ARC KSS COVID-19 response projects funding call

Guidance Notes

This information is intended for those interested in applying for the ARC KSS COVID-19 response project funding call

April 2020

Contents
Section 1 – Background of NIHR and NIHR ARCs................................................................. 2
Section 2 – Funding call aim, criteria and further information ............................................. 3
Section 3 – Funding available and co-funding.......................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Section 4 – How to apply............................................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Section 5 – Further information....................................................................................... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Section 1 – Background of NIHR and NIHR ARCs

1.1 What is NIHR?
The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is the nation’s largest funder of health and care research and provides the people, facilities and technology that enables research to thrive.

NIHR’s mission is to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. The NIHR was established in 2006 and is primarily funded by the Department of Health and Social Care.

Working in partnership with the NHS, universities, local government, other research funders, patients and the public, the NIHR delivers and enables world-class research that transforms people’s lives, promotes economic growth and advances science.

1.2 What are ARCs?
NIHR Applied Research Collaborations (ARCs) support applied health and care research that responds to, and meets, the needs of local populations and local health and care systems.

The NIHR ARC Kent, Surrey and Sussex is one of 15 ARCs across England, part of a £135 million investment by the NIHR to improve the health and care of patients and the public.

Each NIHR ARC is made up of local providers of NHS services, local providers of care services, NHS commissioners, local authorities, universities, private companies and charities. These collaborations work together to conduct high quality, generalisable, applied health and care research that addresses the specific health or care issues in their region.

NIHR ARCs also act to close the second translational gap and increase the rate at which research findings are implemented into practice.

The 15 ARCs work collaboratively to address national research priorities, with individual ARCs providing national leadership in their areas of expertise.

- Find out more about ARCs

1.3 What is ARC KSS?
The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration Kent, Surrey and Sussex (ARC KSS) brings together NHS Trusts, local authorities, universities, communities and other partners to stimulate changes through applied research in health and social care for people living in the South East of England and nationally.

Led by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Professor Stephen Peckham as Director from the University of Kent, our aim is to improve the quality, quantity and relevance of health and social care research in the area.

The ARC KSS aims to provide transforming infrastructure for the region to enable impactful research implemented into practice. To do this we will provide co-ordination, facilitation, management and support for the three core activities: **Capacity building in health and social care research, supporting and conducting applied research and supporting the implementation of findings into practices locally, regionally and nationally.**

ARC KSS is committed to ensure all our research engages with local communities, patients and the wider public.
Section 2 – Funding call aim, criteria and further information

2.1 What is the aim of this funding call?
ARC KSS is keen to fund projects that show potential to change practice for the benefit of the public, patients, service users and/or service providers. Project should involve an intervention or new way of providing care in the current COVID-19 environment. Projects should aim to assess the intervention or change in care to demonstrate outcomes and potential benefits for services users, service providers, commissioners and stakeholders. Projects should also inform how best to implement the intervention to support its use in everyday practice. Projects should have a focus on implementation and within timescales relevant to the COVID-19 response. Hence projects need to be initiated rapidly and make a difference in the short term with the ability to feed in useful or partial findings within a 3 month timeframe. Longer term evidence might support continued use of interventions beyond the current situation to benefit services.

2.3 What are the criteria for applications for project funding?
- Projects must be undertaken within an ARC KSS member organisation or by a member of staff from an ARC KSS member organisation.
- Up to £20,000 (inclusive of 25% co-funding) will be awarded to individual projects over a maximum duration of 6 months. The maximum funding awarded by ARC KSS will be £15,000
- Projects must start as close as possible to 1st June 2020
- Based upon existing, preliminary or pilot evidence, projects will test an intervention or new way of providing care to evaluate changes in outcomes for patients or care users and local services in regard to the COVID-19 situation.
- The project should focus on supporting local services – particularly those in community settings, to provide effective services in response to COVID-19 for people living in Kent, Surrey and Sussex demonstrating potential benefit and impact for local communities and the public, the NHS, health and social care providers.
- Projects should align where possible to one or more of the ARC KSS research themes:
  - Social care: person-centred, community based social care
  - Starting Well: Early detection and Intervention of Mental Health Problems in Children and Young People
  - Primary and Community Health Services: Sustainable and integrated care focusing on people with chronic conditions and marginalised groups
  - Dementia: Living Well with Dementia
  - Co-production: Involving and working with patients and the public to produce relevant research
  - Public Health: Improving health and reducing need among older patients with multiple conditions and younger people at time of transition
  - Digital Innovation: Harnessing digital technology to help create a sustainable health and social care system
  - Health and Social Care Economics: using best practice to efficiently fund health and social care services of benefit to patients

