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Reflections

Earlier this year the RDS reached a “half-way” mark – two and a half years into the five years of our initial contract with NIHR. We therefore took the opportunity to look at our activity data for that period, to reflect on how the RDS is performing.

During the first half of our contract we have advised on a total of 518 projects. Many of these projects have not proceeded to submission; we strive to ensure grant applications are of the highest quality and that often means deferring submission or not submitting at all when appropriate. Other projects continue to be developed.

During the period covered, we have supported a total of 57 outline submissions and 161 full or one-stage submissions. Approximately three-quarters of the submissions are made to NIHR funding streams, the remainder directed at charities and research councils. About 45% of the outline submissions have been short-listed, and 36% of the full submissions funded, to a value of over £18 million. Where the RDS has continued to have involvement right up to submission, the success rate increases further, with about 50% of full submissions being funded.

Stop Press

The i4i Invention for Innovation programme is launching its third call for early and late-stage product development awards on 1 November. The competition is open from 1 November to 7 December (5pm).

The i4i application process has now been simplified - where previously researchers had to apply to either early- or late-stage

Applicants to the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) scheme are asked about their use of the RDS; almost all applicants are now using the RDS and all such users report (anonymously) that they are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with our input, while 98% feel the quality of their application improved “very much” or “somewhat” as a result.

It is tremendous to get such feedback letting us know what you think about the RDS – thank you for your confidence in us, and of course thanks to all the RDS staff for providing such a highly-valued service. We look forward to continuing to provide such support.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of our newsletter. In particular, take a look at the Residential Research Retreat (page 2), the 2012 version having recently been launched. More information about it is of course available on our website at www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk; do consider whether this might be something that could help you take your idea forward to obtain a grant.

Dr Paul Ewings

Director, RDS - South West

product development award streams, from this call onwards all applications will be submitted through a single route. Assignment to early- or late-stage product development will now be undertaken by the NIHR i4i sub-panel as part of the review process.

For further information, visit the i4i website at: www.i4i.nihr.ac.uk

Residential Research Retreat, April 2012

The Research Design Service - South West (RDS-SW) is offering an exceptional opportunity to health and health services researchers in the South West. You are invited to put together a research team of three people and submit your research idea to the Research Retreat Team at the RDS-SW.

Research proposals will be reviewed and you could be successful in gaining a place at the Residential Research Retreat taking place at the Ammerdown Conference Centre near Bath from Sunday 22nd to Friday 27th April 2012 (inclusive).



The Residential Research Retreat provides coaching and support for you to develop your research proposal to the standard required to be competitive in seeking high quality research funding. If what you need is a sustained period of quality time with dedicated support to develop your research project, then this opportunity is for you.



For the last eight years, health service researchers from the South West have benefited from the opportunity to attend a Residential Research development event. Over that time the event has developed a sophisticated, tailored approach to working with research teams to develop research projects that are competitive in seeking high quality research funding.

The Residential Research Retreat will provide:

- protected time dedicated to the development of research projects;
- the experience of working as part of a professional research team;
- coaching in the skills of writing research proposals and grant applications;
- “hands-on” experience of the methodological, technical, and practical issues in planning and explaining research.



A normal working day at the Retreat runs from 9am to 6pm or until the day's assignment is complete. From 2012, there will also be a full day 'follow-up' meeting for all attendees approximately 6

weeks after the Retreat event (venue to be confirmed).

The Residential Research Retreat fee is £3,500 per team of three. This fee includes payment of your team's travel expenses to and from the Ammerdown Centre, full board accommodation and all Retreat tuition and activities; travel expenses for team members and lunch are also provided for the Follow-up Day, which will take place approximately six weeks after the Retreat event. The only additional expenses for delegates are personal spends.

Most teams attending the event in previous years have obtained funding from their Trusts, which have been very supportive. Many Trust R&D Departments have again expressed their willingness in principle to support a team for the 2012 Retreat.

In order to apply for the Retreat you will need to register with us on the RDS-SW website at:
www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk

The deadline for applications is **5pm on 30th November 2011**.

The main part of the application takes the form of a structured research proposal which gives you the opportunity to describe your research question and the design and methodology you have in mind.

