

# OXFORDSHIRE HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH COMMITTEE (OHSRC)

## Small Research Grants

Advice to Grant Applicants applying for Charitable Research Funds

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Committee's funding comes from Oxford Hospitals Charity and an annual grant from the Nuffield Oxford Hospitals Fund (NOHF) Charity. Funding from Oxford Hospitals Charity is from legacies and donations to support research. Oxford Hospitals Charity supports and enhances the work of Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust through the funding of staff education and welfare, patient welfare, medical equipment and research. The OHSRC provides the route by which NOHF supports research, the overall remit of NOHF being 'the raising of the standard of the hospital or hospitals concerned in order to assist the development and carrying on of the Oxford University Medical School'. The OHSRC meets twice a year, and the grants made in each round are dependent on fund availability. The funding provided by OHSRC supports individual research projects which benefit patients and the public. The OHSRC encourages research in relevant clinical and laboratory fields, and the Oxfordshire NHS Trusts and Oxford University provide, whenever possible, the basic environment and facilities for this to be done.

### 2. OHSRC AIMS

- a) To support research in the areas of:
  - (i) clinical studies
  - (ii) community / primary care studies
  - (iii) relevant laboratory studies
- b) To provide opportunities for research by Health Service workers arising out of, and closely related to, their day to day practice.
- c) To wholly fund small projects or pilot studies that are distinct and can be carried out within three years. (OHSRC generally does not provide 'top up' funding for existing projects).
- d) We see it as our primary role to provide **opportunities for career development to researchers who are in the early stages of, or restarting their research careers**. Therefore, this normally means that established researchers are very unlikely to receive an award as primary applicant. We expect 'junior' applicants to describe appropriate supervisory support in their applications (see 6 below).

### 3. FUNDING Research Grants

The maximum grant for one project is £10,000, and the Committee will not consider grants above this amount.

Some legacy funding is donated for particular research areas. In consequence some areas of study may be highlighted and/or be eligible for larger grants in a particular round but naturally this list of topics may change between rounds.

In 2021 highlighted areas (in which grants of up to £20,000 will be considered) are cancer research and research into Alzheimer's disease.

### 4. LENGTH OF GRANT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

The project must be started within 12 months of the grant being awarded. If the grant is not used within three years of commencing the project then the Committee requires an explanation and the remaining funding is likely to be withdrawn.

It is a requirement that annual progress reports and a final report are submitted to the OHSRC for all projects. Reports need be no longer than one side of A4 and should outline progress, any obstacles met and any significant outcomes such as publications or receipt of further funding. Failure to submit projects will result in funding being suspended until the situation is remedied. Furthermore, research team members named in applications for which reports have not been received will be ineligible to apply for further funding.

## 5. ELIGIBILITY

The scheme is open to suitably qualified workers in all branches of the health professions (e.g. medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and other professions supplementary to medicine in science and technology) **who hold a contract of employment, including an honorary contract, with an Oxfordshire NHS Trust, or who are in contract to provide primary care services in Oxfordshire.**

Reapplication for the same project is not allowed unless the applicant is invited to do so by the committee following amendments.

**Principal investigators are not allowed to make multiple applications in a single round, but PIs who make an application for funding may appear as named members of research teams on other applications. Applications from people whose name is associated with an existing project for which the required reports have not been submitted to OHSRC in a timely manner will be rejected.**

## 6. APPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH GRANTS

The application for a project grant should be made on an application form obtained from Catherine King, Secretary to the Oxfordshire Health Services Research Committee. Contact details: telephone 01865 612 680, email: [Catherine.King@ndm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Catherine.King@ndm.ox.ac.uk) or downloadable from: [www.ouh.nhs.uk/researchers/grants](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/researchers/grants)

The form includes a requirement for a Lay Summary which is of value in explaining the work we fund to potential donors. Applicants are therefore encouraged to take this requirement seriously. The OHSRC may (and does) reject grants simply because the Lay Summary is regarded as unfit for purpose. Please see the appendix at the end of these regulations for guidance.

Section 10b of the standard form should include an additional, more detailed paper (3-5 pages) as described in section 10 of the application form.