2.4 What will not be funded?
The following will not be funded under this call:
- Evaluation projects that have no scope to influence the conduct of day-to-day practice;
- Research in ‘controlled’ or ‘artificial’ environments; we are looking to support projects and assess potential in the ‘real world’ of care provision.
• Identifying and exploring an evidence-practice gap.
• Proof of concept or preliminary studies designed to gain more information about a potential intervention. For example, proposals which are solely: literature reviews, audit, surveys, needs assessment, technology development will not be funded in this call.
• Projects which do not address the short-term implications of COVID-19

2.5 When should projects start and finish?
Projects should be in a position to start as near as possible to 1st June 2020. Upon announcement of successful projects, contracts between ARC KSS and the hosting organisation will be organised and where possible should be in place by the start date.

Projects should be no more than 6 months in duration.

2.6 What kind of evidence do we need about the intervention for an application? Are we able to use unpublished evidence?
You can use unpublished evidence and existing practice knowledge about an intervention or change in care pathway. It should be clear in the application that you know from existing research, unpublished information or practice knowledge that this intervention has the potential to work and shows some potential to benefit the public, service providers and other stakeholders. It may be that you have changed practice in some way and observed benefits but these have not been fully measured. It may be that you have already tested the intervention on a small scale to see if it works in your local context, with potential to scale up and for the change to be sustainable after the funding has ended. It may be that there is existing evidence from systematic reviews and NICE guidance that is not being used to inform best practice and you intend to change practice in line with this evidence for public benefit.

2.7 What plans for the intervention need to be in place before the application vs plans for them to happen?
Your intervention should be well-established and planned out. You should have evidence through small early testing locally or support from audit or available data that the intervention has potential to benefit service users, providers, and to change practice in a positive way.

2.8 With whom might we need to engage and how?
We encourage applicants to speak with the relevant ARC KSS theme lead or implementation lead with which your project aligns. Contact details can be found at the end of this guidance in Section 5.

You will need to have already engaged with or plan to engage relevant stakeholders who may contribute to or affect the outcomes of your project and we suggest you develop a targeted approach to each individual/group. For example, to engage commissioners, you may want to look to local providers and commissioners of local services relevant to your intervention. We advise that you begin thinking about your potential stakeholders as soon as possible.

Projects are expected to include appropriate Patient and Community Engagement, Involvement and Participation (PCEIP) and preferably be co-designed with patients and the public. Projects should have clear plans and mechanisms to support future implementation of findings and knowledge mobilisation for the benefit of the NHS service delivery and patients locally.

2.9 Do you regard engagement from commissioners as a necessary or nice-to-have?
It depends on the type of project. In some instances it is absolutely critical, such as if commissioners will need to alter funding arrangements for the ongoing sustainability of the project. Making commissioners aware of your project will add strength to your application.
2.10 When should we involve patients/service users, communities, the public and how?

You should be engaging patients as early into your project as possible and we will be looking for evidence of a clear and comprehensive patient involvement and engagement plan both supporting your proposal development and plans for PCIEP during the work.

You are strongly encouraged to read and align your project with the Involve national standards for public involvement in research:


Section 3 – Funding available and co-funding

3.1 How much funding is available?

For this first round of funding, at least £80,000 will be available for COVID-19 specific applied research projects. Funds will be used flexibly depending on the number and quality of applications received.

Indirect or estates costs cannot be claimed. See more information on what can be funded in Section 4.1 below.

3.2 Why is this call asking for match funding and what is co-funding?

Co-funding is a requirement from the NIHR with which an organisation evidences its commitment. Match funding is not necessarily financial, and is often a release of staff time.

3.3 How much co-funding is required within applications?

The amount of co-funding required per project should be 25% of the total amount requested. The maximum budget that can be requested for a single project is £20,000. Therefore, this should be made up of a maximum of £15,000 ARC KSS funding and at least £5,000 co-funding from the host organisation.

3.4 What can be included as co-funding?

Any organisation’s committed resources, whether it is NHS, charity, volunteers, industry, or social care, will count as co-funding. Co-funding can be provided to the lead applicant as direct cash to support the project or ‘in kind’ resources. Examples of ‘in kind’ resources might be (this list is not exhaustive):

- Staff time to contribute to the project
- Time for frontline staff to recruit and collect data for projects
- Meeting room space for the project e.g. visits or meetings
- Use of facilities for implementing the project
- Staff time to extract data for use in the project
- Consumables already available to the organisation that can be used by the project.
- Training provided to the applicants that is needed to undertake the project

Co-funding should not include HEI or non-HEI overheads (co-funding could include direct funding, ‘in kind’ contributions, use of facilities for implementation). Member organisations of ARC KSS can include project co-funding as part of their overall co-funding commitment to ARC KSS.

