

NIHR Three Research Schools' Mental Health Programme

Improving mental health and wellbeing in underserved populations through collaborative research

Follow-on Funding for Phase 1 award holders

RESEARCH BRIEF

The NIHR Schools for Primary Care Research (SPCR), Public Health Research (SPHR) and Social Care Research (SSCR) (“three schools”) have joined together in a unique collaboration between leading academic centres in England to collaborate on three programmes of work funded through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR): one on mental health led by SPCR, the second on dementia led by SSCR and the third on prevention led by SPHR.

Background:

At least one in four people experience mental health problems, many of whom never access care and treatment. There are also large numbers of people with learning disability (prevalence c.2%) and autism (prevalence c.1%). Mental health problems, learning disabilities and autism generate challenges for individuals with these conditions, their families and the wider society, with often quite high utilisation of health, social care and other services. Those challenges are seen across the life course.

The impacts of mental health problems on individuals and the wider societal and economic consequences are multiple and vast and include above-average rates of concurrent physical illnesses, shortened life expectancy, social exclusion, socioeconomic disadvantage, and the need for health and welfare support. Despite the high prevalence, many people do not receive the support they need and there are significant inequalities in access. These underserved groups include, but are not limited to, people with learning disabilities, older people, parts of the autistic and neurodiverse community, people from Black and other ethnic minority backgrounds. There are also other geographical, demographic and socioeconomic inequalities which this call addresses.

By working collaboratively across primary care, public health and social care, we aim to address problems in a multi-professional, multi-disciplinary way and at the individual, family, group and population levels using a variety of methodological approaches. Research will be underpinned by strong and diverse public, carer, service user and patient, and, as appropriate, practitioner involvement and engagement. Our research will prioritise those groups with high needs for treatment and support, and that have been underserved by research to date.

The requirement:

Phase 1 of funding awarded to the [Three NIHR Research Schools' Mental Health Programme](#) has supported 53 projects. Funding was awarded to a diverse range of partners, including practitioners, local authorities and those working in the third sector. Funding also achieved a wide geographical reach, actively working with populations and communities not traditionally engaged in research.

Research funding in phase 2 would build on our early successes, supporting the implementation of evidence into practice and policy. As part of our second year monitoring, we identified a number of areas that are not significantly represented in phase 1. These include suicide prevention in high-risk groups (including those working in the agricultural sector and young men), mental health in pregnancy, prison mental health, mental health in

different religious groups and mental health in military veterans, but applications are not limited to these areas.

The Opportunity

Follow on funding is available for phase 1 grant holders to support them to apply for more significant grant funding. We anticipate funding up to 9 of these awards.

What the funding offers:

This provides the opportunity for Three NIHR Research Schools' Mental Health Programme Phase 1 award holders to:

- Collaborate with leading health and care researchers, practitioners, public, patient, service user, and carers in the creation of small preparatory activities. These activities will serve as a foundation for larger research proposals such as NIHR Programme Grant for Applied Research, Social Care, Public Health, Health Technology Assessment or the HSDR Programmes.
- Generate and share innovative research ideas arising from their Phase 1 award, contributing to more effective national policies and practices.
- Explore the potential for replicating innovative interventions in other geographical areas.

Funding:

The maximum budget for each proposal is £50,000 for this call. The Programme will fund:

- 100% of the directly incurred staff time on the project
- 100% of the directly allocated staff time on the project
- Overhead of 30% of the directly incurred staff cost
- Overhead of 30% of the directly allocated staff time cost
- 100% of the directly incurred non-pay items

Awards can be of any duration but **STRICTLY** must not extend beyond **31 March 2026**.

Applications should be emailed to c.ashmore@keele.ac.uk by **Thursday 28 March 2024 no later than 3.30pm**.

TIMETABLE

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| Monday 19 February 2024 | Competition launch |
| Thursday 28 March 2024 at 3.30pm | Closing date for submission of applications |
| Friday 8 May 2024 | Panel meeting to discuss applications |
| May 2024 | Competition outcomes to be announced |
| June 2024 | Awards may start from this date |