



NIHR Health Technology  
Assessment programme



*National Institute for  
Health Research*

# Funding, supporting and publishing HTA research



# Commissioned research

The work of the National Institute for Health Research Health Technology Assessment (NIHR HTA) programme is led by the needs of the NHS. The programme's commissioned funding route is one method used to help deliver this.

The commissioning process ensures that research:

- is well designed
- is capable of being competently executed
- answers identified research needs
- uses cost-effective protocols.

## Application

Agreed topics for research are advertised four times a year and researchers are invited to submit a research proposal for review by the HTA Commissioning Board. Applicants are guided by commissioning briefs that are drawn up to support the advert and contain full information about the topic. These are made available on the HTA programme website when a call for research proposals opens.

## Proposal stage

Primary research submissions are first made in outline. Shortlisted research teams are then invited to submit more detailed full proposals for further consideration by the Board. Full proposals are also peer-reviewed by at least four external referees. For evidence synthesis, full proposals are usually invited from the start.

The Commissioning Board is made up of around 20 senior academics and considers research proposals submitted in response to calls for research proposals. It assesses them for:

- scientific merit
- feasibility
- value for money.

For more details visit [www.hta.ac.uk/funding/standardcalls](http://www.hta.ac.uk/funding/standardcalls)



Sign up to receive email alerts notifying you when a new call opens, email: [hta@hta.ac.uk](mailto:hta@hta.ac.uk)

# Researcher-led funding stream

## The HTA Clinical Evaluation and Trials Commissioning Board

HTA Clinical Evaluation and Trials board, considers applications for evaluation studies falling within the remit of the HTA programme. This includes:

- feasibility studies, which can show a clear route to a full trial
- pilot studies, which can show a clear route to a full trial
- proposals for evidence synthesis
- clinical trials that address questions of direct relevance to clinical practice in the NHS and have outcomes that matter to patients.

## Application

Researchers are invited to submit outline research proposals on an ongoing basis. Outline proposals are considered by the Advisory Panels, which assesses these for their importance to the NHS, and then by the HTA Clinical Evaluation and Trials Board which looks at the scientific quality and value for money of the proposal.

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to submit a full proposal to the Board. Full proposals are peer-reviewed by at least four referees external to the HTA programme.

There are four cut-off deadlines a year

and proposals received by the stated deadline will be considered in the next available assessment cycle.

## Themed Calls

The HTA programme also provides funding through its researcher-led workstream for research (primary, methodological or evidence synthesis) in specific themed areas, where it has been identified that there is a particular need for evidence. Calls for outline proposals are advertised, typically, on a yearly basis.

## Funding

Funding recommendations for all funding streams are made to the HTA Prioritisation Strategy Group who consider these and make a final funding decision. Its role is to ensure the best mix between the priority of the topic area and the quality of the proposal. It assesses the likely delivery to the NHS of valuable information, whilst scrutinising the cost of projects. Its decisions are final and cannot be appealed.



## Collaboration

The HTA programme maintains constant communication with other research organisations to ensure that:

- priority topics are not already covered by existing research activity
- research questions are not already covered by existing research activity
- other organisations are kept informed about existing HTA research activity.

Research applications successful in receiving funding from the HTA programme enter the monitoring process once contracted.

## NICE Technology Appraisals

In addition, the HTA programme also commissions Technology Assessment Reports on behalf of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). These reviews form the scientific evidence base for each NICE appraisal by looking at the clinical and cost-effectiveness of the technology being assessed.

## Supporting HTA research

The HTA programme is one of only a small number of national research programmes with a pro-active monitoring process. This provides support for projects commissioned by the programme in starting-up, progressing their research, and presenting their findings in a draft

final report.

The monitoring team liaises with the project teams during start-up and throughout the active research phase to the receipt of the draft final report, to ensure that:

- contracts are signed and exchanged
- approvals are gained and staff appointed
- appropriate management structures are established
- project management tools are developed and used
- achievements are analysed to monitor progress
- recruitment and follow-up targets are identified
- any need for additional resources is identified
- the draft final report meets all requirements.

### This is done through:

- initial contract advice
- project welcome meetings - which provide a forum for discussing potential issues and sharing information and ideas at the onset of the project
- progress reports on a six monthly basis
- on site visits
- expert input from senior clinical HTA programme staff.

## The editorial process

Research projects are contractually obliged to submit a draft final report for inclusion in the influential Health Technology Assessment journal series.

The journal is indexed on MEDLINE, EMBASE and the ISI Science Citation Index, and assessed for inclusion in the Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effectiveness.

Before a draft final report is published it is peer-reviewed by at least four relevant experts to ensure scientific integrity and quality standards.

An editor will review the referee's comments and the draft version of the report and feedback is given to the author. Ideally, this will take place within two months of receipt of the draft final report. The team is invited to resubmit their revised report within four weeks. There may be a further round of editorial review before the report is sent to the publisher.

Once the report is signed off by the editor it is copy edited and typeset for printing and viewing online by HTA's contracted publisher. This process commonly takes 21-27 weeks. During this time the team will receive a set of final proofs for approval.

## Disseminating the findings

Under the contract between the HTA programme and a research team, copyright for all outputs from the project is assigned to the Crown. The journal can therefore be freely reproduced for the purposes of private research, and extracts (or the full report) may be included in professional journals, provided acknowledgement is made and the reproduction is not associated with any form of advertising. Visit [www.hta.ac.uk/faq/copyright.htm](http://www.hta.ac.uk/faq/copyright.htm)

HTA journal titles are available to download for free from the website. Printed copies cost £20 and can be ordered at [www.hta.ac.uk/research/howtogetareport.shtml](http://www.hta.ac.uk/research/howtogetareport.shtml).

All titles are also included on the HTA programme's DVD, available free at [www.hta.ac.uk/htaoncd](http://www.hta.ac.uk/htaoncd)



# NIHR Trial Manager Network

The NIHR Trial Managers Network (TMN) is run by trial managers for trial managers. The TMN has been primarily developed to facilitate the sharing of expertise and knowledge in order to implement best practice in the management of clinical trials. All Trial Managers employed on NIHR trials are eligible for free membership to the NIHR Trial Managers Network (TMN), and are strongly encouraged to join.

For more information, please visit: [www.tmn.ac.uk](http://www.tmn.ac.uk)  
or email: [nihrtmn@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:nihrtmn@leeds.ac.uk).

## Further information

For the latest information on our work, details of application deadlines and support when making an application please:

Visit: [www.hta.ac.uk](http://www.hta.ac.uk)

Email: [hta@hta.ac.uk](mailto:hta@hta.ac.uk)

Tel: +44 (0)23 8059 5586

The HTA programme is managed by the NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC, HTA), based at the University of Southampton.



This leaflet is for information purposes only and does not constitute a contract or intent to enter into a contract. The information contained is assured to be correct up January 2012 (version 2).

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