

NIHR Flexibility and Sustainability Funding Guidance

Overview of NIHR FSF

NIHR Flexibility and Sustainability Funding (FSF) was introduced by Department of Health in 2008/09 in order to attract, develop and retain the research workforce necessary for delivering high quality health research. It is awarded to current or potential NIHR Faculty Members. NIHR Faculty members are individuals who conduct or support patient- or people-based research, and whose salary is funded in part or in whole from an NIHR funding stream, and who are employed by an NHS organisation or by a university. There are four categories of NIHR Faculty membership: Investigators, Senior Investigators, Associates¹ and Trainees.

NIHR FSF will only support salary costs: these can include direct (i.e. salary) and indirect (e.g. payroll, HR) costs. NIHR FSF can not be used for non-staff costs, such as equipment or running costs.

NIHR FSF is intended to support flexibility and sustainability in the Heart of England regions skilled workforce. It should not be used as the long-term, primary source of funding for any member of staff, and therefore NIHR FSF should be attached to an individual for a specified period of time.

Indicative Uses of NIHR FSF

NIHR FSF can be used by the CLRN to support the salary costs of the following:

1. The component of an NIHR Faculty member's salary which is not covered by other NIHR sources;
[Network-related FSF should support NIHR Associates. NIHR Associates are staff that are supporting Portfolio studies and therefore whose salary could be supported from both LRN/CLRN infrastructure funding and NIHR FSF. There must, however, be no 'double funding' of the same salary cost. NIHR FSF allocation would allow the LRN/CLRN to support these staff during periods of low portfolio activity (local or national), for instance]
2. New staff, who are expected to be Faculty members, but who have not yet obtained funding from the other NIHR sources;
[Network-related NIHR FSF could support people who are not yet fully active because they may not have the relevant experience but who have the potential to contribute to portfolio activity in the future in the

¹ NIHR Associates are those Faculty members who support research led by others. All individuals whose salary is funded (partly or wholly) by an NIHR Clinical Research Network are NIHR Associates, including clinicians recruiting patients to UKCRN Portfolio studies, research nurses (or equivalent for other health professions, e.g. physiotherapists, psychologists) and associated staff, and clinical support staff, e.g. pharmacy, imaging, and pathology staff.

view of the their Manager and Hub Executive agreement. This could relate to activity in areas of existing research activity and areas for development. It could also be used to provide training to allow staff to develop the skills to become research active]

3. Existing Faculty members who are “between grants”;
[It is expected that network staff will contribute to a number of studies in their specialty area or hospital/practice. The time spent supporting these studies may vary depending on a number of factors such as variations in numbers of eligible patients (planned and unplanned) and delays associated with studies closing before a new study opens. Network related NIHR FSF could provide funding to support network staff during less active periods and thus help maintain stability within the network workforce. This is applicable for any type of staff]
4. The time of Faculty members in contributing to the wider research endeavour (e.g. *involvement in Specialty Groups or Clinical Research/Studies Groups; contribution to other national groups or projects; provision of expert advice]*
5. The research-related time of NHS-employed administrative and secretarial staff that are supporting Faculty members in their NIHR-related work;

The process by which MHRN HoE Hub will allocate this resource during 2010/11 is as follows:

- The initial deadline for requests for funding will be **13th September 2010**.
- Requests for NIHR FSF should be made through submitting the application form provided.
- Funding will be provided for a maximum of one year.
- The funding is expected to be committed in the 2010/2011 financial year.
- All requests must be supported by the relevant Trusts(s)/Higher Education Institutions including confirmation that the funding has not been provided through alternative sources, and that the organisation will support delivery of the proposed initiative/post(s), **specifically if this is to fund sessions of staff time**.
- MHRN HoE Hubs Executive Board will consider all requests within the framework of the MHRNs/Hubs current and future priorities and strategy. Any Executive Group member who has been involved in making an application will be excluded from the decision making process for that request.
- Additional information may be requested from the applicant to ensure fair consideration.
- Additional expertise and advice with regard to specific requests will be drawn upon at the MHRN HoE Hubs discretion.

- Applicants will be notified of the Hub Executive Boards decisions by September 24th 2010.
- Individuals successfully awarded NIHR FSF will report to MHRN HoE Hub regarding its use and outcomes on at least an annual basis at the Hub's request.
- The allocation of NIHR FSF will be reported to the NIHR CRN CC by the MHRN HoE Hub as part of their year end financial reporting process.