



Knowledge & Library Service

Research Funding Bulletin February 2026

NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

All current and future funding information on NIHR funding can be found on the [NIHR Funding website](#).

NIHR funding includes:

Developing Research Leader (DRL) Programme
[Developing Research Leaders \(Cohort 2\)](#)

Health and Social Care Delivery Research (HSDR) Programme

[HSDR - Researcher-led](#)
[James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnerships rolling funding opportunity \(HSDR Programme\)](#)

Themed call

[Shaping and supporting the health, public health and social care workforce of the future](#)

Invention for Innovation (i4i) THRIVE

We're launching a new round of our i4i THRIVE funding opportunity on 12 March. This supports clinicians and researchers to fast-track healthcare innovations that address health inequalities.

THRIVE offers up to £150,000 over 9 months to develop a technology-based product or service, alongside a structured programme of entrepreneurial training, mentoring, peer support and networking.

[Learn more and register for one of our online events](#) to support your application.

Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB)

Our [new RfPB commissioned funding opportunity](#) is due to open on 11 March. This will replace the usual researcher-led funding opportunity.

INSIGHT: Inspiring Students into Research
[2026 INSIGHT Competition \(Cohort 2\)](#)

Evidence Synthesis Programme
[Researcher-Led – Evidence Synthesis](#)

Programme Grants for Applied Research
[February 2026](#)

Pre-application Support Fund
[Pre-Application Support Fund \(Cohort 8\)](#)

ROK-UK Smart Clinical Trials Application Development Award

We are partnering with the Korea Health Industry Development Institute (KHIDI) to support UK and Republic of Korea (ROK) researchers working together on developing and using new tools and technologies to deliver 'Smart' clinical trials.

These are clinical trials that leverage innovative technologies and methodologies to enhance efficiency, accuracy and inclusiveness in clinical research.

[Learn more and apply for the ROK-UK Smart Clinical Trials Application Development Award.](#)

Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME) Programme

- [EME Programme Researcher-led](#)
- [NIHR James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnerships rolling funding opportunity \(EME Programme\)](#)

- [NIHR NICE rolling funding opportunity \(EME Programme\)](#)

Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme

- [Improving mobility and quality of life after stroke](#)
- [Reconstruction surgery for FGM/C survivors](#)
- [Step-up treatment for people with uncontrolled asthma](#)
- [Using light therapy in care/nursing homes](#)



**UK Research
and Innovation**

UK Medical Research Council

[Opportunities – UKRI](#)

- [Future Leaders Fellowships: round 11](#)

Funding to support ambitious research and innovation across UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)'s remit. You must be a researcher or innovator who is looking to establish or transition to independence.

- [Capacity building: clinical research training fellowship](#)

Apply for funding to reacquire research skills. Your research can focus on any area of Medical Research Council (MRC)'s remit to improve human health. You must:

- be a registered healthcare professional
- be a PhD graduate working outside of research, usually five or more years ago
- show plans to pursue a research career

- [Professional doctorate: clinical research training fellowship](#)

Apply for funding to undertake a PhD. Your research can focus on any area of Medical Research Council (MRC)'s remit to improve human health. You must:

- be a registered healthcare professional
- be at an appropriate point in your training to undertake a PhD
- show plans to pursue a research career

- [Early independence: clinician scientist fellowship](#)

Apply for an early independence fellowship if your research focus is within Medical Research Council (MRC) remit. You must:

- be a registered healthcare professional
- have a PhD or equivalent
- show evidence of career consolidation and productivity
- show clear plans for establishing your own research niche

- [MRC: new investigator research grant: applicant-led](#)

Apply for funding to take the next step towards becoming an independent researcher. Your research must be in the remit of the Medical Research Council. You must have:

- the skills and experience to 'transition to independence'
- the support of an eligible host research organisation

Other Funding Opportunities

Wellcome Trust

All Funding Opportunities can be found on the [Wellcome Trust website](#).

- [Wellcome Trust Early-Career Awards](#)

Summary: This scheme provides funding for early-career researchers from any discipline who are ready to develop their research identity. The researcher will deliver shifts in understanding that could improve human life, health and wellbeing. By the end of the award, they will be ready to lead their own independent research programme. Project duration is usually 5 years but may be less for some disciplines and longer if held on a part-time basis.

Award: Your salary and up to £400,000 for research expenses.

