

# Trainees Handbook



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# Welcome

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the NIHR School for Primary Care Research, a unique family dedicated to improving primary health care for patients through research excellence.

Since our inception almost two decades ago we have been committed to training and supporting the next generation of primary care researchers. Our multi-disciplinary focus provides the perfect learning environment that is strongly supported by the unique collaboration of the top nine English departments of primary care.

In addition to being a member of the wider NIHR Academy you will also be able to access a wide range of resources to enhance your training and development through the School and your department. Each host institution has a named training lead to support your transition towards an independent academic career. You will work with leading primary care investigators who are committed to helping you develop as a primary care researcher. I hope you enjoy your time as an NIHR SPCR student or fellow. Make the most of the available opportunities and we look forward to hearing about all your future success stories.

*Professor Christian Mallen Director of the NIHR School for Primary Care Research*

## Overview

Established in 2006, with latest membership revised in 2021, the NIHR School for Primary Care Research is a partnership between nine leading academic centres for primary care research in England. Bringing together academics and practitioners from across the country, the School collaborates on cutting edge, topical primary care studies that have an impact both at policy level and in primary care settings around the country. Our partners are based in primary care departments at the [University of Bristol](#), [University of Exeter](#), [Keele University](#), [University of Manchester](#), [University of Nottingham](#), [University of Oxford](#), [Queen Mary University London](#), the [University of Southampton](#), and [University College London](#).

In addition to conducting high profile research, we attract the best researchers into our capacity programme and offer trainees support and networking opportunities through an extensive training and events programme.

## Being a member of the School for Primary Care Research

### Public involvement and engagement

Public Involvement and engagement are integral to the School's research and research capacity development activities and is informed by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)'s policy for patient involvement. Members of the public with an interest in research are encouraged and supported to work in

partnership with researchers on projects carried out across the NIHR School for Primary Care Research. Public partners bring particular knowledge and insights to research based on personal experiences as users of health care services and treatments. Our purpose in working with the public is to improve the quality and relevance of the research that we fund, and to raise public awareness of our research.

The '[Patient and Public](#)' pages on the SPCR website are a useful source of information about public involvement and engagement. They contain helpful resources to help you get started, plan for involvement and engagement, and provide useful tools for evaluating and reporting on these activities. The website also provides links to practical support and provides contact details for each of the SPCR Member Department's PPIE Leads who can signpost you to local guidance and provide support and advice for involvement and engagement activities locally. Several case studies focused on public involvement and engagement have also been published on the website [Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement Case Studies](#) can be found on the SPCR [website](#).

### Reporting

As a SPCR trainee you are expected to:

- Attend the annual School trainees' meeting in September of each year of your award and present your research in progress.
- Complete progress reports twice a year on your research and training and complete a final report at the end of your award with follow ups in [ResearchFish](#).
- Inform the School Directorate team when you have a publication (see section on Communicating your research).
- Inform the School Directorate team if there is any change to your project or personal circumstances.

### Award finance

- Trainees and local Research Managers should be in regular discussion about non pay expenditure and forecasts. The Directorate must be notified at the earliest opportunity when a trainee goes on maternity leave, parental leave, and sick leave. Requests to change FTE, or switch to part time should be submitted to the SPCR Senior Programme Manager for approval.
- Award holders are expected to cover travel and subsistence costs for attendance at the annual trainees event from their personal award research costs budget allocation.

### ORCID Registration

The NIHR is an ORCID member and requires all its funded researchers to hold an ORCID iD; this persistent digital identifier distinguishes individual researchers: <https://orcid.org/>

### Researchfish

The NIHR uses [Researchfish](#) to monitor the impact of funded research. The data submitted allows the NIHR and the SPCR to demonstrate the difference that your funded health research project has made to the health and wealth of the nation. It allows the NIHR to advocate continued research funding and evaluate the most effective ways to allocate it. The SPCR asks SPCR personal award holders to report annually via

ResearchFish: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding-and-support/funding-for-research-studies/manage-my-study/my-researchfish-submission.htm>

### Communicating your research

All researchers and trainees publishing or presenting work in any form are required by the NIHR to use the correct funding acknowledgement and disclaimer. This and other branding guidelines can be found on the School's website <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/Guidance>

### Press

Press releases are to include the NIHR boilerplate which is available on the [website](#). Draft press releases must be sent, via the SPCR Communications Officer to the NIHR for comment at least 28 days before they are released.