3.5 What are the expected contractual arrangements?

Successful projects will be required to undergo a contracting process between the host organisation and ARC KSS host Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust in order to receive funds. This will be in the form of a short collaboration agreement setting out the responsibilities of ARC KSS and the organisation delivering the project. Standard project agreements templates will be used and major changes to the content will not be considered. Execution of the contracting process should be completed as close as possible to 1st June 2020.
3.6 What if my organisation is not a member?
If your organisation is not currently an ARC KSS partner but you believe your organisation is eligible to
become one, please contact the ARC KSS team on the details below to discuss this further. Organisations
eligible to be an ARC KSS partner include organisations in the ARC KSS region who are:

- NHS Trusts
- Local authorities
- Universities
- Charities or communities involved in health and social care
- Companies or not-for-profit organisations involved in health and social care

Section 4 – How to apply
4.1 How do I apply?
If you are interested in applying, please do the following:

- read the application form and guidance notes carefully
- You should complete an application form and send this to:
  ARCKentSurreySussex@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk by Friday 1st May 2020, 5pm. Applicants should
  provide all the information requested on the application form. You should complete your application
  in clear and concise language with minimal use of technical jargon. Where you use abbreviations,
  these should be fully described in the first instance of using the acronym. See below for guidance on
  each application form section.

Application form sections - guidance:

1. Application details: Please provide overview details of your project including:
   - Full project title and a short title if you have one
   - Intended duration of the project in months – this should not exceed 6 months
   - List the ARC KSS theme(s) with which your project aligns.
   - Lead applicant details – the lead applicant is the person with overall responsibility for the delivery
     and conduct of the project. Please tell us:
     o the lead applicants name
     o contact details including address, email and telephone number
     o name of your employing organisation
     o professional role or job title
     o Qualifications

   NB – a current CV no longer than 3 pages should be submitted with the application to demonstrate the
   relevant knowledge, experience and expertise. This should include up to 10 relevant publications and any
   other grants held.

   - The total funding (including co-funding) for the project should be entered

2. Host organisation details:
   - Please name the organisation hosting the project which will be responsible for holding the project
     contract. This should be an ARC KSS member organisation based and delivering service in Kent,
     Surrey or Sussex.
   - Please name a key R&D contact for the host organisation – this contact will be used to begin the
     project contracting arrangements and will also ensure governance oversight of the project and
     provide local support
3. **Research Team details:**
- Provide a list of each member of the research team involved directly in delivering the research project as a co-applicant. You should also briefly include:
  - Team members names, job roles and employing organisations
  - Please provide a brief description of each co-applicants role in the proposed research.
- Provide a description of the roles and expertise of the research team that will support successful delivery of the project (500 words maximum). This section should describe why the team is well qualified to do the work and should include:
  - Explain in addition to your role as Lead Applicant, the role that you will be undertaking in the research, e.g. coordination and project management, analysis, methodological input etc.
  - Please summarise the teams’ relevant expertise and track record in applied health research, in terms of skills and experience, previous publications, grant funding and impact on health service provision.

NB – if you have collaborators, who are supporting the project in some way but not individuals who are directly involved in delivering the project, these should be mentioned in the Project Plan section of the form.

Co-applicants are those individuals with responsibility for the day to day management and delivery of the project and can include patients, carers and service users. Co-applicants are considered part of the project team and are expected to share responsibility for its successful delivery. Collaborators normally provide specific expertise on particular aspects of the project but do not share in the responsibility for the delivery of the project. For example, this may be staff who will help you to recruit service users and collect/provide data.

4. **Project Description:** - see Application Form for guidance

5. **Public and Community Involvement, Engagement and Participation (PCIEP):**

ARC KSS is committed to appropriate and relevant involvement of patients and the public and other key stakeholders in all its activities. In this section please tell us about PCEIP activity that has supported the development of your project to date. Please also tell us about your plans to involve patients and the public during the project. These sections will be assessed as part of the funding decisions made. The assessment panel will also include public members.

Information and resources to assist you can be found on the INVOLVE website ([a detailed definition of patient and public involvement in research, briefing notes for researchers on how to involve patients and the public](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/nihr-reaffirms-its-support-for-patient-and-public-involvement-engagement-and-participation-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/24641)).


