



Engineering and
Physical Sciences
Research Council

NIHR | National Institute
for Health Research

Transforming care and health at home and enabling independence

Frequently Asked Questions

Please can you clarify the meaning of 'home' as part of this call?

We are taking a fairly broad interpretation of the meaning of home to include any home residential setting, including private residence, care and nursing homes, sheltered accommodation, and provided housing.

Please could you elaborate on what you mean by 'independence'?

The focus of this call is geared towards preventative health and social care rather than the provision of clinical interventions, and how the home environment can best support care and maintain health for individuals. Thus, there is a strong focus on health maintenance and self-management in such a way as to enhance independence. Independence in this sense is about quality of life for individuals and families and supporting people to be able to live the life they want to and take part in activities that are meaningful for them.

Please can you clarify why the timeline is so short to write a full application?

UKRI calls typically operate on an eight-week window. This call opened on August 26th and closes on October 21st, 2021.

Will applications be turned down at the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage? Does only one person have to submit an EOI?

Applications will not be turned down at the Expression of Interest stage. Only one person for each application will need to submit an EOI. All teams wishing to apply for this call will need to submit an EOI by 16:00 on October 7th.

Are Research Grants at 100% full economic cost (fEC)? What is the upper limit of such grants?

Values provided online for the three grant types being considered under this call are for illustrative purposes only. Each proposal will have its own research needs depending on the type of research carried out and the research questions being addressed and will need to ensure that any values proposed are reflective of those needs. Value for money is one of the success criteria the panel will be scoring applications against. The only upper limit this call has set is £1.5m at 100% fEC. We will not be awarding above this limit for any of the three grant types.

EPSRC and NIHR will be awarding projects at 80% fEC.

Do you support multiple applications from the same institution?

Host institutions should only put forward their most competitive proposals. We would expect a Principal Investigator (PI) to submit only one proposal maximum for each grant type, however they can be co-Investigators on other proposals as part of this call.

Do you encourage early-career researchers to lead or take leading roles in applications?

There is nothing precluding an early-career researcher in applying as a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator on an application providing they meet EPSRC eligibility requirements. However, applications that contain less experienced applicants may need to demonstrate greater evidence that they have the expertise and commitment to be able to carry out the research project for its full duration. We would also expect to see plans for appropriate support and mentorship for ECRs who are leading applications as part of this call.

What technology readiness levels (TRL) of research would you consider as relevant? Can this include development and translation of research previously funded by EPSRC?

Proposals will still need to be applicable to TRL levels that EPSRC traditionally considers, TRLs 1–3. However, proposals that use existing EPS for a novel application that require validation in a home setting, for example, may fit within the remit of the call provided the proposal clearly demonstrates how the research meets one of the core themes, and addresses the cross-cutting challenges identified.

Does technology include software, machine learning and mobile apps?

Yes, it does. However, applicants will need to demonstrate how the application will meet one or more of the core themes identified, how it will be relevant to a home setting, and how it will be able to maximise independence or support health.

Is using the Research Design Service (RDS) a pre-requirement of this call? Is the RDS available to countries outside of England?

Engaging with the RDS is not a pre-requirement of the call. Unfortunately, the NIHR RDS does only cover England, however there is an equivalent body in Wales. This call is open to all eligible applicants from the whole of the UK.

Do you have any guidance on how long small grants should be?

We expect projects funded under this call to last no more than three years. For small grants, we expect anywhere in the region of 18 to 24 months.

Are there any limitations on number of co-Investigators who can apply for the Network Plus grants?

There is no set limit to the number of co-Investigators that can be included in a NetworkPlus application. However, we expect all co-Investigators to be able to make a meaningful contribution to the project and be able to realistically meet their estimated time commitment.

Can fees for Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) be included in the funding bid?

PPIE costs can be included in the funding bid under directly incurred costs. For more information on resources that are eligible to be included in UKRI bids, please see the Patients and the public Stakeholder engagement webpage.

Involvement from PPIE representatives should be recognised as offering co-application status on the application, yet eligibility criteria will not let this happen. How can this be managed?