### NIHR SPCR Socials

When using socials to promote research please include the following handles where relevant. You may also wish to follow us to stay updated about our latest news, publications and funding:

- X (Formally known as Twitter) [@NIHRSPCR](#)
- LinkedIn: [NIHR School for Primary Care Research](#)
- YouTube: [@NIHRSPCR](#)

### Open Access

The SPCR funds open access fees for the primary publication from your research if there is no other funding source available in line with our Open Access policy: <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/open-access-process>

### Presentations

The SPCR PowerPoint and poster templates are designed to be used to represent all School funded work. These templates are available on the [website](#).

## SPCR training and development opportunities

### SPCR annual trainees' event

The SPCR Annual Trainees' Event encourages networking, research development and enhances a sense of belonging to the School and to the wider NIHR infrastructure. Trainees are given opportunities to learn about the scope of multidisciplinary research skills, methods and perspectives from lectures and discussions. Small interactive sessions help to develop presentation skills in a facilitated and supportive environment. Trainees are also exposed to research from different disciplines and departments within the NIHR and the wider academic primary care environment. The event provides trainees with the opportunity to meet new and existing members and network with colleagues across the School, present their work in a supportive, constructive environment and learn about innovative research from peers, increase understanding of cross

disciplinary collaboration and learn about further funding and training opportunities offered by the School and NIHR and beyond.

### [Transdisciplinary Understanding on Research - Primary Health Care \(TUTOR PHC\)](#)

TUTOR-PHC is a one-year, pan-Canadian, interdisciplinary research capacity building program that has been training primary and integrated health care researchers and decision-makers from family medicine, nursing, psychology, epidemiology, social work, education, policy and many other disciplines since 2003. The SPCR has a competition in January each year to select and fund one place. <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/tutor-phc>

### [Writers' retreat](#)

A two-day off-site retreat for PhD students dedicated to time to progress writing projects/reports etc. in a supportive, non-surveillance environment. Example projects include book chapters, journal articles, research proposals and reports. Most of the time is used for writing, with everyone in the same room. Brief scheduled discussions between writing slots often generate solutions to writing problems, develop drafts, lead to research-orientated conversations and provide feedback on writing in-progress.

### [Masterclass Series](#)

These sessions are designed for SPCR Trainees, research award holders and wider members of the Schools and offer the opportunity for Trainees to expand their research skills and knowledge. The SPCR Masterclass series sessions are led by experienced researchers and theme leads and are offered on a range of topics from Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement, Big Data and Methodology, Grant Writing to What to do when things go wrong! <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/SPCRmasterclasses>

### [Oxford primary care research leadership programme](#)

The programme aims to foster and develop future leaders in primary care research. Designed to explore different aspects of leadership, participants are encouraged to identify their own development needs and form peer learning groups. Participants have access to current leaders and experts in strategic leadership. The SPCR part-funds up to two places per year.

<https://www.phc.ox.ac.uk/study/primary-care-research-leadership-programme/primary-care-research-leadership-programme>

### [SPCR personal awards](#)

The 'Career Development' section of the SPCR website has links to the following awards:

<https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/funding>

### [Primary Care Clinicians career progression awards](#)

With an increasing demand for part-time academic training from clinicians who do not wish to lose clinical competencies, we have introduced part-time Primary Care Clinicians Career Progression awards.

### Post Doctoral Fellowship awards

Available to those with some previous research experience, such as those who have worked as research associates in primary care research. The aim of these fellowships is for the fellow to follow an independent research project, publish their research and prepare grant applications to secure future funding (e.g. an NIHR fellowship).

