

NIHR Newcastle PSRC Pre-Application Support Fund

For the brightest clinicians, practitioners and methodologists in patient safety

Section 1: Introduction and Background

The National Institute for Health and Care Research Newcastle Patient Safety Research Collaboration (NIHR Newcastle PSRC) carries out research with the goal of improving healthcare safety where there are inequalities for those from disadvantaged communities.

By working in partnership with Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals (NUTH), Newcastle University, and a diverse range of stakeholders, we address strategic patient safety challenges across three key themes: patient safety behaviours, effective patient safety practices, and the validation, implementation, and outcomes of clinical risk scores.

Listening to patients, the public and practitioners, taking their experiences into consideration from design to evaluation, strengthens our research. Collaborating with a range of partners with expertise in the field further benefits patients and professionals.

At the NIHR Newcastle PSRC, we seek to bring together a dynamic, diverse, growing community of health and care researchers and professionals and collectively build capacity in patient safety innovation, research, and care related to multiple long-term conditions (MLTCs). We emphasise sustainable, integrated career pathways for future patient safety research leaders from diverse and complementary professional backgrounds.

Section 2: About the Funding – Overview and Expectations

Academic Career Development (ACD) is a central pillar of the NIHR's strategy to build a capable, high-quality research workforce. The awards available represent a significant investment in both individual researcher development and ecosystem capacity. It is designed to drive growth in capacity and capability across the health and life-sciences ecosystem, ensuring that capacity-building post-holders in infrastructure receive a high-quality offer similar to NIHR Academy-managed schemes. Newcastle University and the PSRC are committed to administering these awards under sound governance practices, including the Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles).

Every award is intended to equip individuals with the necessary skills, experience, and protected time to successfully transition to the next stage of their research career. A primary expectation is that the award holder will produce a high-quality fellowship funding application submitted to an identifiable external funder. Applications that do not name a specific target scheme from an identifiable funder will not be considered. Award holders are also expected to participate in the PSRC research community by providing regular updates and presenting their proposed projects during studentship sessions.

Please note that this pre-application support fund is unable to cover employment costs. Please only request salary costs within your submission.

These awards are a development opportunity:

- **For pre- and post-doctoral health and care researchers to develop a competitive application to an appropriate funding scheme.**
- The Newcastle PSRC Academic Career Development team will provide tailored advice and support to maximise the success of the final application.
- To gain regular interaction opportunities with researchers and clinical and practitioner academics from different disciplines across career stages.
- To access information about further formal research training opportunities and support for preparing your onward funding application.
- To network with other existing patient safety studentships and other award holders.
- To receive mentoring for the next career steps and related funding opportunities.
- To participate in monthly support and training meetings to build research capacity.
- To access Newcastle University development opportunities, seminars, and workshops.

Core Expectations and Outputs:

- A fellowship funding application submitted to an external funder. Recently, there have been some changes in the NIHR award structure. You can read about these [here](#).
- Any offer is subject to robust supervision arrangements. Applicants must provide details of their committed supervisors, with at least one supervisor based within the NIHR Newcastle PSRC.

A fellowship application is an expected output of this award. Applications not including a named scheme from an identifiable funder will not be considered. It is requested that you provide details of a future scheme that you intend to apply for, including an estimated timeframe linked to your application for this funding.

You will be expected to provide updates about your progress at regular time points of your award period and to present your proposed project in the NIHR Newcastle PSRC studentship sessions. The Academic Career Development team will then provide tailored advice to support the success of your application. Following completion of your Pre-Application Support Funding award you will be contacted by members of the Academic Career Development team request an update on the progress and outcome of your future onward application(s).

Please note: *this Pre-Application Support Fund has been awarded to and administered by the NIHR Newcastle PSRC. It is a separate scheme from the central NIHR Pre-Application Support Fund, details of which can be found [here](#).*

Section 3: Support Available

The NIHR Newcastle PSRC Pre-Application Support Fund offers a flexible funding package designed to provide the protected time and resources required to transition to the next stage of your academic career. The primary component of the award is the provision of your salary as the lead applicant for the full duration of the award at an agreed Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) up to a maximum of £40,000 per individual.