The Committee expects clinical and laboratory research, including comparisons of therapies and procedures or case-control studies, to be carried out in properly controlled studies with appropriate randomisation procedures and assessments designed to avoid bias. Power calculations on which the sample size is based should also be given or a clear statement should be made that the project is a pilot study with an explanation of how it will allow appropriate power calculations to be performed in future. Advice and guidance on issues relating to research can be obtained from the NIHR's Research Design Service South Central: [www.rds-sc.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.rds-sc.nihr.ac.uk)

The OHSRC chair is also happy to discuss the suitability of any applications. This is currently Professor Chris Pugh [Chris.Pugh@ndm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Chris.Pugh@ndm.ox.ac.uk)

If applicants are being supervised for the duration of their projects, the name, address and a one page CV of the supervisor must be included within the application.

## 7. ETHICS

Where ethical approval is required for a piece of work appropriate permission must be in place before the project commences (see for example <http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/>) and applicants should take potential delays in this into account when making applications. If relevant ethics approval has already been applied for, related to other funding sources, then this must be stated in the OHSRC grant application. If ethical approval has not been obtained at the time of application evidence that it is in place will be required prior to the release of any monies.

## 8. CONTENT OF GRANT

Grants should relate to specific and defined research projects.

### ***Allowable expenditure***

Grants may include any or all of the expenditure items listed below:

- a) Sessional, part time or ad hoc funding will be considered for appropriate support staff, but complete and regular salaries will not be funded. If part of a salary is contained in the application, the application must include the costs of employer's insurance, pension and any pay awards

likely to occur during the period of employment. The application must not be from the person who would receive any salary.

- b) Any travelling and incidental expenses, proper to the study, in accordance with Trust conditions of service. Travelling will be paid at public transport rate.
- c) Research consumables. A full costing of materials to be used must be provided.
- d) Costs of purchasing or renting equipment and apparatus. As the OHSRC obtains its funds from charitable organisations and donations, it is likely that equipment purchased is eligible to be VAT zero-rated provided a suitable statement is made at the time of purchase.
- e) Costs of purchasing computer equipment (including software) may be allowed provided the specified equipment is demonstrated to be relevant and necessary to the research project (and not available free via Trust or University computing services). Advice from the Trust IT department indicates that for a given specification PCs are almost always cheaper than Macs and therefore there are few, if any, justifications for buying Mac computers from charitable funds. Please note: the computer equipment will remain the property of the Trust and should be returned on completion of the project.
- f) Conference fees and associated travel may be allowed provided it is necessary to the research project (attendance at one conference to disseminate the research results may be allowed and should be discussed and agreed with the OHSRC Chair).

***Expenditure the OHSRC does not fund:***

- a) Complete and regular salaries (see above)
- b) Bursary costs
- c) University/College fees
- d) Payments by means of vouchers
- e) Ordinary/general printing costs (these would be expected to be covered by applicant's department).

**Publication costs (e.g. journal fees) should not be included in applications. The Committee reserves a small amount of funding centrally and, if work funded through this scheme does achieve an appropriately acknowledged publication, we would make a contribution to publishing costs.**

Other expenditure not included in the original grant application budget will not normally be funded. If there is a change in the nature of expenditure required, approval for this change should be sought from the OHSRC Chairman. The budget cannot normally be used retrospectively i.e. to cover expenditure incurred prior to commencing the research project.

## **9. EQUIPMENT**

Before equipment is requested for a project the applicant should verify that this is not only essential for the project but also that existing facilities cannot provide the services required.

The purchase of equipment should be reported to the Trust's Equipment Bank. If the Bank does not accept the machinery, then 10% of the cost of the equipment should be added per annum to meet the cost of maintenance. Any equipment purchased becomes the property of the Trust for whom the main applicant works.

## **10. EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF**

All contracts to any research workers partly funded by the OHSRC should be issued by the appropriate Trust Personnel Officer. These will be fixed term contracts. Contracts will include the Waiver Clause, which extricates the Trust from its obligations in connection with unfair dismissal and reducing payments after the termination of the contract.