### PhD/DPhil studentship awards

Available to those with limited primary care experience (e.g. Masters-level training). The awards offer traditional project-specific training in shortage areas of particular importance to primary care. They focus on non-clinical disciplines (e.g. medical statistics, health economics, health psychology). The award covers stipend, tuition fees, and funds for research, training and development.

### Primary Care Clinicians PhD Programme

These Wellcome funded PhDs support Primary Care Clinicians to study for a PhD whilst maintaining their clinician competencies. Studentships are awarded to clinicians from all disciplines working in UK primary care, for example: practice nurses; health visitors; dentists, primary care pharmacists; optometrists working in primary care and general practitioners: <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/doctoral-training-programme-for-primary-care-clinicians>

## NIHR SPCR Research funding opportunities

The SPCR runs funding competitions alongside its trainee programme. Some of these may be of interest to you and you should talk to the Training Lead or Research Manager within your member to ensure you receive updates on these opportunities. These include small grants for early career researchers as well as seed corn or bridging awards to support researchers between other funding streams or as they prepare funding applications.

### NIHR Academy funding and opportunities

- [Academic Career Development in NIHR Infrastructure and NIHR Schools | NIHR](#)
- [Additional training and development support | NIHR](#)

### NIHR Doctoral research training camp

A three-day intense annual event for NIHR Trainees. The event includes workshops, presentations from guest speakers who have established research careers and poster presentations and opportunities for networking and mentoring. This is an important opportunity for early career researchers and attendance is by competition through the School in February each year: <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/NIHR-doctoral-training>

### NIHR Short placement awards for research collaboration

The NIHR Short Placement Award for Research Collaboration (NIHR SPARC) Scheme offers NIHR Academy members (from pre-doctoral to early career postdoctoral researchers) supported by a part of NIHR

Infrastructure, a Health Protection Research Unit or an NIHR School an opportunity to spend time in other parts of the NIHR to network, train in a specific skill or collaborate with other researchers/specialists. Individuals can apply to the SPARC scheme for up to £15,000 to undertake a bespoke short placement designed to optimise and enhance their research training experience, CVs and academic careers.

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/>

### Society for Academic Primary Care

The Society for Academic Primary Care (SAPC) has a Primary Health Care Scientists (PHoCuS) group to understand and address the career development needs of members who do not come from a medically qualified background: <https://sapc.ac.uk/article/primary-health-care-scientists-phocus>

SAPC hosts and supports several Special Interest Groups (SIGs). SIGs are an important part of SAPC's work to achieve impact through collaboration: <https://sapc.ac.uk/special-interest-groups>

## About the NIHR

- <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/who-we-are/>
- <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-do/>
- <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/our-impact/>

### Key contacts within the SPCR

Training Leads for each member department, important, local points of call for SPCR Capacity award holders, Directorate team, Member Research Managers, Board Members and PPI leads details can all be found on the following page <https://www.spcr.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/Who-we-are>

## Glossary of terms

The NIHR has a very useful glossary which includes regularly used terms which you may find useful:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/glossary.htm>

Some additional terms we use within the School are:

### Membership

The School for Primary Care Research is a partnership between departments at 9 universities (host institutions), collectively referred to as the '**membership**'

The term **member** or **member department** is used to refer to any of the individual departments/host institutions. It's important to note that membership of the school is not institution wide and applies only to staff/students within certain departments or research groups.



## Training Leads

The role of the SPCR training lead is to act as a central point of contact for SPCR Trainees and to disseminate relevant opportunities and information to them;

- To provide trainees with support where required for example in identifying a mentor
- To represent the trainees voice at the Training Leads Forum

## Academic Capacity Development Leads

The programme is overseen by two Academic Capacity Development Leads, Steph Taylor and Hazel Everitt. They oversee funding decisions and are responsible for ensuring the programme offers the right level of support to the trainee community. They play an active roll in the school and you will meet them at the annual trainee event as well as the PhD writers retreat.

## Research Managers

The role of the Research Manager is to oversee all SPCR awards that are held by the member department. They should be the person you contact if you have queries about your award, how to access any research costs and to let you know about local departmental procedures and policies that may affect you. They should also be able to signpost you to any institutional services you may require or let you know where to get advice on HR issues.