

CLRN Funding and Access to Resources

1. Introduction

This paper outlines the support that can be provided by Norfolk and Suffolk Comprehensive Local Support Network (N&S CLRN) to establish and maintain an excellent NHS infrastructure for clinical research and research management. As such, it aims to clarify the principles and purpose of CLRN support, the type of support that may be available and the process for obtaining this.

There is a wide range of funders and funding programmes relevant to NHS research. This paper does not provide an all-encompassing overview of these but aims to clarify issues relevant to the CLRN.

2. Background

The National Institute for Health Research Comprehensive Clinical Research Network (NIHR CCRN) comprises 25 Comprehensive Local Research Networks (CLRNs) in England, each including primary care, secondary care, tertiary care and mental health service providers. N&S CLRN was established in 2007 and overall aims to:

- build on existing research strengths;
- further develop successful research partnerships;
- invest in emerging research areas to support sustainable growth across all sectors; and
- streamline research, communication and bureaucracy throughout Norfolk and Suffolk.

A key role for the N&S CLRN is to establish and maintain an excellent NHS infrastructure for clinical research and research management. This involves providing access to resources for the successful completion of high quality research studies, support to enable the development of a number of Local Specialty Groups for development of research, guidance and support for clinicians working on commercial studies, advice and support on the research management and governance process and information relating to research activity in the two counties.

The CLRN is only able to support studies that are on the NIHR Portfolio. The Portfolio is the NIHR's national register of all eligible studies. To be eligible studies must be funded in open national competition and with independent peer review. For more information about the Portfolio see:

http://www.crnc.nihr.ac.uk/about_us/processes/portfolio/portfolio

3. Provision of resources for research

The CLRN provides resources to support research in Norfolk and Suffolk that is on the NIHR Portfolio. This support is intended to cover the infrastructure that enables research to be done. The CLRN does not provide support for excess treatment costs or direct research costs. The Department of Health ARCO document sets out the following definitions of research cost and the broad criteria that are applied in determining eligibility for support (see Further Information).

Table 3.1 Broad types of research cost

| Type of research cost | Who provides support? |
|---|---|
| Research costs are the costs of the R&D itself that end when the research ends. They relate to activities that are being undertaken to answer the research questions. | These costs are met by the research funder(s). |
| NHS Treatment Costs are the patient care costs, which would continue to be incurred if the patient care service in question continued to be provided after the R&D study had stopped. | These costs will normally be met through commissioning arrangements for patient care. |
| NHS Support Costs are the additional patient care costs associated with the research, which would end once the R&D study in question had stopped even if the patient care involved continued to be provided. | Locally, these costs will be met from NHS R&D support funding through the CLRN |

In this context, CLRN support is about enabling the infrastructure required to carry out research (NHS Support Costs in Table 3.1). This includes providing clinical research support staff and sessional support for clinical investigators of all

professions, funding for other NHS support costs such as additional clinical services and diagnostic tests, and research management, governance systems and staff.

The CLRN provides staff costs for local network management, research nurses, clinical trials officers, data managers and sessional protected time for clinicians of all professions who enter patients into research studies within the NIHR Portfolio. In addition, the CLRN will provide the costs for the pharmacy, pathology, radiology and IT support for studies running on all research networks. The following scenarios may provide useful illustrations.

I am developing a questionnaire and have realised it needs extra testing. Am I eligible for funding from the CLRN to do this?

No – this is essentially a research cost and should be met by the research funder.

We need some additional staff to manage and recruit patients onto our three Portfolio research studies. Can we apply to the CLRN for a part time research nurse manager to do this?

Yes, the CLRN would consider this application.

Our study has been on the Portfolio for some time and we now need some additional funding to support ongoing treatment care costs. Where can we get this support?

Excess treatment costs will not be met by the CLRN. You will need to contact your local R&D office in the first instance. Alternatively, contact the CLRN and we will signpost you to the area you will need to contact.

4. How to apply for support

In this context, there are principally three main types of CLRN support:

- Annual allocations based on activity
- Support that is specific to a study or an activity
- Support that falls within the remit of Network NIHR Flexibility and Sustainability Funding

4.1 Annual allocations based on activity

The annual budget setting process for the CLRN's takes place between late December and early February each year. CLRN budgets for the forthcoming year are not usually issued by the Department of Health until February.

Funding for clinical staff is provided by the CLRN across all CLRN priority areas, all Topic Specific Network (TCRN) areas, including the Primary Care Research Network (PCRN). We have also targeted some funding at key areas to break down current barriers to participation in clinical research.

These allocations are reviewed and authorised by the CLRN Executive and Board on an annual basis and are based on the level of research activity for each individual topic area. Discussions on funding decisions are also taken in consultation with LSG leads, PCRNs and TCRNs and member organisation. For a list of N&S CLRN priority areas and TCRNs, please refer to www.norfolk-suffolk.crncc.nihr.ac.uk.

It is not necessary to make a specific application for such support, although you should contact the Kath Jones, CLRN Senior Manager, if you feel your area warrants further funding. Funding for these allocations is provided to the relevant Trust R&D department. Any questions about accessing this support should be directed to the R&D Manager for the appropriate Trust (see contacts at end of document).

4.2 Support that is specific to a study or an activity

Individual requests for support should be addressed to Kath Jones, CLRN Senior Manager in the first instance. It is important to alert the CLRN to potential requests for support as soon as you are aware they may be needed as funding is limited. For further information see www.crncc.nihr.ac.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C7485002-A88E-41A0-B94B-6218740DEA0E/0/ApplicationforNorfolkSuffolkCLRNsupt2011BLANKFORM.doc

4.3 Flexibility and Sustainability funding (NIHR FSF)

NIHR FSF is a funding stream aimed at attracting, developing and retaining the research workforce necessary for delivering high quality health research. NIHR FSF is available to research active NHS Organisations and also to all NIHR Research Networks.

NIHR FSF is awarded to current or potential NIHR Faculty Members. NIHR Faculty members are individuals who conduct or support patient- or people-based research, and whose salary is funded in part or in whole from an NIHR funding stream, and who are employed by an NHS organisation or by a university.

Applicants can apply on behalf of other people or can make applications for their own salary costs. NIHR FSF will only support salary costs: these can include direct (i.e. salary) and indirect (e.g. payroll, HR) costs. NIHR FSF can not be used for non-staff costs, such as equipment or running costs, and HEI Full Economic Costing cannot be applied.

If you require any further information about eligibility for NIHR Network FSF please contact Jenny Cooper, CLRN Support Manager, 01603 288316 or email jenny.cooper@nnuh.nhs.uk . Further information is available at http://www.crncc.nihr.ac.uk/about_us/ccrn/norfolk_suffolk/library .

5. Further information

We have tried to highlight where to go for additional information on any of the issues raised in this paper. If you have any questions or issues about which you cannot find the answers, please do get in touch with the CLRN. We have listed members of the Core Team below.

Attributing revenue costs of externally funded non-commercial research in the NHS (ARCO) - see http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4125280

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Trust R&D contacts:

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Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust – bonnie.teague@nwmhp.nhs.uk

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East of England Ambulance NHS Trust – theresa.foster@eastamb.nhs.uk