



**National Institute for  
Health Research**

**BEST RESEARCH FOR BEST HEALTH**

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 6.4**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH  
INVENTION FOR INNOVATION PROGRAMME**

*Best Research for Best Health*<sup>1</sup> 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 INVENTION FOR INNOVATION PROGRAMME**. 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*

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH: INVENTION  
FOR INNOVATION PROGRAMME**

**Aim**

- This new funding stream will bring together two of our existing programmes, NEAT and HTD, together with new investment, to create a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Invention for Innovation research programme.

**Purpose**

- This programme will initially comprise the following four strands of activity:
  - The New and Emerging Applications of Technology (NEAT) programme
  - The Health Technology Devices programme (HTD)
  - The Department of Health's R&D Directorate's contribution to the piloting of **Healthcare Technology Co-operatives**, as announced in the recent Healthcare Industries Task Force (HITF) report. Details of the piloting process are currently being developed by HITF partners (<http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/hitf/sigmeeting231105overview2.pdf>)
  - A Challenge Fund for Innovation.

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

## NEAT

### Aims

- The NEAT programme aims to deliver strategic and applied research across the medical sciences that has the potential to generate both intellectual property and cost-reducing products and interventions.
- Outputs have wide applicability and are capable of exploitation to enhance the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of health and social care.

### Process

- At present, the programme operates in response mode although there are plans to have more strategic and focussed calls.
- All outputs are published on the NEAT website [www.neatprogramme.org.uk/](http://www.neatprogramme.org.uk/)

### Funding

- The NEAT programme has been in operation for some 6 years and currently has an annual budget of approximately £2.0 million.

## HEALTH TECHNOLOGY DEVICES

### Aims

- The Health Technology Devices Programme aims to stimulate and promote collaborative research that contributes towards the development of new technology, which meets patient needs and supports independence and dignity with respect to social care needs.
- The HTD programme focuses on supporting the development of new medical devices and healthcare technologies that are capable of exploitation by the healthcare industries, yielding both improved benefit to patients and also a more robust UK medical devices sector. Key areas of support include:
  - trauma care and tissue engineering;
  - improvement to disease diagnosis;
  - rehabilitation devices for use on or by patients;
  - therapeutic devices to aid patient recovery;
  - software to achieve improved performance of medical devices;
  - non-pharmaceutical technologies that assist provision of healthcare.

### Process

- This programme operates in response mode. Calls are invited and handled through the HTD web portal (<http://www.healthtechnologyportal.org.uk>)
- A programme Management Committee advise on scientific quality, clinical need and exploitation potential, and routes to market.

### Funding

- The HTD programme currently has funding of £2 million per year.

## **CHALLENGE FUND FOR INNOVATION**

### **Aims**

- The main aim of the Challenge Fund for Innovation is to promote and accelerate the transfer of knowledge and innovation between the NIHR and the NHS.
- This will involve a wide range of initiatives, some anticipated – such as the development of informal networks via workshops and seminars of researchers and service users - and others more inventive – such as the role of new technology in disseminating research findings.

### **Purpose**

- The purpose of this new scheme is to ensure that research sponsored by the NIHR and others is fully exploited to the benefit of the NHS.
- The fund is not only intended to support the commercial exploitation of research, but is also aimed at effective ideas that have no commercial end-point.

### **Funding**

- We plan to allocate funds of £5 million per year to this scheme.

### **Process**

- The new NIHR Central Commissioning Facility will administer the scheme.
- There will be an on-going competition with up to five decision points through the year.
- The main criteria for assessment will be the potential to make a difference to the NHS, both regionally and nationally.
- Applicants will be expected to set out clear objectives, implementation plans with milestones, likely success criteria, and resource requirements etc.
- Where appropriate, applications will be reviewed by external experts who will be asked to certify that the proposed innovations have been proven to be effective.

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