



**National Institute for
Health Research**

BEST RESEARCH FOR BEST HEALTH

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 6.2(b)

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

**RESEARCH FOR INNOVATION, SPECULATION AND
CREATIVITY (RISC) PROGRAMME**

*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 a key component of that strategy: **RESEARCH FOR INNOVATION, SPECULATION AND CREATIVITY (RISC) PROGRAMME**. This document will be regularly updated. The latest version should be used.

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**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH: RESEARCH FOR
INNOVATION, SPECULATION AND CREATIVITY PROGRAMME**

Aim

The main aim of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Research for Innovation, Speculation and Creativity (RISC) programme will be to support potentially paradigm-changing projects in the arena of Health Services and Public Health Research.

Purpose

- The purpose of the NIHR RISC programme is to fund new and radical ideas for health research, with potential for high impact. RISC awards are intended particularly for speculative, novel proposals that are unlikely to fair well in traditional peer review processes.
- They will complement the NIHR RfPB funding, providing a response-mode funding stream for applications that would be too speculative for the standard RfPB awards.
- A fixed grant will be awarded to successful applicants and it is envisaged that follow-on funding could occur through the NIHR RfPB programme or the other NIHR programmes.

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

Research for Innovation, Speculation and Creativity (RISC) Programme

Funding

- We plan to make up to 50 awards each year at a cost of £100,000 each.
- Awards will normally be for 12 months duration.

Process

- The new NIHR Central Commissioning Facility will administer the scheme.
- There will be an annual competition initiated by advertisement. The purpose of the publicity will be to reach as wide an audience as possible.
- The application form will be short.
- Applicants will be asked to set out a clearly stated hypothesis and approach, the potential impact of the project, demonstrate an understanding of the risks that are being taken and prove that the work has not been undertaken elsewhere.
- An *ad-hoc*, virtual panel will be established with new members each year, to ensure the vibrancy of the scheme. The panel will include members from the Department of Health, NHS service users and others.
- The panel Chair is Professor Malcolm Lowe-Lauri, Chief Executive of King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.
- As a condition of funding, all awardees will be required to submit an 'end-of-grant' report that will be collated into a publicly available report. (One of the main benefits of the RISC awards will be the negative results – that is those potentially paradigm-changing ideas that proved to be unsuccessful).

Selection Criteria

- Applications will be judged on the quality of the research proposed, and the significance and potential benefit of that research to the NHS.
- More detailed selection criteria will be published when the scheme is launched.

Eligibility

- All researchers based in the NHS in England will be eligible to apply.
- Joint applications from NHS researchers with academic partners as co-applicants are welcome.
- In both cases, funding will be awarded to the NHS organisation.

Implementation Timetable

The R&D strategy published 25 January 2006 confirmed the intention to establish the NIHR RISC scheme. The planned implementation timetable is still under consideration and will be published here as soon as possible.

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