects in Health Services Research and Public Health. Projects can be either quantitative or qualitative, and should aim to

- study the way that NHS services are provided and used
- evaluate whether interventions are effective and provide value for money
- examine whether alternative means for providing healthcare would be more beneficial in terms of cost and effectiveness
- formally assess innovations and developments in healthcare which will benefit patients.

Purpose

This national response-mode funding programme supports high quality, investigator led research that is relevant to the NHS. All NHS researchers across England can apply.

The RfPB programme:

- funds research related to day-to-day practice in areas identified and developed by health service staff
- includes high quality academic input
- selects proposals for funding on the basis of the quality of the research proposal and its relevance to the broader NHS

Funding

Funds of up to £25 million each year is to be available for the programme, building up to that amount over the three years NHS R&D transition period. Individual grants are awarded to fund research projects rather than set up or maintain research units, or new service developments. They are normally up to 36 months in duration with a total maximum cost of £250k. Individual project grants will fund research projects rather than set up or maintain research units, or new service developments.

Project Grants will be the most common type of grant awarded under the programme. They will normally be up to 36 months in duration with a total maximum cost of £250k.

Process

The National Institute for Health Research Central Commissioning Facility (CCF) administers the programme under the guidance of the national Programme Director.

- We have established ten regional funding committees which meet three times a year. Each committee has an appointed regional chair to promote the programme within the region and run the commissioning meeting.
- Allocation of regional funding has been established on a population basis.
- A single-stage electronic process for applications to the programme has been developed.
- Applications are accepted throughout the year and are considered at the next available committee meeting.
- The CCF manages the external peer review process.

Selection Criteria

- Applications receive a preliminary scrutiny by a sub-committee, applications successful at this stage are sent out to peer review.
- Applications are judged on the fit to scope, quality of the research proposed and on the significance and potential benefit of the research to the NHS.
- Applications which pass the preliminary screen are peer reviewed prior to being considered by the relevant regional funding committee.

Eligibility

- All researchers in the NHS in England can apply.
- Joint applications from NHS researchers with academic partners as co-applicants will be particularly welcome.
- For joint NHS/university applications, funding will be normally awarded to the NHS partner.