In addition to salary costs, support is available for training and development activities tailored to your specific professional needs. This allowance can be utilised for a broad range of developmental opportunities, including formal and informal training courses, professional coaching, or strategic placements in settings that facilitate the acquisition of new skills, practical understanding, or research collaborations that are essential to your onward application plans.

It is important to note that this award is strictly intended for individual career development; therefore, it does not include provision for direct research costs, nor does it cover fees for conferences or scientific meetings. Provided that costs remain within the established envelope for duration and FTE, the award does not have rigid budgetary limits for specific line items, though all requested costs must represent clear value for money and be fully justified within the application. You are encouraged to construct your award plan carefully to ensure it meets your unique individual circumstances and long-term career objectives.

Awards are able to be undertaken on a part-time basis, to a maximum of 0.5WTE and over a maximum duration of 10 months.

We recognise that individual requirements vary and will endeavour to be flexible with start dates to accommodate specific institutional or personal needs. Due to the current PSRC funding period, the absolute latest date for award uptake is September 2026.

All applicants should ensure their proposed project timetable reflects these parameters to allow for the successful completion of training and the timely submission of their onward funding application.

Section 4: Eligibility – Who Can Apply?

To be eligible, the applicant must be in existing employment and have an employer willing to support the application. Applications from within the Newcastle Health Research Partners (NHRP) organisations are particularly encouraged but is not a requirement to apply. You can find information about NHRP [here](#).

Successful applicants to the Newcastle PSRC Pre-Application Support Fund will become [NIHR Academy Members](#).

Applicants must be in existing employment at the time of application and have the full support of their employer, evidenced by a statement from a senior line manager. A finance officer signature on the application is a requirement. Applications missing either of or both of these signatures will not be considered.

The scheme is open to doctoral and post-doctoral applicants, as well as pre-doctoral health and care researchers seeking to develop their first major fellowship application. All offers are strictly subject to robust supervision arrangements. Applicants must identify a supervisory team that includes at least one lead supervisor based within the NIHR Newcastle PSRC.

Individuals working within social care and public health are welcome to contact the Newcastle PSRC to explore their suitability for these career development opportunities.

Please note that applicants from Newcastle University are also required to submit a Project Initiation Form (PIF) at the time of application:

<https://www.cognitoforms.com/NewcastleUniversity1/NewcastleUniversityNuTHProjectInitiationFormV2>

We encourage those considering applying to discuss their application with one of the NIHR Newcastle PSRC Academic Career Development team:

- Dr Chris Lovegrove: chris.lovegrove@newcastle.ac.uk
- Mr Philip Hodgson: philip.Hodgson2@newcastle.ac.uk

Furthermore, we encourage potential applicants to attend the Pre-Application Support Fund webinar at **12:30-13:00** on **Wednesday 13th May 2026**. Please register your interest [here](#).

Section 5: Selection – Criteria and Assessment

We are looking for ambitious individuals with a strong interest in developing their research leadership in patient safety research.

Key assessment factors include the strategic fit of the proposal with Newcastle PSRC's strategic purpose and key themes, the quality of the tailored training plan, and the robustness of the supervision and mentoring arrangements. The committee also evaluates the applicant's commitment to research inclusion.

The process begins with an administrative check for completeness and eligibility. Eligible applications are then reviewed and shortlisted, with selected applicants being interviewed online on 9th July 2026. Following interview, our selection committee will meet to finalise funding decisions.

Our selection committee made up of a diverse panel with a broad range of perspectives, knowledge, skills, and experience. All committee members have signed and agree to abide by the NIHR committee code of practice declaration to ensure unbiased and objective decision-making.

Our committee will be formed from:

- Professor Annette Hand (Committee Chair, and the ACD Lead, Newcastle PSRC)
- Dr Chris Lovegrove (Committee Deputy Chair, NIHR Senior Clinical and Practitioner Research Awardee, NIHR Newcastle PSRC)
- Mr Philip Hodgson (PSRC Clinical Research Fellow, NIHR Newcastle PSRC)
- Dr Gill Norman (Methodology Expert, NIHR Innovation Observatory, Newcastle University)
- Mrs Olivia Grant (Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement Co-Theme Lead)

All decisions are expected to be communicated to applicants via email by Friday 10th July 2026.