You are recommended to discuss your application with your local RDS consultant who will be able to offer advice and guidance. For further advice or information please contact the Co-ordinating Centre on 01823 342792 or email: rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk

We look forward to receiving many interesting applications from researchers across the South West.

Grant Applications Workshop, Bournemouth

The RDS-SW is running a one-day workshop on 29th February 2012 in Bournemouth for researchers who are developing proposals with the intention of applying for a grant.

The workshop does not provide detailed training in research methodology, rather it more generally covers the full range of issues inherent in developing a successful grant application.

The RDS has a particular interest in supporting applications to the Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Programme, and this workshop will be particularly useful for people wishing to apply to that scheme. However, it is also relevant for those applying to other NIHR funding schemes and indeed other applied health research funders such as national charities.

Competition for these grants is fierce and the workshop aims to help participants understand how to improve their chances of success. The Grant Applications Workshop is directed at researchers who are considering applying to peer-reviewed funding competitions for applied health or social care research and is



intended to allow them to turn good applications into excellent ones.

Researchers will need to send in advance the latest draft of their research proposal. As a minimum they should have a plan for a project but, ideally, a worked up proposal, perhaps even one that has been previously rejected. Some of these will be selected and used as illustrative material during the workshop. However, all proposals will receive detailed written feedback.

This **free** full day workshop will be held at Bournemouth University, The Executive Business Centre, 89 Holdenhurst Road, Bournemouth Dorset, BH8 8EB, on **Wednesday 29th February 2012**. It will comprise short talks and group work on different elements of the application. The team leading the workshop has a wealth of

experience in working collaboratively to develop grant applications for peer review funding.

Applications to attend the workshop should be submitted on the standard form available on the RDS – SW website at: www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk/events.htm

You will also need to attach a copy of your written research proposal at whatever stage it is at now - this can be an early draft or a well worked up application, but as a minimum you need to outline the research question that you want to address, why you think it is an important research question and how you are going to address it.

Applications will be reviewed and places awarded to applicants with suitable proposals.

The **deadline** for receipt of completed application forms and research proposals is **Friday 6th January 2012**.

For further information, visit the RDS - South West website at: www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk or contact our Co-ordinating Centre on 01823 342792 or rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk

New Health Services & Delivery Research programme

From January 2012 the Health Services Research (HSR) programme and the Service Delivery and Organisation (SDO) programme will be merging to create a new National Institute for Health Research Health Services and Delivery Research (NIHR HS&DR) programme.

The HS&DR programme will fund high-quality research on themes relating to the delivery of health services. It will build on the strengths and contributions of the SDO and HSR programmes. For more information please visit the HS&DR website at: www.netscc.ac.uk/hsdr/

The programme will aim to produce rigorous and relevant evidence on the quality, access and organisation of health services, including costs and outcomes. There will be more funding opportunities because the new programme's remit will include research on implementation, as well as the themes of its predecessor programmes. It will support ambitious evaluative research to improve health services and commission work, and fill strategic gaps in the joint portfolio of the SDO and HSR programmes.

Contact Us

Each RDS office is run by an experienced researcher, well equipped to provide practical and user-friendly advice on the research process and applying for funding. If you are unsure of where your nearest office is, or who best to contact, simply get in touch with the **Co-ordinating Centre, Taunton** on **01823 342792** or rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk or visit our website at: www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk

Bath Office	01225 386575	rds-sw@bath.ac.uk
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The new programme will have two workstreams:

- a mainly researcher-led workstream, which will focus on research into the quality, appropriateness, effectiveness, equity and patient experience of health services;
- a mainly commissioned workstream, which will focus on evaluating models of service delivery and interventions which have the potential to improve service effectiveness, efficiency and productivity.

Key dates

January 2012:	HS&DR programme is launched.
January 2012:	First HS&DR funding call (researcher-led) opens for applications.
February 2012:	First HS&DR funding call (commissioned) opens for applications.

Frequently Asked Questions

The frequently asked questions webpage at: www.netscc.ac.uk/hsdr/FAQs.asp provides advice and guidance on this new programme.



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