Deadline: July 2026

- [Wellcome Trust Discovery Awards](#)

Summary: This scheme provides funding for established researchers and teams from any discipline who want to pursue bold and creative research ideas to deliver significant shifts in

understanding related to human life, health and wellbeing.

Research questions should generate knowledge that leads to a shift in understanding or delivers new insight into how human life and health work. We welcome proposals that may have a clinical or societal impact or have translational potential, but the focus should be on discovery research. We fund research into the:

- fundamental processes that underpin biology, to understand more about how human life works
- complexities of human health and disease, including clinical and population-based approaches
- burden of disease and its determinants where this brings new and transformational knowledge.
- development of methodologies, conceptual frameworks, technologies, tools or techniques that could benefit health-related research.
- needs, values and priorities of the people and communities affected by disease and health disparities.
- social, ethical, cultural, political, economic and historical contexts of human health and disease.

Award: The average size of a Discovery Award is £3.5 million. Applications above £5 million will be subject to additional scrutiny. Awards can be up to 8 years, but may be less for some disciplines, and may be longer if held on a part-time basis. The average duration of a Discovery Award is 7 years, although we have supported awards from 3 to 8 years.

Deadline: March 2026

▪ [**Wellcome Trust Career Development Award**](#)

Summary: This scheme provides funding for mid-career researchers from any discipline who have the potential to be international research leaders. They will develop their research capabilities, drive innovative programmes of work and deliver significant shifts in understanding that could improve human life, health and wellbeing.

Award: Provides a salary for the grant holder (if required) and research expenses. Please request for level and duration of funding that's justifiable

for your proposed research.

Deadline: March 2026

British Heart Foundation

- [Clinical Study Grants](#) – deadlines **23rd April, 27th August 2026**

Diabetes UK

- [Project Grants](#) (deadline – 1st June 2026)
- [Early-career small grants for basic scientists and healthcare professionals](#) (deadline 31st July 2026)

Cancer Research UK

- [Clinical Future Leaders Fellowship](#) (deadline **26th March 2025**)
- [Clinical Research Funding Scheme](#) (deadline **27th March 2026**)

▪ [Discovery Programme Award](#)

This scheme provides long-term support for established researchers to pursue an ambitious and creative programme of work addressing key questions in the cancer field. Proposals should be centred on a core overarching vision, explored via a set of connected aims. We encourage collaborative teams and multidisciplinary approaches. (deadline 2 April)

▪ [Discovery Programme Foundation Award](#)

This scheme is equivalent to our Discovery Programme Award but aimed at mid-career researchers seeking to further develop their independent research programme and scientific leadership. It is designed to support development of a strong foundation for future internationally-leading research and often serves as a pathway to the Discovery Programme Award. (deadline 2 April)

The Urology Foundation

▪ [Small Projects Fund](#)

Small Projects Fund focuses on projects that seek to improve the quality of clinical services and patient treatments and care. The maximum award available from this funding stream is £10,000. (deadline 30th April)

Research related opportunities

Embedding research into practice

Dr Lisa Ledger, NIHR Assistant Director of Allied Health Professions, [shares how her role will be instrumental in shaping research for radiographers](#) in the Society of Radiographers magazine, 'Synergy'.

She explains the challenges facing radiographers pursuing research careers and how NIHR can address these barriers, as well as sharing resources and advice for those considering undertaking research.

Taking the next big leap to transform health and care research

In a new blog, Professor Anthony Gordon, Director of our Health Technology Assessment Programme, sets out a vision on how the research community needs to harness the power of big ideas to drive life-changing research.

Read '[Taking the next big leap to transform health and care research](#)'.

Writing a plain English summary

Tuesday 24 March at 12pm

Would you like to gain an in-depth understanding of how to write an effective plain English summary?

Join our webinar to hear insights from a public contributor that you can apply to your research application. You'll also learn where to find useful resources.

[Register for our 'How to write a plain English summary' webinar.](#)

Student opportunities: 'Is a career in research for me?'

We're running a series of webinars and events for students considering a career in research. You'll learn about the range of research roles available and hear first-hand from professionals what it's really like to work at the forefront of health and care innovation.

[Discover our 'Is a career in research for me?' webinar series and register](#)

Further information

If you need help accessing any of the links outlined above please contact Katherine France, Knowledge & Library Service Manager, Katherine.France1@nhs.net

Please see our website for information about Knowledge & Library Services available to you.

<https://www.dbth.nhs.uk/services/library-services/>