Research Funding Scheme: Health Research Grants
Funding Board

Current RFS: HRG Funding Board Members*
Professor Tim Peters (Chair), Bristol University
Professor Jane Noyes (Deputy Chair), Bangor University
Professor Ivor Chestnutt, Cardiff University
Professor Deborah Fitzsimmons, Swansea University
Professor Kerry Hood, Cardiff University
Professor Ruth Northway, University of South Wales
Professor Julius Sim, Keele University
Professor Phil Stevens, Cardiff University
Dr Alex Tonks, Cardiff University
Professor Reyer Zwiggelaar, Aberystwyth University
Dr Xianghua Xie, Swansea University
Ms Jan Lecouturier, Newcastle University
Dr James White, Cardiff University
Professor Jorg Huber, University of Brighton
Dr Joanna Charles, Bangor University
Mrs Sarah Peddle, Public Member
Mr Nathan Davies, Public Member
Mr Eric Deeson, Public Member

*Correct as at May 2019

Funding Board Role

The role of the RFS: HRG Funding Board is to assess the scientific quality of the applications it is asked to review. Issues considered by the Board when making its assessment includes such matters as:

- Is there a knowledge gap addressed by the proposed study?
- Are the aims of study and the research question clearly stated?
- Are the proposed methodology and science of the application sound?
- Do the proposed methodology and methods of analysis answer the question adequately?
- Is there clear demonstration of the necessary skill mix and experience within the team for the project to be delivered successfully?
- Have the ethical, legal and social implications of the research been considered?
- Is there appropriate public involvement in the proposed research?
- Has the project been properly costed and do the costs represent good value for money?

(Please Note: The above criteria are a guide for assessment and the discussion will not be limited to these areas.)

In making its assessment, the Board makes full use of an independent peer review process.
Funding Board Selection and Conflicts of Interest

The Research & Development Division (RDD) within the Health and Social Services Group of the Welsh Government creates external, independent funding boards to advise it on the quality of applications for Health and Care Research Wales research funding (e.g. through the Research Funding Scheme, the Research for Public and Patient Benefit Scheme, and Fellowship and Studentship funding schemes).

Funding Board Selection

Health and Care Research Wales maintains a number of external and independent funding boards to advise on scientific quality of applications submitted through its open and competitive grant schemes.

When created by the Health and Care Research Wales Grants Team, funding boards are recruited in keeping with the following steps and principles.

1. All funding boards will be recruited through an open, competitive process.
2. When a new funding board is created, or an existing Board refreshed, an advert for members will be posted on the Health and Care Research Wales website.
3. Potential members will be asked to submit an expression of interest.
4. Expressions of interest will be reviewed by officials from the Health and Care Research Wales Senior Management Team and Grants Team within Welsh Government, in conjunction with the relevant funding board Chair and Deputy Chair. Membership will be offered to those applicants felt to be most suitably qualified and able to commit the time required.
5. A key selection consideration will be to ensuring that funding boards are balanced in terms of the breadth of methodological and topic-based expertise.
6. In cases where there is a perceived gap in expertise that has not been filled by open recruitment, Health and Care Research Wales may look to identify and approach specific individuals able to fill the gap.
7. In addition public members (usually two) will be sought for each funding board. Public members will be recruited via open advert on the Health and Care Research Wales website and through the Involving People team.
8. A separate open and competitive process will be run to identify the Chair and Deputy Chair. Applicants will be required to submit an expression of interest for this role and can expect to be interviewed by senior Health and Care Research Wales officials.
9. The Chair will be non-voting but will be expected to manage processes around funding board discussion and assessment, ensuring that the board delivers clear recommendations to Health and Care Research Wales.
10. All funding board members will be provided with terms of reference, including information about individual responsibilities and rules relating to conflict of interest.
11. In the interests of transparency, the names of all funding board members will be published on the Health and Care Research Wales website.

Where grant scheme administration is contracted out to a third party, the contractor must operate an equivalent or similar selection process.
Conflicts of Interest

Health and Care Research Wales operates a conflict of interest policy both in relation to funding board membership, and process and conduct during funding board meeting. Details of these are set out below.

1. Following provisional selection, all funding board members will be asked to complete a form and provide a CV capturing their institutional affiliations, areas of expertise and research interests. These will be held and collated by the Health and Care Research Wales Grants Team.

2. Subject to the absence of any conflicts that would prevent an individual being a funding board member (e.g. Head of a major research school or department in Wales that would require the member to be a signatory on a significant number of applications to the scheme) membership will be agreed.

3. For each new funding call, information held by the Health and Care Research Wales Grant Team will be used to help identify potential conflicts of interest in relation to applications received.

4. Potential conflicts will be discussed with funding board members and drawn to the attention of the Chair in advance of the meeting and in chairing notes.

5. The funding board Chair will be responsible for managing the conflict of interest process at the meeting itself, and for taking appropriate action in response to known or declared conflicts. Current rules for conflict of interest declaration and process are set out below.

Conflict of Interest: Declaration and Process

The Chair will seek declarations of conflict before the presentation and discussion of each application. Funding board members should promptly declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts affecting them.

Clear conflicts of interest include:

- Being a lead or co-applicant on the application
- Being a named collaborator on an application
- Being a signatory of any sort on the application
- Having a family connection with the lead or co-applicant
- Having a close working relationship with the lead or co-applicant

Any other potential conflicts of interest should be raised for Funding Board consideration and discussion. Funding Board members with a clear or agreed conflict of interest are unable to contribute to the discussion and assessment of an application.

Conflicted Funding Board members will be required to leave the meeting while the conflicting application is discussed. Conflicts of interest will be recorded in the formal minutes of the meeting.

Where grant scheme administration is contracted out to a third party, the contractor must operate an equivalent or similar selection process

Words: 1164