6. **Impact, implementation and dissemination:**
- Why is this research important in terms of improving the health, care and/or wellbeing of the public, patients and/or services users and health or social care services? (300 words maximum)

It is essential that you clearly identify the health and care need that your project aims to address and how the outputs of your project will benefit the public, services users, service providers and commissioners.
Briefly describe:

1. The importance of the proposed research and its relevance to local and national priorities and needs (including a statement of the significance of the research area, e.g. burden of disease, amount of care provided).
2. The anticipated outputs, outcomes and impact of the proposed research on the health of patients/service users and/or the public
3. Highlighting the potential benefits to service providers or commissioners where possible
4. The potential for your project to inform or change practice for the better

- How do you plan to use the knowledge gained from this project to change or inform practice or commissioning? (300 words maximum)

You might describe how this project might lead to Implementation of the invention into local practice, you may intend to scale up the intervention or project for the benefit of patients/service users. In this section it is important that you identify all stakeholders who are relevant to your research proposal. For each stakeholder group you need to be clear about how they benefit from your proposed research and, where appropriate, how they have been involved in the development of the application, as well as the plans for their involvement in the proposed research.

- What are your plans to disseminate the knowledge gained from this project to ensure use for the benefit of patients and the public? (300 words maximum)

Please describe any plans for knowledge gained through this project to be mobilised and used by local health or social care staff. How do you intend to mobilise knowledge gained for the benefit of stakeholders and commissioners?

- Is there any support ARC KSS might provide to ensure the successful delivery of this project? (300 words maximum)

Please tell us if there is any support ARC KSS can provide to help the delivery of the project. This might be links to recruiting sites or access to data, support with ethical approvals/governance processes, dissemination or PCEIP activities or training/support for the research team in methodology.

7. **Value for Money:**
   - Describe how this project represents value for money?

You should describe how the cost of investing in this research project weighs up against the potential benefit services providers, commissioners and/ or the public. For example, where appropriate, describe the likely cost savings or benefits in terms of numbers of patients treated, treatment times etc.

You should describe the value for money of the conduct of the proposed research.

- Please provide a justification of costs requested: (500 words maximum)

Please provide a breakdown of research costs associated with undertaking the research and provide justification for the resources requested. When justifying staff costs you should also provide the % amount of time input of each co-applicant linked to their role in the project where appropriate

Please provide a breakdown of the co-funding associated with the project and what this will contribute to in terms of elements of the project delivery.

8. **Detailed budget:**
The finance section should provide a breakdown of costs associated with undertaking the research as described in the proposal. Please provide enough detail for each line to show how you came to the amount requested.

The funding requested may include the following costs: staff costs, travel and subsistence, dissemination costs, equipment (including lease versus purchase costs) no more than £2000, consumables, patient and public involvement (PCIEP) and any other direct costs.

NOTE: Indirect and estates charges cannot be claimed as part of the funding requested nor as part of co-funding provided.

Costs must be provided at current prices. Whilst allowances for incremental increases should be included, nationally or locally agreed pay increases should be excluded.


It is in the best interest to undertake a thorough, realistic and accurate costing where possible including providing a clear and full justification for all costs. You must also ensure that you include all costs including those required to secure good research management. Given the rapid response

Further itemisation of costs and methods of calculation may be requested to support the application at a later date.

Payments will be made to the contracted organisation only and the contracted organisation will be responsible for passing on any money due to their member organisation(s). Appropriate sub-contracts must be put in place for any element of the research which is to be paid to another organisation.

4.2 Where do I submit my application?
Completed applications forms should be submitted along with a current CV of the project lead to ARCKentSurreySussex@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk by Friday 1st May 2020, 5pm

9. Authorisations:
All application forms should be signed by the lead applicant and also a representative from the leading organisation to confirm that the application has been approved by any relevant Research and Development departments or senior departmental lead within the organisation and co-funding agreed. If you submitting an application individually or collaboratively from Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, University of Sussex, University of Brighton or BSMS please note that your application needs also needs sign off by the Joint Clinical Research Office: jcro@sussex.ac.uk.

The deadline for application submission is Friday 1st May 2020 at 5pm.

4.3 How will applications be assessed?
Projects will be assessed by a project review panel of ARC KSS core staff and members of the public. Applications will be assessed using the below criteria.
- Team: To what extent does the project team appear to have the right skills and experience to deliver the intended benefits?
- **Project plan:** How appropriate is the proposed project plan? Is the methodology clearly explained and appropriate for the project? Are the data collection and analysis methods justified and appropriate? Is the project timeline achievable?

