

Research Programme for Social Care

# Research Programme for Social Care Competition 3

## Overview

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**Opportunity status:** Open

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**Type:** Programme

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**Opening date:** 01 October 2024

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**Closing date:** 15 January 2025 at 1:00 pm

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**Reference ID:** 97015

## Ready to apply?

Apply for this funding opportunity through our online application form

**Apply now**  
(<https://ccfrms.nihr.ac.uk/>)

The Research Programme for Social Care funds research which generates evidence to improve, expand and strengthen the way social care is provided for users of care services, carers, the social care workforce, and the public across the UK - England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. The programme funds primary, secondary and evidence synthesis research including qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods designs. All proposals are expected to have a high degree of involvement from relevant people who need or use social care and the social care workforce. RPSC welcomes high-quality proposals from researchers and practitioners that are focused on but not limited to:

- Studies of social care needs, circumstances and relevant outcomes related to adults, children or young people who need or use social care and carers, including studies of inequalities in any of these domains
- Evaluation of existing or new social care services, addressing their effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and distributional consequences
- Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness evaluations of interventions, including adaptations or refinements of existing interventions/technologies
- Developing and testing new assessments, interventions or services
- Research methods development
- Feasibility, pilot and definitive trials
- Research examining consequences for social care users of provision of other services (e.g., health, education, criminal justice, family courts, housing, benefits)
- Policy-implementation research
- Studies that involve secondary data analysis or record linkage
- Systematic or other reviews of evidence
- Strategies for preventing or delaying the need for care and support
- Research on approaches to support and strengthen the social care workforce
- Capacity-building opportunities within awards

The submission deadline for applications is 1pm on 15 January 2025.

## **Pre-submission form**

Applicants considering submitting a Stage 1 application may wish to submit an initial outline of their proposal for guidance using our [pre-submission form](https://forms.gle/JA4WShX6CKR3LqD47) (<https://forms.gle/JA4WShX6CKR3LqD47>). This is non-mandatory and purely aimed at helping potential applicants to engage with the requirements of the call (e.g. eligibility and remit). For other questions, contact [rpsc@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:rpsc@nihr.ac.uk) (mailto:

## Highlight notices and themed calls

RPSC is currently participating in the following highlight notices and themed calls, please see the links on the left for more information:

- DHSC area of research interest early action to prevent poor health outcomes
- NIHR NICE Rolling Call
- NIHR James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnerships Rolling Call

## Webinar

A virtual Q&A webinar for this call will take place on Tuesday 29 October from 2pm to 4pm for potential applicants.

Register your attendance and gain access to joining details through the [Eventbrite RPSC Call 3 Researcher webinar](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rpsc-call-3-researcher-webinar-tickets-1041452270777?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl). (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rpsc-call-3-researcher-webinar-tickets-1041452270777?utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&utm-medium=discovery&utm-term=listing&utm-source=cp&aff=ebdsshcopyurl>)

## Key dates

**1 October 2024**

Call launch

**15 January 2025**

Deadline for Stage 1 applications

**March 2025**

Submission outcome

**9 April 2025**

Stage 2 launch (if invited)

**21 May 2025**

Deadline for Stage 2 applications

**August 2025**

Submission outcome

To apply for this funding opportunity you will need to log in through the NIHR Research Management System (RMS). Click the link below to log-in to the system and start your application.

**Apply now**  
(<https://ccirms.nihr.ac.uk/>)

## **RPSC Highlight notice for DHSC Areas of Research Interest 1: Early action to prevent poor health outcomes**

### **Summary**

- NIHR is announcing a targeted funding opportunity which is part of a co-ordinated response by NIHR to the [DHSC Areas of Research Interest \(ARI 1\) - early action to prevent poor health outcomes](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest>).
- RPSC applications under this highlight are expected to focus on how early action to prevent poor health outcomes via social care interventions and actions can prevent escalating health and care needs. The focus and outcomes of the research will need to be clearly on the role of social care in preventing escalating health and care needs. In particular:
  - How social care can support the prevention of escalating health and care needs of adults and children with disabilities (e.g., helping to meet their health needs, supporting access to health checks and healthcare)
  - Earlier intervention, and how it can prevent poor health outcomes for specific communities who face inequalities, including rough sleepers, people who experience the care system, care leavers
  - Addressing inequalities in the health and wellbeing of the social care workforce, including carers.

