

## NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) support for NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) funded and supported studies

### 1.1. Introduction

The [NIHR Clinical Research Network \(NIHR CRN\)](#) supports researchers and the life sciences industry to deliver high quality research in both the NHS and the wider health and social care environment across England, through its [Study Support Service](#), and by providing [NHS Support as defined by AcoRD](#). Support is granted to studies that fulfil the requirements of the [Department of Health and Social Care Eligibility Criteria for NIHR CRN Support](#) (Eligibility Criteria).

The NIHR also provides research infrastructure in the NHS through a number of dedicated [NIHR centres and facilities](#) which support early translational (experimental medicine) research and clinical and [applied health research](#). Studies which are fully funded by this NIHR Research Infrastructure, and within the contracted NHS/ University partnership and formal partners, do not require additional support from the NIHR CRN unless:

- They are delivering in multiple centres (i.e. centres not the contracted NHS/ University partnership and formal partners)
- They have additional funding awarded from NIHR research programmes, NIHR's Non-commercial Partners, Research Councils or other areas of central government.

The purpose of this paper is to confirm the position on the provision of NIHR CRN support for NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) funded and supported studies and outline the implementation process.

### 1.2 Implementation guidance

1.2.1. In line with other NIHR infrastructure awards, NIHR ARC awards include funding for the NHS Support Costs, or equivalent in non-NHS settings (as defined by [AcoRD](#)), of people- and/or patient-focused applied health and care research that is integral to NIHR ARC's work programme. Therefore, as per section 3.23 of the Eligibility Criteria (Jan 2018), studies which are fully funded by NIHR ARC awards and which are taking place solely within the NHS/University partnership that holds the contract and/or formal partner organisations should be appropriately costed so as not to require additional NIHR infrastructure support from the NIHR CRN.

1.2.2. However 'additional' NIHR Infrastructure support may be granted in two situations as outlined below and in sections 3.24 and 3.25 of the Eligibility Criteria (Jan 2018)

1.2.2.1. Multi-centre non-commercial research, funded and supported by an NIHR ARC award may require 'additional' NIHR Infrastructure support via the NIHR CRN if additional collaborating site/s (i.e. not the contracted NHS/ University partnership and/or formal partners) are involved in study activities (e.g. recruitment) that cannot reasonably be covered by the NIHR ARC. For instance, it is accepted that if a study funded by the Wessex ARC needs to recruit from additional sites in London and Manchester, in order to meet recruitment targets, Wessex ARC staff cannot be expected to travel to these additional sites, therefore NIHR CRN support can be granted to support recruitment in London and Manchester.

- Note: Where two ARCs are collaborating to deliver a study, CRN Support may be extended to sites within the remit of the collaborating ARC(s) if required. The need for support at collaborating ARC sites will be determined locally<sup>1</sup>.

1.2.2.2. In addition, where studies conducted in/led by NIHR ARCs are in receipt of funding from other NIHR research programmes, NIHR Non-commercial Partners or other areas of central government (including research councils), NHS Support Costs may be sought from the NIHR CRN. However NHS Support Costs for single centre investigated-initiated or industry-collaborative research, and research funded by overseas organisations or ineligible funding streams, should be met through the NIHR ARC award (as outlined in the guidance issued by Central Commissioning Facility).

1.2.3. During the eligibility review, the NIHR CRN Coordinating Centre will consider whether NIHR ARC supported studies require additional NIHR CRN support and seek clarification from local CRNs if required.

1.2.4. Where support is required for multi-centre non-commercial studies funded by an NIHR ARC award, ARC funding will be considered eligible subject to sponsor confirmation that peer review in line with Eligibility Criteria has taken place.

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<sup>1</sup> ARC-ARC collaboration is actively encouraged to deliver high quality research. In some cases collaborations may have been established prior to confirmation of ARC status and NHS support costs, and equivalent in non-NHS settings, for the proposed collaborative work included in the final ARC award. However, this information is not available to the NIHR CRNCC so the actual requirement for CRN support will need to be monitored at the local level by local CRNs.

1.2.5. NIHR ARC led studies deemed eligible for 'additional' NIHR support from the CRN will be added to the NIHR CRN Portfolio. Recruitment data should be provided for all UK sites (i.e. both the CRN and the NIHR ARC supported sites) and mapped in line with guidance.

1.2.6. Where possible NIHR ARC studies that require CRN support should submit an application before opening via the standard IRAS linked application process ("Route 1"). However it is recognised that the requirement for CRN support may change during the lifecycle of the study, for example an NIHR ARC study may need to open in new CRN supported sites to achieve the study's recruitment target or may secure additional funding. In such cases a manual application may be submitted to the Portfolio Eligibility Team in the NIHR CC with evidence of all available funding, study protocol, evidence of appropriate approvals and the IRAS Form, following discussion with the Lead LCRN ("Route 4" - open NIHR infrastructure supported studies).

### 1.3 FAQ

The following FAQ is provided to support understanding of when additional NIHR support may be available through the NIHR CRN.

#### **My study is funded and supported by an NIHR Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) is it eligible for NIHR Clinical Research Network support?**

Funding for NIHR Applied Research Collaborations (ARCs) is "self-contained" i.e. funding for both research costs and NHS infrastructure for research (including NHS Support costs) are included in the award. The funding goes directly to the contracted NHS/University partnership and formal partners in each of these NHS/University collaborations. Studies which are fully funded as part of an ARC programme, and within the contracted NHS/University partnership and formal partners, will not therefore require additional research infrastructure support from the NIHR CRN.

Multi-centre<sup>2</sup>, non-commercial, ARC studies, may require NIHR Clinical Research Network support if an additional collaborating site/s (i.e. not the contracted NHS/University partnership and formal partners) is involved and requires support.

In addition, where studies conducted in/led by NIHR ARCs are in receipt of funding from other NIHR research programmes, NIHR Non-commercial Partners or other areas of central government (including research councils), support, including NHS Support Costs, may be sought from the NIHR CRN. Please note that this does not extend to single centre investigated-initiated or industry-collaborative research, and

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<sup>2</sup> This includes ARC-ARC collaborations

research funded by overseas organisations or ineligible funding streams. The NHS Support Costs for these should be met through the NIHR ARC award.

NIHR ARC led studies deemed eligible for 'additional' NIHR support from the CRN will be added to the NIHR CRN Portfolio. Recruitment data should be provided for all UK sites (i.e. both the CRN and the contracted NHS/ University partnership and formal partners - ARC sites) and mapped in line with guidance.

It is recognised that the requirement for NIHR CRN support may change during the lifecycle of the study, for example a fully funded ARC study (within the contracted NHS/ University partnership and formal partners) may need to open in new CRN supported sites to achieve the study's recruitment target. Should this situation arise an application for NIHR CRN support should be made following discussion with the local CRN.