The committee's decisions are final, and there are no external reviews. Successful applicants will receive a formal written offer letter stating the award terms and any conditions. Unsuccessful applicants will receive brief written feedback and an opportunity to discuss the outcome with the PSRC Academic Career Development Lead.

Section 6: Application Process – How to Apply

All application documents must be formatted in Arial font, size 12, with minimum single line spacing and minimum margins of 2.0cm on all sides.

Please name each file as [your name + the heading, in bold, below], and repeat the same at the top of each page within the document. You may wish to convert your documents to PDF before sending them, to ensure formatting is consistent.

A complete application must include the following:

1. **An Expression of Interest (Eoi) Summary Form** detailing learning objectives and the target funding scheme. Maximum length = 2 sides of A4 (Appendix A).
2. **Narrative CV** focusing on four specific modules:
 - a. Your research skills and experience.
 - b. Contributions to the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships.
 - c. Contributions to the wider research community.
 - d. Your suitability for the programme
 - i. Maximum length = 1000 words total split between the four sections (Appendix B).
3. **Research area and Training Plan.** This award does not fund a research project. However, we need to understand the area or discipline in which you wish to develop your research career. Please provide an overview of your training needs and provide details on how these needs will be met over the course of the award. Consider your training plans broadly, including any courses, informal learning, placements, collaborations, and other activities. This will enable the selection committee to assess your career development programme and the proposed support and collaborations. Maximum length = 2 sides of A4. (Appendix C)
4. The application must also include a one-page **project timetable or Gantt chart** to detail the timeline associated with your plans.
5. **Signature and finance form** (Appendix D). This form requires a breakdown of costs, a supporting statement from a senior line manager, confirmation of mentorship, supervision (and any potential collaborator agreement), and a signature from the finance officer associated with your employer.

Please use the applicant checklist (Appendix E) to ensure that your application is complete before submitting.

Applications should be emailed to the Newcastle PSRC (psrc@newcastle.ac.uk) by 26th June 2026.

The PSRC provides alternative submission formats, such as video or audio applications, for neurodiverse candidates or those with disabilities to ensure an inclusive process.

The NIHR Newcastle PSRC will acknowledge the receipt of your application via email. **If you have not received an email acknowledgement within two working days of submitting your application, please contact the NIHR Newcastle PSRC (psrc@newcastle.ac.uk).**

Please note that applications will not be considered if they are incomplete, including applications without a finance and manager signature.

Section 7: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

The NIHR Newcastle PSRC is committed to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity across all protected characteristics. This commitment is aligned with the NIHR EDI Strategy 2022-2027, aiming to promote a research workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. We encourage applications from all backgrounds, particularly groups currently underrepresented in clinical academia.

Reasonable adjustments are available throughout the application process to support diverse needs. We also promote flexibility by allowing awards to be taken up on a part-time basis. To ensure accountability, all selection committee members must agree to a Code of Practice that mandates non-discriminatory decision-making. Non-identifiable diversity data may be collected to monitor and improve the reach of our recruitment processes.

Section 8: Contact and Further Information

For technical support, questions regarding eligibility, or queries about NIHR Academy Membership, applicants should contact the PSRC via email (psrc@newcastle.ac.uk) or phone (0191 208 6000) during standard business hours.

For academic guidance regarding research themes or the suitability of a target funding scheme, the Academic Career Development Team (see *section 4*) is the primary point of contact.

Applicants seeking confidential advice regarding reasonable adjustments or EDI-related matters should contact the designated PSRC EDI Lead, Dr Anna Robinson-Barella (anna.robinson-barella@ncl.ac.uk). A variety of online resources are available to assist applicants, including the NIHR Career Development Framework, the PSRC website for theme details, and guidance on the Narrative CV format.

A live [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) is maintained on the PSRC website and should be consulted prior to making a formal inquiry.

