

Understanding NIHR Funding Programmes

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) is one of the UK's largest funders of health and care research. Its funding programmes support a wide range of activities, from early-stage research and evidence reviews through to large-scale clinical studies. Each programme has a specific purpose and is designed to address different research questions, stages of development, and areas of healthcare that directly benefit the NHS and the public.

This guide provides an overview of the main NIHR funding programmes and the types of research they are designed to support, helping you identify the best funding pathway.

Funding Programme	Opportunities per year	Details
Better Methods, Better Research (BMBR)	2 researcher-led calls	Funding for projects that improve research methodology. Helping future studies produce better and more reliable results.
Career Development Awards	Throughout the year	Supports researchers through funding, training, and career development opportunities.
Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME)	3 researcher-led and 3 commissioned calls	Funds clinical trials and research studies at TRL 3-6 to test whether a treatment, intervention, or approach works and helps improve patient care.
Evidence Synthesis (ES)	Researcher-led throughout the year	Supports research projects that identify, evaluate, and combine data from existing studies to inform health, public health, and social care decisions.
Health and Social Care Delivery Research (HSDR)	3 researcher-led and 3 commissioned calls	Supports research at TRL 3-6 that helps make health and social care services more effective, accessible, and efficient.
Health Technology Assessment (HTA)	3 researcher-led and 3 commissioned calls	Funds studies at TRL 6-9 that assess whether treatments, tests and healthcare interventions are effective, cost-effective, and suitable for wider use.
Invention for Innovation (i4i)	3 researcher-led opportunities and 2 commissioned FAST competitions	Supports the development of new medical devices, diagnostic tools, and digital health technologies at TRL 3-6 that address current or emerging health and care challenges.
Programme Grants for Applied Research (PGfAR)	3 researcher-led calls	Funds long-term, substantial research programmes at TRL 7-9 that are designed to improve health and social care services and deliver real benefits for patients and the public.
Public Health Research (PHR)	3 researcher-led and 3 commissioned calls	Funds research that helps improve health, prevent illness, and reduce health inequalities across communities.
Research Programme for Social Care (RfPB)	2 researcher-led calls and 1 commissioned call	Supports research that improves social care services and outcomes for care services, carers, and care providers.