- Our funding decisions are based on several criteria including quality, timeliness, potential impact and value for money.
- This highlight notice will be launched as part of RPSC Call 3 which launches on 01 October 2024. The submission deadline for applications is on 15 January 2025 at 1 pm. Applications should be submitted using the online form on the [Research Management System \(RMS\)](https://ccfrms.nihr.ac.uk/Login/LoggedIn) (<https://ccfrms.nihr.ac.uk/Login/LoggedIn>). Applicants are strongly encouraged to start completing the online form on RMS as soon as possible.

Both the [RPSC scope](/research-programme-social-care-scope) (/research-programme-social-care-scope) and the ARI 1 scope outlined below apply to this call.

## Introduction

From Summer 2024 onwards, NIHR research programmes and infrastructure are running a series of linked research calls on specific aspects of the DHSC ARI 1 Priority Research Topic "[Early action to prevent poor health outcomes](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest#ari-1-early-action-to-prevent-poor-health-outcomes-1)" (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest#ari-1-early-action-to-prevent-poor-health-outcomes-1>). As part of this RPSC will be running a highlight notice as part of RPSC call 3 , that will form part of this a coordinated response by NIHR to the DHSC ARI 1.ARI1.

RPSC will use this highlight notice to focus on inequalities that lead to poor health outcomes, and social care's role in preventing escalating health and care needs, particularly amongst marginalised groups and to address inequalities within the social care workforce. This includes:

- How social care can support the prevention of escalating health and care needs of adults and children with disabilities (e.g., helping to address their health needs, supporting access to health checks and healthcare services)
- How social care can support the prevention of escalating health and care needs of marginalised communities including rough sleepers, people who experience the care system and care leavers.
- How the social care sector could address health inequalities and support the health and wellbeing of the social care workforce as well as carers more generally, including unpaid carers.

All research proposals will be expected to consider engagement, impact and knowledge mobilisation strategies.

## Scope

Proposals should be within the [RPSC scope](#) (/research-programme-social-care-scope) and the scope of this ARI 1 highlight notice.

More can be seen about ARI 1 on [DHSC's areas of research interest webpage](#) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest>). Please note, that while the ARI 1 call is looking at health outcomes, as applications will also need to be within the RPSC scope, the focus of the research (and any intervention or action examined) will have to be social care focussed. Therefore, this call will particularly focus on inequalities that lead to poor health outcomes and the role of social care interventions in preventing escalating health and care needs.

In this call, we welcome research applications that are clearly aligned with ARI 1's research objectives, related clearly to social care and are designed to generate relevant high-quality research evidence 'at pace' on generalisable, early-action approaches for the following populations:

- people with disabilities
- marginalised communities and groups facing health and care inequalities including rough sleepers, people from LGBTQ+ communities, people who experience the care system, care leavers
- social care workforce and carers (including unpaid carers)

Research topics relating to the above populations of interest include (but are not restricted to) the following:

- Systems helping people get the early support they need:
  - Front door models, and support accessing healthcare including health checks and services (including signposting, social prescribing and single point of t of access for health and care staff to make referrals)
  - Data targeting (including risk stratification methods, population mapping)
  - Local Area Coordination (including neighbourhood networks)