Section 9: Appendix and Templates

Appendix A – EOI Summary Form (maximum length = 2 sides of A4, not including this introductory guidance). You must not amend section headings, margins or line spacing. Use Arial size 12 font and single line spacing.

Applicant name and email address:

Employing organisation:

Discipline/Profession:

Educational qualifications:

Topic of interest:

What are your specific learning objectives for this development opportunity?

An expected output of this award is a competitive application for onward funding. What funding scheme will you be developing an application for?

What would you like the next step after this opportunity to be, and how will this opportunity help you to take these steps?

What relevant experience (patient safety, research, clinical/practice, leadership) do you bring to this opportunity?

Appendix B – Narrative CV Template:

This template is intended to provide a flexible framework that allows you to showcase relevant skills and experience to support your application and demonstrate your ability to successfully deliver the proposed work. The template contains four modules.

- Your research skills and experience.
- Contributions to the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships.
- Contributions to the wider research community.
- Your suitability for the programme

Relevant skills and experience will differ depending on the opportunity to which you are applying. You should describe a selection of past contributions that best evidence your ability to carry out the proposed work. Please refer to the guidance for each module to inform the content of your narrative CV.

The limit for your narrative CV is 1000 words total split between the four modules (not including this introductory guidance). Within this limit, you can include as much information as you like within each module. You must not amend section headings, margins or line spacing. Use Arial size 12 font and single line spacing.

Please name this file “[Your name] Narrative CV”

Module 1 – Research skills and experience

Module 2 – Contributions to the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships

Module 3 – Contributions to the wider research community

Module 4 - Your suitability for the programme

Appendix C – Research Area and Training Plan:

Please delete text in italics before submitting. Maximum length = 2 sides of A4.

1. Strategic Research Proposal

Building on the topic of interest identified in your summary, please provide a detailed description of your proposed research focus. This section should clearly articulate how your project aligns with one or more of the NIHR Newcastle PSRC themes. You must explicitly state how your work will address healthcare safety inequalities for disadvantaged communities and patients with multiple long-term conditions. Use this space to demonstrate the patient safety innovation potential of your proposed fellowship topic.

2. Tailored Training and Development Activity Plan

While your learning objectives are stated in the EoI, this section requires a breakdown of the specific activities you will undertake to meet those objectives. Please describe the formal and informal training you plan to undertake, professional coaching sessions, and strategic placements you have identified. Please note that any training requested must be directly relevant to the process of writing and submitting your application for future funding.

Following NIHR 2025 standards, you must include a dedicated plan for training in Research Inclusion and methods for working effectively with people and communities. Describe how these activities collectively bridge the gap between your current skill set and the requirements of your target external funding scheme.

3. Supervision, Mentorship, and Collaboration

The offer of an award is subject to robust supervision. Please identify your supervisory team, ensuring at least one lead supervisor is based within the NIHR Newcastle PSRC. Detail the frequency and format of your supervision meetings and how your supervisors' specific expertise will support the development of your application. Beyond direct supervision, outline any broader collaborations or mentorship arrangements both within the Newcastle Health Research Partners (NHRP) and externally that will enhance the quality of your future fellowship proposal.

4. Milestones and Feasibility

Provide a justification for your expected submission timeline. Explain how the FTE protected time will be distributed across the award duration to ensure the timely completion of your training and the submission of your future funding application.

You should identify key milestones, such as the completion of specific training, the finalisation of your research questions, and the submission of a full draft to your supervisory team for review.

This section must demonstrate that your plan is realistic and achievable within the requested funding envelope.

5. Added Value and Professional Impact

Describe how this specific award, hosted within the Newcastle PSRC, provides a unique advantage that could not be achieved through other funding routes. Explain how the protected time specifically will be used to move beyond standard project planning into high-level fellowship preparation, such as conducting preliminary feasibility work or establishing long-term stakeholder partnerships that will sustain your future research career.

Appendix D: Signature and Finance Form:

This form must be completed in full and signed by the relevant institutional authorities. All costs must represent value for money and be calculated in accordance with your employing organisation's standard financial procedures.

