



**National Institute for
Health Research**

BEST RESEARCH FOR BEST HEALTH

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 6.1

OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL INSTITUTES FOR HEALTH RESEARCH RESEARCH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES, UNITS AND CENTRES

*Best Research for Best Health*¹ set out a 5-year Research and Development Strategy for the NHS in England. This Implementation Plan provides **AN OVERVIEW** of one of the key strands of that strategy: **NIHR RESEARCH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES, UNITS AND CENTRES**. This document will be regularly updated. The latest version should be used.

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The new strategy for DH R&D '*Best Research for Best Health*' makes a number of specific proposals to create a new portfolio of National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) research programmes. Outlined below are the main objectives of this element of the strategy, our plans for implementation of the new research programmes and a brief description of the main changes to our existing programmes.

Objectives

Strengthen and focus the funding mechanisms through which we commission research.

- Expand and develop relevant and flexible programmes of research addressing the broad range of health research priorities.
- Target our health research funding to resolve uncertainties and address areas of unmet need.
- Allocate NHS health research funding in a transparent manner based on quality and relevance.

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

To achieve these objectives by 2010 we will:

- Develop a range of research funding mechanisms to ensure that we fund important, relevant and high quality health research that is inadequately supported by other funders, but is essential for delivering our public services.
- Expand and strengthen our existing R&D programmes.
- Introduce a new Research for Patient Benefit responsive funding programme.
- Introduce Programme Grants for Applied Research in areas of high priority to the NHS.
- Continue to invest in research units focused on priority areas.
- Create Research Centres of international standing within our leading NHS/University partnerships as the NHS support for UK competitiveness in 'Biomedical Sciences' and 'NHS Patient Safety and Service Quality'.

Funding

- We plan to increase annual expenditure on NIHR research programmes as we move through the three-year NHS R&D funding transition period.

Process

- We will use a variety of funding mechanisms, each appropriate to the needs of the individual research programmes.
- Our guiding principle is to improve the quality, relevance and focus of research in the NHS by distributing funds in a transparent manner after open competition and rigorous peer review.

Implementation Timetable

- We plan a seamless transition from our current funding systems to the new NIHR programmes, so that research can continue during the introduction of the new strategy.
- The timetable for implementation of each of the elements of the NIHR programmes is itemised in the individual Implementation Plans available from the DH and NIHR websites.
- The overall timetable for change is:
 - 25 January 2006 - R&D strategy published confirming intention to establish a new portfolio of NIHR research programmes
 - March 2006 - new NIHR Central Commissioning Facility (CCF) began operation
 - April 2006 onwards - the NIHR CCF announced calls for applications to the new NIHR programmes
 - September 2006 – new NIHR programmes reviewed applications
 - Early December 2006 – first round of NIHR committee meetings assessed applications
 - Mid December 2006 – first round of NIHR awards.

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