PPIE representatives can be involved in a proposal as a project partner. A project partner is a partner who will have an integral role in the proposed research, which may well include

financial contributions but could also include in-kind contributions such as expertise, time, or use of facilities. We would expect project partners to submit a letter of support which clearly demonstrates the benefits of the collaboration being proposed and highlights the potential impact of that collaboration.

Can you comment on the PPIE and social care involvement for 'small grants', which may not be ready for end-use at that point of development?

A key requirement of this call is consideration of PPIE perspectives at all stages of a research project – whether this is at initial or end stage. Consultation with PPIE representatives and being able to evidence the need are ways in which we would encourage applicants to incorporate PPIE into their applications even in the early stages of development.

Given the strong focus on co-production and PPI, can we nominate community groups and/or end users as reviewers?

Community groups and end users can be nominated as reviewers provided that applicants are confident that those individuals identified have the expertise and confidence to be able to review in an independent and research-focused manner, and there are no conflicts involved. However, final say on reviewer selection remains at the discretion of EPSRC Portfolio Managers.

Are allocated funds for project partners (eg, travel costs) held by the Principal Investigators, and partners can claim expenses back?

Project partners can now receive small amounts of money for Travel & Sustenance for attending meetings. These will need to be requested by the Principal Investigator and will need to be fully justified.

Could you say a bit more about what user groups you like to see covered in research and small grants?

A key focus of this call is the need for multistakeholder engagement – both academic and sectorial. This can include engineers, data scientists, social care researchers, health researchers, health and social care professionals, data, computer, social and design scientists, statisticians, social care providers and commissioners, those from local authorities with housing and social care responsibilities, and patient and public representatives. However, this shouldn't be interpreted as a requirement for maximum coverage – but for projects to seriously consider who the most necessary and relevant stakeholders are.

Is there an expectation for a follow-on call with a similar theme?

This call features under EPSRC's priority of 'Engineering healthier environments where people live and work', which will build on UK strengths in new technologies such as robotics and AI and enhanced use of health data analytics, economic and social sciences, as well as the arts and humanities with the aim of transforming support for built environment and infrastructure research. This will enable a step change in our ability to predict and anticipate factors to prevent ill health, prevent infection spread and shape the future living and working environment to promote increased wellbeing. Depending on the outcomes of this call, we anticipate the possibility of a future call that will address some of these topics.

Useful links

For full details on the *Transforming care and health at home and enabling independence* funding opportunity, please see <https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/transforming-care-and-health-at-home-and-enabling-independence/>.

For the full the Housing and Social Care Workshop Report from EPSRC, NIHR, ESRC and AHRC from May 18th, 2021, please see <https://epsrc.ukri.org/files/newsevents/housing-and-social-care-workshop-report-18-may-2021/>.

To check if you are eligible for research and innovation funding, please see <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-research-and-innovation-funding/who-can-apply-for-funding/#contents-list>.

For more information on eligibility of investigators, including principal investigators, co-Investigators, or Researcher Co-Investigators, please see <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-funding/>.

To check for costs that you can apply for, please see <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/costs-you-can-apply-for/directly-incurred-costs/>.

For more information on NHS costs you can apply for, please see <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/costs-you-can-apply-for/nhs-costs/#contents-list>.

For more information on equipment on research grants, please see <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/what-to-include-in-your-proposal/equipment/equipment-on-research-grants/>.

For more information on project partners, please see <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/what-to-include-in-your-proposal/project-partners-letter-of-support/>.

For more information on the resources that you can request for patient and public involvement, please see <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/what-to-include-in-your-proposal/health-technologies-impact-and-translation-toolkit/stakeholder-engagement/patients-and-the-public/>.

For more information and guidance on PPI involvement and making a strong application, please see <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/researchers/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply-for-project-funding/make-a-strong-application.htm>.

For more information on funding for international collaboration, please see <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/types-of-funding-we-offer/international-funding/funding-for-international-collaboration/>.

For more information on the stage of technological development EPSRC supports, please see our Funding Landscape <https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/ourportfolio/themes/healthcaretechnologies/strategy/toolkit/landscape/>.

For more information on what to include in your proposal, please see <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/what-to-include-in-your-proposal/>.

For more information on the NIHR RDS (England), please see <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research-design-service.htm> for the Health and Care Research Wales Support and Delivery Service, please see <https://healthandcareresearchwales.org/support-delivery-service>.

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