

Investigator Initiated Commercially Funded Research Studies (IIT) award guidance 2023/2024

The Award

NIHR Clinical Research Network North East and North Cumbria (CRN NENC) aims to:

- Increase the volume of Investigator Initiated Commercially Funded Research Studies (IITs) taking place across the region.
- Support the development of new Chief Investigators

An IIT (Investigator Initiated Trial) is a study led by an Investigators (e.g. NHS, University, Public Health or Social Care staff) with research funding (e.g. financial/equipment/software) provided by a commercial organisation specifically to support that study. NHS IITs are often supported by a commercial company such as a pharmaceutical, biotechnology or devices company. However, for non-NHS settings it could be any type of commercial organisation that provides support via the funding described. For IITs, an NHS Trust or other non-commercial organisation (e.g. University or Local Authority) is the Sponsor of the study.

Since 2017/2018 the CRN NENC Executive Board and MedConnect North have funded a total of 26 IIT projects. The awards aimed to ensure that individuals had recognition of work done to develop IIT research and supported the development of portfolio adopted IITs. In the short term this brought benefit in the form of recruitment and investment and has helped develop research skills, involvement and engagement with portfolio research. In the longer term we want to further support the development of applicants; specifically to facilitate future CI trials that lead to larger grant-funded or commercially funded projects.

Consequently, the NENC Executive Board and MedConnect North have agreed to run the scheme again. 5 awards of £5,000 will be available to support the development of new IITs, or to support the progression from current or recent IIT to research council funded or commercially sponsored study.

One of the awards is sponsored by MedConnect North and seeks to support an investigator working on a Medical Technology product.

Applications are open to anyone involved in health or social care research including previous applicants. Where an award was received in any of the previous years, applicants

are expected to outline the next steps and detail how further funding will be used towards a larger study.

The award will be for a period of 12 months from April 2023 with funding provided to support the scheme up front. We will treat the award as being fully spent in-year however it is up to partner organisations how it is used to support the 12 month programme.

Criteria

This is a competitive funding award assessed against the following criteria:

Essential	Desirable
The lead applicant is a professional in the CRN NENC region working in a Health, Public Health, Social Care or Academic setting	Unfunded to do research/without adequate Chief Investigator (CI) time included in any commercial grant/remuneration
Formed research idea	Development of previously supported feasibility study (if applicable)
Partner/funding agreed (commercial company) and written documentation of their funding contribution.	
Proposed study to run in an NENC Partner Organisation, Public Health or Social Care setting.	Multi-site within NENC

Support available

As part of the scheme, support will be available to help with completion of the award application. Please email nencstudies@nihr.ac.uk if you want to access support with your application.

In addition, we are hosting a [drop-in session on Microsoft Teams, 15th February 1-2pm](#), where you can join Clinical Lead, Stuart Watson and members of the MedConnect North and CRN teams - to ask any questions and to seek further help and guidance if required.

For Medical Technology studies, additional support will be provided from the [MedConnect North](#) Service including Research Operations Manager and Project Manager to assist with study design, grant writing and liaising with R & D. The MedConnect North Team can also make introductions to a Methodologist and Statistician if required (although there may be a cost for this time if anything other than a high level review is required).

Expected outcomes

Increased research capacity via development of new, or progression from existing, IITs that have the potential to be adopted onto the NIHR Portfolio at the end of 12 months.

Applications

Applications will be via an [online form](#) and will require details of the proposal, how it meets the above criteria.

A panel will review and assess applications against the criteria outlined above and will also discuss with relevant R&D Managers/Directors from applicants' host organisation before confirming outcomes.

Timelines for Applications

Activity	Date
Competition advertised and open to applications	30/01/2023
Closing date for applications	10/03/2023
Decision by panel on successful applications	W/C 20/03/2023
Funding sent out	W/C 03/04/2023
6 month progress review	September 2023
Protocol Approval/Study Set-up due by	March 2024
Final Review	March 2024

[The application form can be found here.](#)