\*New funding available\*

Regional pre-application support fund

NIHR ARC North West Coast is delighted to offer dedicated pre- application support awards for applied health and social care

researchers, including those who identify as clinical academics or who wish to develop a research focused clinical career, who need funded time to develop a NIHR career development award.

What is it for?

The purpose of this funding is to provide protected, funded time for individuals to prepare a high quality, competitive application for a NIHR career development award (from the list below):

* Predoctoral level: Pre-Doctoral Fellowship; Pre-Doctoral Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship; Pre-Doctoral Local Authority Fellowship Scheme; In-Practice Fellowship.
* Doctoral Level: Doctoral Fellowship; Doctoral Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship; Doctoral Local Authority Fellowship.
* Postdoctoral Level: Development and Skills Enhancement (DSE) Award; Advanced Fellowship; Advanced Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship; Advanced Local Authority

Fellowship; Senior Clinical and Practitioner Research Award; Research Professorship;;

* Other career development awards: Clinical Academic Research Partnerships.

More information about these awards can be found here: [https://www.nihr.ac.uk/career-](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes) [development/research-career-funding-programmes.](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/career-development/research-career-funding-programmes)

Applicants will be required to state which of these awards they will be pursuing at the point of application for the ARC NWC regional pre-application support fund. Awards not listed above are outside of the scope of this funding. It is a requirement of the award that an application to one of the above NIHR opportunities will have been submitted by the end of February 2026.

# Who is it for?

This funding is designed specifically to offer new opportunities to individuals from traditionally underserved research areas (such as methodological researchers, medical statistics, health

economics, clinical trial design, operational research, modelling, bioinformatics, qualitative research, mixed methods and epidemiology), professions (nurses, midwives and allied health care

professionals), and those working in social care and local authorities, and in communities and non-dominant geographical areas, in order to help them apply for NIHR career development awards. Whilst we are particularly hoping to receive applications from these groups, you are also able to apply for these fellowships if you don’t meet any of these characteristics. You do not need to be registered with a regulatory professional body to apply.

To apply, you need to be employed by an ARC NWC Partner organization already. This might be in health and social care, as a clinician, or as a researcher. You must want to pursue a research career of some kind.

If you are intending on applying for a doctoral level award, you must meet the entry qualifications to register for a PhD before applying for this fellowship. These are PhD programme specific, and you will need to check with the university you wish to study at. For example, PhDs usually require a 2.1 at undergraduate degree level; some require a Masters degree.

If you are intending to apply for a postdoctoral level award, you must have submitted your thesis by the application deadline for this fellowship award (13th January 2025).

The Pre-Application Support award cannot be held alongside another NIHR career development award. If you have previously held an NIHR award, clear justification will be required as to why further support from the Pre-Application Support Fund is needed.

# How much funding is there?

In the current round of funding (a 2nd round will be announced in 2025), we will fund up to 8 individuals. Each individual can apply for up to £12,500.

# What should the funding cover?

The funding should be used to pay for the time, support and development you require to enable you to submit a high quality, competitive application for a NIHR career development award.

We expect that the £12,500 award will include up to £10,000 to buy out your time and up to £2,500 in non-pay costs. This must include PPIE (at NIHR rates:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/payment-guidance-researchers-and-professionals>) costs. However, these are bespoke awards – if you need to request a different split between pay / non-pay, you will be able to do so in the application form and justify the costs you have asked for.

The following are examples of what the non-pay element of the funding might be used for (this is not an exhaustive list):

* Training and leadership skills.
* Building research collaboration and developing research networks
* Visiting other research institutes in the UK.
* Attending conferences and presenting work.
* Writing up and publishing research papers (please include open access fees in your budget).

We envisage each award lasting up to 12 months in total. It must be finished by February 2026.

Institutional overheads will not be covered, nor any costs linked to roles / people other than the applicant’s time or training provision / non-pay costs.

There is no additional funding from ARC NWC beyond the allocated £12,500 per award.