It is important to note that the NHS Trust will be the employer in law of any research worker receiving an OHSRC grant, unless there is a specific arrangement to the contrary. This means that the research workers are employed under Trust Terms and Conditions of Service. Applicants for grants must therefore bear in mind all additional costs which have to be calculated in estimating grants to meet staff costs.

The NHS Trusts, like other employers, may be held vicariously liable for the negligence (other than criminal

negligence) of their employees in the course of their employment. Applicants for grants should note that there is no requirement for staff, including research staff, to take out special forms of insurance cover and the Health Authority, as a crown body, is required to meet its own risks. It is essential that all researchers undertaking work in Oxfordshire hospitals have been appropriately cleared for the work they will be undertaking.

## 11. NHS LABORATORY, X-RAY OR CLINICAL INVESTIGATIONS

If the protocol will require investigations additional to normal clinical needs, it is important that these are discussed with that department prior to submitting the application. The department may request costs for investigations, which should be included in the application, along with a written quotation.

## 12. APPLICATIONS

Your completed application should be saved as one complete document with all supporting material included within it, and called: yoursurname.doc or yoursurname.pdf

Applications should be submitted in Word or .pdf format to [Catherine.King@ndm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Catherine.King@ndm.ox.ac.uk) **by 15 April or 15 October.**

### Appendix: Guidance for Writing the Lay Summary

#### **OHSRC Lay Summary**

A **lay summary** is a brief summary of a research project or a research proposal written for members of the public, rather than researchers or professionals. It should be written in plain English, avoid the use of jargon and explain any technical terms that have to be included.

#### **Importance of the Lay Summary**

From major funders to small grants committees, the lay summary is usually the first thing a reviewer will read. For major funding bodies, such as the NIHR, a high-quality lay summary is one component of determining if the application receives funding. If your application is successful, your lay summary may be posted on the [Oxford University Hospitals website](#).

The lay summary helps the reviewer, who is very unlikely to have any specific knowledge of your research question or area, to better understand what your research proposal is aiming to achieve and how. Reviewers and committee members are rarely inclined to fund a research proposal that they do not understand. The lay summary is the only section of the application where you are able to explain your research in clear accessible language, to a person who often has little or no knowledge of your research area.

#### **Format for the Lay Summary**

The lay summary should be no longer than 300 words. The lay summary should include the following subheadings:

- **Background:** briefly provide the background to the research to ensure a non-academic/non-specialist can understand the rationale for your research
- **Research Aim(s):** state the primary aim and secondary aims of the research
- **Design and Methods:** clearly indicate to a non-specialist language your research design, methods and outcomes
- **Dissemination:** briefly indicate how the results of the research will be disseminated

#### **Brief Guidance for Writing the Lay Summary**

The lay summary is not a scientific abstract. Do not cut-and-paste sections of your scientific summary into the lay summary.

- **Write for your audience:** your audience for the lay summary are people who do not know your research area, nor will be familiar with your research methodology

- Write with an 'active voice': a sentence written with an active voice reduces the number of words in the sentence and has more impact on a reader; e.g. *Passive Voice*: "The researchers will use Atlas.ti for the analysis of the qualitative data"; *Active Voice*: "We will use Atlas.ti to analyse the qualitative data"
- Define all abbreviations or acronyms: always provide the full terms for abbreviations when used the first time in the summary; e.g. 'CBT' becomes "cognitive behaviour therapy or CBT"
- Remove all jargon: jargon can be both technical language (medical terminology and specific device names), but can also be more specialist wording; e.g. "*the effectiveness of X*" is changed to "how well X works")
- Use more accessible words: keep it simple by using more common, straight-forward wording; a very useful resource for finding alternative words is the [Plain English Campaign's 'A-Z of Alternative Words'](#)
- Keep sentences short: the average length of a sentence should be 15-20 words (lay summaries which have an average of 14 words are understood by 90% of people; lay summaries with an average word length of 43 words are understood by 10% of people...this includes reviewers)
- The average reading age of your lay summary should be 12-14 years old (this can be achieved by using more accessible language, writing in an active voice and keeping sentences short); there are a number of freely available online 'readability' programmes which can calculate whether your lay summary is suitable for 12-14 year olds (Flesh-Kincaid, Gunning Fog Index, etc.)