



**National Institute for
Health Research**

BEST RESEARCH FOR BEST HEALTH

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 5.4

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH SCHOOL FOR
PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH**

*Best Research for Best Health*¹ set out a 5-year Research and Development Strategy for the NHS in England. This Implementation Plan provides more details on one of the key components of that strategy: the **NIHR School for Primary Care Research**. This document will be regularly updated. The latest version should be used.

Gateway Reference: 6050

Version: 4

Issue date: January 2007

Planned revision & re-issue date: July 2007

Aim

- To increase the evidence-base for primary care practice.

Purpose

- To increase the volume of high-quality research focused on improving practice in primary care for the benefit of patients.
- To provide a focus for applied research in primary care within the National Institute for Health Research.

Nature

- The National Institute for Health Research School for Primary Care Research will be the first research school to be established within the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).
- The School will comprise the leading academic centres of primary care research in England.
- The Director of the NIHR will select one of the members of the School to be Director of the School.
- The funding for the School will be used to support the conduct of clinical trials and other well-designed studies in primary care and at the interface with secondary care.

¹ *Best Research for Best Health: A New National Health Research Strategy*. The NHS contribution to health research in England. Department of Health. 2006

Selection Criteria

- The academic departments of primary care which were rated as 5 or 5* in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise have been invited to become founding departments of the NIHR School for Primary Care Research.

Selection process

- The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has already judged the quality of the research conducted in English Higher Education Institutions through the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). We minimised unnecessary bureaucracy by using the outcomes of this assessment to identify the leading university departments of primary care research.
- All departments of primary care that demonstrated that they were rated as 5 or 5* in the 2001 RAE were invited to submit a short statement to that effect.
- The DH Director of Research and Development validated these statements and confirmed acceptance to the NIHR School of Primary Care Research.

Monitoring and Performance Management

- Appropriate arrangements will be established to advise the Director of the NIHR on the strategic direction and performance of the School.
- The School has produced a Business Plan, which it agreed with the Director of the NIHR. The Business Plan sets out the research programme to be conducted by the School and the deployment of the human and financial resources to deliver it.
- The performance of the School as a whole, and of its constituent academic departments, will be reviewed regularly against the Business Plan by the Director of the NIHR.
- The continuation of an individual academic department as a member of the School will be dependent on satisfactory performance.

Future Development

- Following the next RAE (due in 2008), the membership of the School will be revised accordingly.

Eligibility

- All academic departments of primary care in England.

Funding

- The total amount of funding available will be £3 million per annum.
- The amount of funding allocated to each academic department will be determined by the scale and nature of the research activity to be conducted by that centre. If these are similar, then the funding will be distributed equally between the centres.

Duration

- Funding will be provided for the period covered by the RAE, subject to satisfactory performance.

Implementation Timetable

- The planned implementation timetable is:
 - 25 Jan 2006 - R&D strategy published confirming intention to establish the NIHR School of Primary Care Research
 - 27 February 2006 - call released for academic departments to submit a statement confirming their eligibility
 - March 2006 - DH Director of R&D validated statements and confirmed acceptance of successful departments to the School of Primary Care Research (Manchester, Birmingham, Cambridge, Oxford and Bristol are confirmed as the five founding member departments)
 - April 2006 - Director of School of Primary Care Research selected (Professor Martin Roland, Manchester)
 - April 2006 - School started in shadow form
 - June 2006 - School submitted Business Plan
 - July 2006 - Business Plan agreed
 - October 2006 - NIHR School of Primary Care Research started operation.

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