You will be allocated suitable supervisor(s), who can support you in developing your research ideas and your NIHR career development application. They will be someone senior who can guide you to develop a research network and the skills needed to apply for a NIHR career development award. If you have already identified potential supervisors (they must be employed within one of the ARC NWC partner organisations), you can detail this in the application form, you will need to explain why this person is suitable to act as your supervisor. They will also need to write a statement of support telling us how they will support you, and why their expertise makes them the best person to support you.

We are aware that in some circumstances this funding will not be enough to cover all expenses and additional costs incurred as well as salary support. In these circumstances it is the responsibility of your employer to manage the amount that can be spent to mitigate any financial risk incurred. There will be no additional funds available from NIHR ARC North West Coast.

# Payment:

**A condition of the award is that the total amount of funding awarded to you, if successful, must be accepted and invoiced for by your employing organisation, prior to 31st March 2025.**

# Format of the fellowship

This is a bespoke award. The format will be dependent on your own developmental needs and what you need in order to be able to submit a high quality, competitive NIHR career development award. In your application form, you will need to tell us how you will use this funded time.

The fellowship must finish by February 2026. At this point, you must have submitted, or be very near to submission of, your NIHR application for a career development award.

As part of the award, ARC NWC will provide you with (at no additional cost):

* Access to skills and training workshops
* Peer support
* Expert lived experience and access to leaders and NIHR career development award holders from within our ARC community and established ARC Faculty
* PPIE expertise through our Public Engagement Team and Public Adviser Forum
* Peer review – the opportunity to present your project proposal (application) to the ARC community (to examine utility for later adoption and spread)

# Delivery:

As a condition of funding, successful applicants will be required to deliver:

1. Quarterly progress reports for monitoring and progression.
2. Training needs assessment & plan of action.
3. Demonstrated engagement with our Public Adviser Forum and recruitment of at least one ARC NWC Public Advisers to support your proposal development.
4. Draft proposal and presentations at relevant time points.
5. Submission of NIHR application for career development award by February 2026.

Successful applicants will also, as a condition of funding, have a non-time limited obligation to inform ARC of the following metrics:

1. Submission of NIHR funding application(s) as chief investigator and co-applicant.
2. Award of NIHR funding as chief investigator and co-applicant.
3. Submission / award of other funding applications (non NIHR) as chief investigator and co- applicant.
4. Other progression data submitted to the ARC (such as personal fellowships and project funding).
5. Career development achievements (promotions, esteem factors) as in/direct result of this funding.
6. Building capacity in others (mentoring, supervision, journal clubs, skills sharing).
7. Other (i.e implementation of research / improvements into practice).

# Application process:

You will need to complete a short application form, but our main assessment method will be at interview (online). At interview you will be asked to deliver a 5 minute PowerPoint presentation that tells us about you and your proposed research idea or vision. This needs to clearly tell us why what you want to research is important (the problem), what you will do (the research), and what difference (and when) it will make to the lives of those affected by the research (directly or indirectly). Tell us about why we should invest in you! How will this award help you to achieve a bigger NIHR Career Development Award?

In the application form, you will need to tell us who your subject specific mentor (academic) is (if you have already identified them, if not we will assign supervision, and attach their statement of support, plus a statement of support from your employing organisation. We will need evidence confirming your release from your current role for the days / hours equivalent time you have requested support for. Unless you have a part time job, this application development work should not be accomplished in your own time, but for the funds to be used to ‘buy-out’ your time at work.

We will ask you to complete a finance section, explaining how you are going to use the £12,500 allocated to the award.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview on XX January 2025. The questions are likely to cover topics such as why you should be selected for funding and how this funding would assist in your career development.

Applications should be emailed to [arcnwc@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:arcnwc@uclan.ac.uk).

Deadline for applications (Round 1): 5pm (17:00 hours) on 13th January 2025. Applications arriving in the inbox after this date/time will not be accepted.

Interview dates: All day 28th January and morning of Thursday 30th and Friday 31st January 2025. Interviews will be held online, using Teams.

The application form can be found [here](https://arc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/impact/nihr-arc-nwc-pre-application-support-fund/).

# Point of contact:

To discuss these awards further, please contact Dr Julie Cook at [arcnwc@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:arcnwc@uclan.ac.uk).