- Early help and early intervention forms of support aimed at improving health outcomes for children or preventing escalating health and social care need or risk
- Community services including meal services
  - Physical activity programmes
  - Social isolation programmes and other community support initiatives and wellbeing services.
  - Early memory loss support groups
  - Services for complex needs, e.g. learning disabilities (including employment support,)
  - Day care services
- The effectiveness of core care packages:
  - Domiciliary care
  - Residential care packages
  - Shared Lives or other alternative care packages
- Keeping people out of formal health and care settings (and preventing readmission to hospital/care settings):
  - Falls prevention (including home adaptations, handyman services and Disabled Facilities Grant adaptations, limiting polypharmacy)
  - Telecare and telehealth (including assistive technology, virtual wards, AI sensors, tech enabled care – including basic monitoring and sophisticated technology)
  - Reablement and rehabilitation programmes (community led, early intervention and acute response - includes home care and bedded settings)
  - All out of home care
- Inequalities in the social care workforce, and carers more broadly (including unpaid carers)
  - How the social care sector could address inequalities and support the health and wellbeing of the social care workforce
  - Prevention of poor health outcomes in the social care workforce
  - Interventions and actions to improve support for carers
  - Encouraging uptake of vaccinations
  - Better planning of home care visits
  - Organising schedules to reduce stress and absenteeism

It is our intention to fund research which has a high likelihood of:

- generating outputs that can be adopted by social care practitioners
- informing policy development and decision-making, to enable system level improvements.

RPSC's aim is to support the social care system by funding research that tackles one or more of these priority research topics to generate synergies that improve outcomes for users of social care in the short term (0-10 years). Projects that use relevant, [DHSC's priority cross-cutting methodologies](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest#priority-cross-cutting-methodologies) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest/department-of-health-areas-of-research-interest#priority-cross-cutting-methodologies>) to demonstrate service user or carer benefits at an individual or population level are particularly welcome.

In line with the [UK Standards in Public Involvement](https://sites.google.com/nihr.ac.uk/pi-standards/home) (<https://sites.google.com/nihr.ac.uk/pi-standards/home>) and [NIHR Research Inclusion strategy](/about-us/who-we-are/research-inclusion) (</about-us/who-we-are/research-inclusion>), meaningful public involvement and engagement (PPIE) should be embedded within every stage of the research cycle. We are particularly keen to support established and emerging research partnerships with community and charity organisations and groups who can facilitate effective engagement with groups who are underserved by social care research.

While remaining flexible, we aim to support applications that:

- clearly demonstrate how they will reduce disparities and prevent escalating health and social care needs
- identify and justify the social care research context in terms of recent and currently funded research in the UK.
- actively address barriers to engagement in research and co-production, such as disability and social exclusion. Collaboration with third sector and non-profit organisations dedicated to improving people's lives.
- include and incorporate plans to build interdisciplinary applied research teams with relevant experience, to ensure research has potential to transfer into benefits to the health and social care systems, service users, carers and the wider public.

As part of RPSC call 3, this highlight notice allows applications to take advantage of [RPSC capacity building funding](/capacity-building-within-rpsc-research-programme) (</capacity-building-within-rpsc-research-programme>) and offers the Early Career researcher opportunity



## Eligibility

Standard eligibility rules will apply as detailed in the [RPSC scope](#) (/research-programme-social-care-scope).

## Funding

The amount awarded and the length of the funding period depends on the nature of the proposed work. Please see the [RPSC page](#) (/research-funding/funding-programmes/research-programme-for-social-care) for further details.

## How to apply

### Application process and assessment criteria

- If you would like the team to comment briefly on your research plan please complete the [pre submission](#) (<https://forms.gle/JA4WShX6CKR3LqD47>) form.
- The applications submitted under this highlight notice will undergo routine scrutiny and will be assessed on their quality and individual merits according to standard RPSC scheme criteria. Reviewers will also be asked to consider if applications are in scope of the highlight notice.
- In your application, please make it clear that you are applying under the highlight notice within the research plan
- Applications will be considered by a cross-disciplinary expert assessment. Assessors will be drawn from existing RPSC Committees, and additional experts as appropriate.