Please note that this pre-application support fund is unable to cover employment costs. Please only request salary costs within your submission.

Part 1: Financial Summary and Award Logistics

Please provide a breakdown of the requested funds below. Note that research costs and conference fees are not eligible.

Financial Category	Cost Summary	Total Amount (£)
Salary Costs		£
Training & Development		£
Total Award Value		£

Proposed Timeline:

- Requested Start Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]
- Requested End Date: [DD/MM/YYYY]
- Requested FTE:

Part 2: Senior Line Manager Support

Supporting Statement:

Please confirm the applicant's suitability for this award and agreement that the applicant will be granted the required protected time and released from their standard duties for the duration of the award.

- **Manager Name:** _____
- **Job Title:** _____
- **Signature:** _____ **Date:** [DD/MM/YYYY]

Part 3: Supervision, Mentorship, and Collaborator Confirmation

We, the undersigned, confirm our commitment to providing the necessary guidance and oversight for this award. We have reviewed the proposed training plan and agree to support the applicant in developing a competitive fellowship application.

- **Lead PSRC Supervisor:** _____ **Signature:** _____
- **Secondary Supervisor/Mentor:** _____ **Signature:** _____
- **Collaborator Agreement (If applicable):** I confirm my agreement to collaborate on the proposed project/training activity as described in this application.
 - **Collaborator Name:** _____ **Signature:** _____

Part 4: Employer Finance Officer Certification

I certify that the salary costs provided in Part 1 are accurate and based on the applicant's current employment contract. I confirm that the organisation supports this application and will administer the funds in accordance with NIHR governance standards if the award is successful.

- **Finance Officer Name:** _____
- **Email Address:** _____
- **Signature:** _____ **Date:** [DD/MM/YYYY]

Part 5: Applicant Declaration

I confirm that the information provided in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that my data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and used for the purposes of assessment and award administration.

- **Applicant Signature:** _____ **Date:** [DD/MM/YYYY]

Appendix E - Applicant checklist:

Before submitting your final application, please ensure that all components are completed and ideally compiled into a single PDF document. Failure to include any of the following items or exceeding the specified page limits may result in your application being excluded from the selection process.

- **[] Expression of Interest (Eoi) Summary Form (Appendix A):** Ensure you have provided a clear title for your topic of interest, defined your specific learning objectives, and identified the target external funding scheme. *Maximum length: 2 sides of A4.*
- **[] Narrative CV (Appendix B):** Your CV must follow the narrative format rather than a traditional list of publications. It must be a **maximum of 1000 words total** and address the following four modules:
 - **Module A:** Your research skills and experience to date.
 - **Module B:** Contributions to the development of others and the maintenance of effective working relationships.
 - **Module C:** Contributions to the wider research community
 - **Module D:** Your overall suitability for this specific pre-application support funding.
- **[] Research Area and Training Plan (Appendix C):** Provide an overview of the discipline in which you wish to develop your research career and a detailed training plan. This should outline how your needs will be met through courses, informal learning, placements, and collaborations. **Maximum length: 2 sides of A4.**
 - *Note: This award funds your development and protected time, not a specific research project.*
- **[] Project Timetable or Gantt Chart:** Provide a visual timeline detailing when your specific proposed activities and training (if relevant) will take place, and the date of your intended external funding submission. **Maximum length: 1 side of A4.**
- **[] Signature and Finance Form (Appendix D):** This document must be fully signed and include:
 - Check that salary costs do not include overheads (i.e. National insurance and pension contributions etc.)
 - A full breakdown of salary and training costs.
 - A supporting statement and signature from your senior line manager.
 - Formal confirmation of mentorship and supervision arrangements.
 - Any relevant collaborator agreements.
 - The signature of the finance officer associated with your employer to verify the accuracy of the requested costs.
- **[] Project Initiation Form (PIF) – Newcastle University applicants only:**
<https://www.cognitofrms.com/NewcastleUniversity1/NewcastleUniversityNuTHProjectInitiationFormV2>
- **Final Formatting Reminder:** All documents must be submitted in **Arial font, size 12**, with minimum **2.0cm margins**.