- **Impact, Implementation and Dissemination:** What is the expected improvement in health outcomes, operational efficiency, patient experience and/or safety and quality of care? Is the project likely to lead to a change in practice? Are there appropriate plans to ensure knowledge gained is shared and disseminated to inform practice?

- **PCIEP:** Is there appropriate PCIEP activity that has fed into the development of the project? Are there clear plans for PCIEP activity within the proposed work? Has the invention been informed or co-designed by the public or patients/services users?

- **Value for money:** How appropriate is the proposal financially? Is the overall budget realistic and justified in terms of activities proposed? Does the project show potential for high health and/or socioeconomic impact, high potential for cost savings?

The following prioritising features will also be used to inform selection of final projects.

- Potential for cost-effectiveness or economic benefits resulting from proposed change(s) in practice – as assessed by the ARC KSS health and social care economics theme lead or designate
- Addresses a local STP or commissioner priority and/or aligns with national priorities and research agendas.
- Multiple ARC KSS partners are involved in the project and evidence of cross sector collaboration

4.4 What feedback will applicants receive?

Successful application will receive comments from the assessors and will be expected to address any significant areas of concern prior to commencing the project. Unsuccessful applications will receive feedback on areas of their project that could be strengthened and advice on whether the project can be supported by ARC KSS in other ways going forward e.g. support from implementation leads where projects have potential but were not successful, recommendation of other funding streams or linking to experts that could contribute to the project.

4.4 What is the timeline for assessment and announcement of successful applications?

The flowchart below summarises the intended timeline for assessment and announcement of applications. Depending on the volume of applications received this may be changed if required.

![Flowchart](image)

**Deadline for applications:**
Friday 1st May 2020, 5pm

Applications scored against assessment criteria by project review panel week commencing 11th May 2020

Successful projects announced and feedback provided by **mid-May 2020**

Contracting with member organisations to take place **late May 2020**

Projects to commence **1st June 2020**
4.6 How do we report back to ARC KSS on the progress of our project?
There will be a formal project review after 3 and 6 months. These formal reviews will take the form of a progress meeting and will allow you to reflect on the progress of your project and are an opportunity to get input from ARC KSS to support the success of the project. These reviews will be conducted by a dedicated member of the ARC KSS team who will also be available to provide support should you need it at any time during the life span of the project.

Section 5 – Further information

5.1 Who is the main point of contact at ARC KSS?
Your main point of contact will be the ARC KSS Research Programme Manager:
Dr Melanie Rees-Roberts
m.rees-roberts@kent.ac.uk

You can also discuss your application with our Theme Leads and Implementation Leads. They will be able to help you to assess if it fits within our ARC KSS themes and support you with any questions you may have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Theme lead</th>
<th>Implementation lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting Well</td>
<td>Prof David Fowler, <a href="mailto:d.fowler@sussex.ac.uk">d.fowler@sussex.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Becca Randell, <a href="mailto:Becca.randell@nhs.net">Becca.randell@nhs.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dementia</td>
<td>Dr Naji Tabet, <a href="mailto:Naji.tabet@bsms.ac.uk">Naji.tabet@bsms.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Kath Sykes, <a href="mailto:katherine.sykes@nhs.net">katherine.sykes@nhs.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Care</td>
<td>Prof Julien Forder, <a href="mailto:j.e.forder@kent.ac.uk">j.e.forder@kent.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Becky Sharp, <a href="mailto:rebecca.sharp4@nhs.net">rebecca.sharp4@nhs.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary and Community Care</td>
<td>Prof Harm Van Marwijk, <a href="mailto:h.vanmarwijk@bsms.ac.uk">h.vanmarwijk@bsms.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Dr Sam Fraser, due to start in post in April 2020. In the interim, please contact Melanie Rees-Roberts on the contact details above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>Prof Jackie Cassell, <a href="mailto:j.cassell@bsms.ac.uk">j.cassell@bsms.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Any of above Implementation leads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Innovation</td>
<td>Dr Jo Armes, <a href="mailto:jo.armes@surrey.ac.uk">jo.armes@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Any of above Implementation leads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-production</td>
<td>Prof Tricia Wilson, <a href="mailto:p.m.wilson@kent.ac.uk">p.m.wilson@kent.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Any of above Implementation leads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Social Care Economics</td>
<td>Prof Heather Gage, <a href="mailto:h.gage@surrey.ac.uk">h.gage@surrey.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Any of above Implementation leads</td>
</tr>
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5.3 Key Dates

Call release date               Friday 17th April 2020
Application deadline            Friday 1st May, 5pm