A two stage application process will apply to applications submitted under this notice. Stage 1 applications will be reviewed by assessors and undergo a triage process, with the highest scoring applications invited to submit a Stage 2 application. Recommendations for funding of Stage 2 applications will be made at the Committee meeting. Applicants must submit an online application via the [RMS](#) (<https://ccfrms.nihr.ac.uk/Login/LoggedIn>).

## Call timetable

**1 October 2024**

Call launch

**29 October 2024**

## 15 January 2025

Stage 1 call close

## April 2025

Invitation to Stage 2 decision

## May 2025

Stage 2 call close

## NIHR NICE rolling call

The Research Programme for Social Care (RPSC) is accepting Stage 1 applications to this funding opportunity. The programme is interested in receiving applications to meet recommendations in research identified in [NICE guidance](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/published?type=apg,csg,cg,cov,mpg,ph,sg,sc,dg,hst,ipg,mtg,qs,ta) (<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/published?type=apg,csg,cg,cov,mpg,ph,sg,sc,dg,hst,ipg,mtg,qs,ta>), focusing on social care, that has been published or updated in the last 5 years.

In order to apply you will need to carefully review the [NICE rolling call specification](#) (/nihr-nice-rolling-call-specification-document) and [RPSC Stage1 guidance notes](#) (/research-programme-social-care-rpsc-guidance-stage-1-applications). You should also review the documents in the 'Application support' tab of this funding opportunity.

All proposals submitted must fall within [the scope of the RPSC](#) (/research-programme-social-care-scope). The RPSC Stage 1 guidance notes provides further details on:

- eligibility
- collaboration and team expertise
- timescales
- funding limits
- guidance on applying

The submission deadline for applications is **1pm on 15 January 2025**.

## Other participating NIHR programmes

This call is also open in the [Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation \(EME\)](/research-funding/funding-programmes/efficacy-and-mechanism-evaluation) (/research-funding/funding-programmes/efficacy-and-mechanism-evaluation), [Health Technology Assessment \(HTA\)](/research-funding/funding-programmes/health-technology-assessment) (/research-funding/funding-programmes/health-technology-assessment), [Health and Social Care Delivery Research \(HSDR\)](/research-funding/funding-programmes/health-and-social-care-delivery-research) (/research-funding/funding-programmes/health-and-social-care-delivery-research), [Public Health Research \(PHR\)](/research-funding/funding-programmes/public-health-research) (/research-funding/funding-programmes/public-health-research), [Invention for Innovation \(i4i\)](/research-funding/funding-programmes/invention-for-innovation) (/research-funding/funding-programmes/invention-for-innovation), [Programme Grants for Applied Research \(PGfAR\)](/research-funding/funding-programmes/programme-grants-for-applied-research) (/research-funding/funding-programmes/programme-grants-for-applied-research) and [Research for Patient Benefit \(RfPB\)](/research-funding/funding-programmes/research-for-patient-benefit) (/research-funding/funding-programmes/research-for-patient-benefit) programmes for proposals which fall within the remit of those programmes – applicants should apply directly to the relevant programme.

## NIHR James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnerships Rolling Call

The Research Programme for Social Care call is accepting Stage 1 applications to this funding opportunity. The programme recognises the importance of the research priorities identified by the James Lind Alliance (JLA) Priority Setting Partnerships (PSP) and are interested in receiving high-quality applications which address them.

We are looking to receive applications for research studies addressing JLA PSPs' research priorities, rather than to conduct a PSP itself.

In order to apply you will need to carefully review the [JLA Priority Setting Partnerships rolling call specification](/nihr-james-lind-alliance-priority-setting-partnerships-rolling-call) (/nihr-james-lind-alliance-priority-setting-partnerships-rolling-call) and [RPSC Stage 1 guidance notes](/research-programme-social-care-rpsc-guidance-stage-1-applications) (/research-programme-social-care-rpsc-guidance-stage-1-applications). You should also review the documents in the 'Application support' tab of this funding opportunity.

