Health and Care Research Wales Specialty Leads

Information Pack

Background

Health and Care Research Wales funds an extensive research development and delivery infrastructure to support high-quality clinical research taking place in the NHS.

The infrastructure includes:

- 5 research Centres, in Cancer, Ageing and Dementia, Mental Health, Population Health and Primary and Emergency Care
- 3 research Units in Diabetes, Brain and Kidney
- 3 Clinical Trials Units, in North, South East and West Wales
- the Wales Gene Park
- the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage Databank (SAIL)
- the Welsh Health Economics Support Service; and
- an NHS-based Health and Care Research Wales support and delivery service that provides a range of central all-Wales and local services and resources to researchers.

While this infrastructure includes Centres and Units working in areas of particular research strength, all projects meeting Portfolio criteria, and thus deemed high-quality, have prioritised access to study delivery resources (via the support and delivery service).

The appointment of Specialty Leads in Wales will provide additional research development and delivery support in areas covered by, but extending beyond, our Centres and Units.

In England, the Clinical Research Network comprises 15 Local Clinical Research Networks (LCRN) each of which delivers research across 30 clinical specialties. These specialties are:

- Age and Ageing
- Anaesthesia, Peri-operative Medicine and Pain Management
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Children
- Critical Care
- Dementias and Neurodegeneration (DeNDRoN)
National Specialty Leads have been appointed for each of the speciality areas and chair Specialty Groups. The Specialty Groups consist of representation from all 15 LCRNs, and are open to representation from the devolved nations. In essence, the role of the Specialty Groups is to create a national “community of practice”, providing specialist knowledge essential for Clinical Research Network success. The groups co-ordinate and oversee activity at a national (UK) level, providing a national forum to share good practice, successes, opportunities and challenges, and helping to influence and shape the clinical research environment.

The functions of the groups are determined by recently revised Terms of Reference and cover stakeholder engagement, communication, and oversight and monitoring of infrastructure performance and portfolio delivery.

Given the existence of a large number of cross-border research studies, and the added value created by cross-border working, Health and Care Research Wales wishes to appoint Welsh Specialty Leads in all 30 clinical specialties. UK engagement through membership of the NIHR Specialty Groups is a key part of the Welsh Specialty Lead role.

It is Health and Care Research Wales’s intention that where specialities are covered by existing Health and Care Research Wales Centres and Units, the Welsh Speciality Lead should be affiliated with and come from the relevant Centre or Unit.
In areas not currently covered by a Centre or Unit, Health and Care Research Wales is happy to receive applications from all research-interested clinicians who would like to take on the role.

The Welsh Specialty Leads will be given formal recognition within the Health and Care Research Wales community, providing identity and visibility for the specialities and a source of information and advice back to Health and Care Research Wales.

Specialty Leads will receive study information to support their role via the support and delivery service, primarily from the Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre’s information team. Specialty Leads will be required to feed information back to relevant elements of the support and delivery service to help drive growth in study take-up and recruitment. A model of working will be developed to ensure well coordinated and effective interaction.
Health and Care Research Wales Specialty Leads

Key tasks and responsibilities

- To champion Welsh involvement in portfolio studies within the NHS in Wales and the Welsh research community.

- To actively encourage Welsh NHS participation in UK portfolio studies, thus enhancing opportunities for patient participation in clinical trials (and other well designed studies).

- To actively promote the uptake of particular studies at suitable sites in Wales.

- To be aware (via engagement with the Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre) of the progress and performance of all portfolio studies led from Wales in the relevant specialty area.

- To be aware (via engagement with the Health and Care Research Wales Support Centre) of the progress and performance of all Welsh sites in portfolio studies led from elsewhere in the UK in the relevant specialty area.

- To be a member of the relevant NIHR Specialty Group and to attend and represent Wales at NIHR Speciality Group meetings (3 to 4 each year).

- To report to the NIHR Specialty Group on the performance of all portfolio studies with Welsh involvement.

- To raise NIHR Specialty Group awareness of Wales-based research expertise.

- To raise NIHR Specialty Group awareness of the potential for Welsh NHS engagement in UK portfolio studies.

- To play a full part in opportunities offered by the NIHR Specialty Group to share good practice and develop responses to challenges.

- To work to address and unblock specific delivery problems at Welsh sites of UK portfolio studies.

- To network effectively across the relevant speciality area, bringing Wales-based researchers together to prioritise research questions and develop research funding applications.

- To provide opportunities for Wales-based researchers to get involved in studies led by researchers outside Wales.
Health and Care Research Wales Specialty Leads

Person Specification

Health and Care Research Wales Specialty Leads should be research-interested clinicians or clinical academics who are close to and active in the NHS in Wales and have standing and credibility with NHS colleagues.

As a Health and Care Research Wales Speciality Lead, you will understand the research needs and priorities of NHS Wales in your speciality area.

You will have the confidence, ability and experience to:

- engage with, and command the respect of, eminent colleagues and peers at the highest (UK) level
- enthuse and galvanise NHS colleagues to engage in research in your specialist area
- actively promote the uptake of studies offered to Wales and the opening of Welsh recruitment sites
- address and overcome blocks and challenges, where these arise
- form appropriate and effective networks of researchers and research-interested clinicians to identify research questions and shape research funding applications.

You must be able to attend and contribute effectively to NIHR Specialty Group meetings.

You must be able to provide continuity of service in the role for the initial appointment period (3 years).

If applying in a specialty area with a large portfolio of research in Wales, you can expect to devote 0.1fte (i.e. 1 session a week) to the role.

If applying in a specialty area with a smaller portfolio of research, you can expect to devote 0.05fte (i.e. 1 session every two weeks) to the role.
Financial Support for Health and Care Research Wales Specialty Leads

a) Sessional Time

It is expected that Speciality Leads in areas where there is a large portfolio of research in Wales will devote 0.1fte (i.e. 1 session a week) to the role. Specialty Leads in smaller specialty (or any sub-specialty) areas can expect to devote 0.05fte (i.e. 1 session every two weeks) to the role.

In specialty areas covered by the Health and Care Research Wales Centres and Units, the key tasks of this role fall within the aims and objectives of the Centres and Units. Additional sessional time will not, therefore, be paid.

In specialty areas not covered by Health and Care Research Wales Centres and Units, we will pay for sessional time not exceeding the fte/sessional requirement specified above.

b) Research development/networking support

The NIHR Specialty Groups do not have a research development remit. They do not, therefore, have Research Development Group or Clinical Studies Group functions. However, Health and Care Research Wales wishes to incentivise research development across the Specialty Group topics and will pay a sum of up to £2,500 annually to support research development activity within Wales or facilitated participation in similar groups led from outside Wales. This resource is open to all Welsh Specialty Leads regardless of whether or not they are part of a Health and Care Research Wales Centre or Unit. You will be expected to apply to Health and Care Research Wales (Welsh Government) directly for these funds and will be accountable for using the funding appropriately.

c) Travel and subsistence (T&S)

Health and Care Research Wales will meet reasonable T&S costs incurred attending NIHR Specialty Group meetings or engaging in other essential Specialty Lead activity. All Welsh Specialty Leads will be able to apply for reimbursement of essential T&S costs in accordance with levels set by the Welsh Government’s T&S policy.