Information on [eligibility checks](https://www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/priority-setting-partnerships/) (https://www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/priority-setting-partnerships/) can be found on the JLA website.

All primary research projects are expected to establish a programme appointed Study Steering Committee and it is important that you read the [Research Governance Guidance](/about-us/who-we-are/policies-and-guidelines/research-governance-guidelines) (/about-us/who-we-are/policies-and-guidelines/research-governance-guidelines) before completing your application. Costs incurred by this committee should be included in the budget as appropriate.

## Studies within a trial or review

This funding opportunity is eligible for a SWAT/SWAR (study within a trial or study within a review), which can help significantly improve methodology of future research as well as the host study. Find out about [the benefits of SWATs/SWARs and how to include one in your application](#) ([/methodological-sub-studies-studies-within-trial-or-project-swat-and-studies-within-review-swar](#)).

## Improving NHSE Data Access Pilot

The NIHR are working together with the Data Access & Partnerships Team in NHS England (NHSE) to better align NHSE requirements for data access with NIHR commissioning processes.

This funding call will include a pilot to support researchers in making data access requests by identifying any potential issues and resource impact earlier in the process. If your research will require access to NHSE data, please refer to our [NIHR & NHS England Improving Data Access Pilot](#) ([/nih-r-nhs-england-improving-data-access-pilot](#)) webpage for further details of the pilot.

The submission deadline for applications is **1pm on 15 January 2025**.

## Supporting information

- [Research specification](#) ([/nih-r-research-programme-social-care-rpsc-call-specification](#))
- [Guidance for Stage 1 applications](#) ([/research-programme-social-care-rpsc-guidance-stage-1-applications](#))
- [Finance guidance](#) ([/research-programme-social-care-rpsc-finance-guidance](#))
- [Frequently asked questions](#) ([/research-programme-social-care-rpsc-frequently-asked-questions](#))
- [RPSC Competition dates](#) ([/research-programme-social-care-competition-dates](#))

## Application form template

You can download a template of the application form below. Please use this template as a guide to help you prepare your application. This Word document of the Outline Application form is to be used as a guide only. It is designed to help you complete the online application form only. For example, to see how many characters are accepted in each section and to see how information in the form is laid out. Please do not try to use this as an application form. You must submit your application in our online application system which you can access by clicking on the 'Apply now' links when a funding opportunity is open.

(/media/21891/download/)

## RPSC-SAF-Template.docx

DOCX

Last updated: 13 September 2024

[Download document \(66.82 KB\)](#)

## How to apply

This competition opens on Tuesday 1 October 2024. The closing date is 15 January 2025 at 13:00.

When you are ready, you will need to log in to our Research Management System using the 'apply now' buttons on the Overview page of this funding opportunity.

If you are applying to the 'Areas of Research Interest 1: Early action to prevent poor health outcomes' highlight notice, please make this clear in the Research Plan section of your application.

## Pre-submission form

Applicants considering submitting a Stage 1 application may wish to submit an initial outline of their proposal for guidance using our [pre-submission form](https://forms.gle/JA4WShX6CKR3LqD47) (<https://forms.gle/JA4WShX6CKR3LqD47>). This is non-mandatory and purely aimed at helping potential applicants to engage with the requirements of the call (e.g. eligibility and remit). For other questions, contact [rpsc@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:rpsc@nihr.ac.uk) (<mailto:%20rpsc@nihr.ac.uk>)

## Contact Details

- For help with your application contact [rpsc@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:rpsc@nihr.ac.uk) (<mailto:rpsc@nihr.ac.uk>)
- For more information about the funding Programme, visit the [RPSC page](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/funding-programmes/research-programme-for-social-care.htm) (<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/funding-programmes/research-programme-for-social-care.htm>)
- Got a research idea and not sure how to turn it into a funding application? The free NIHR Research Support Service (RSS) supports researchers in England to apply for funding, and to develop and deliver clinical and applied health, social care and public health research post award. [Find out how the RSS can help you](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research-) (<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research->

[support-service/](#).