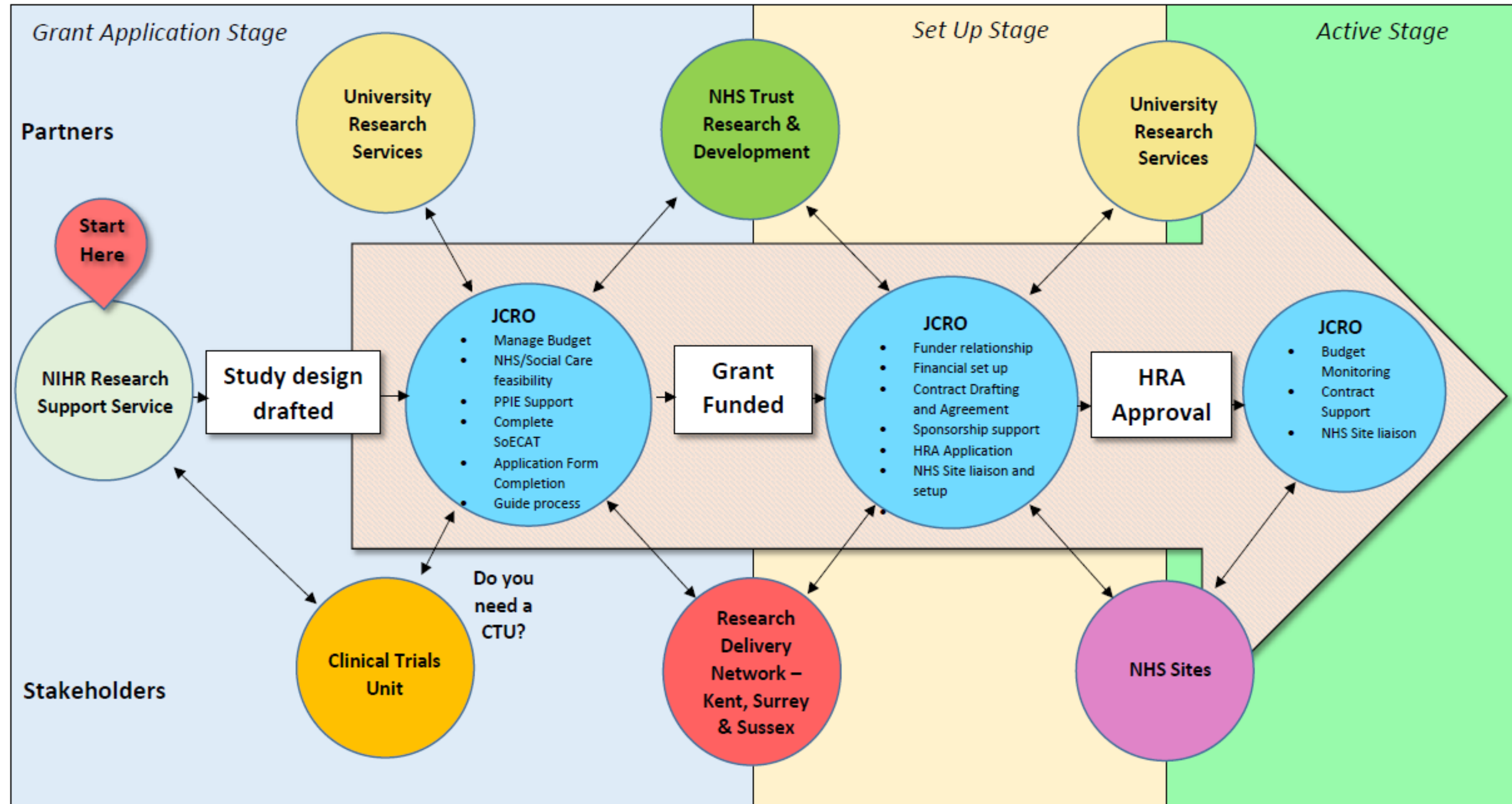


*Costing a health and care research
project: key elements to consider
at grant application stage*

Debbie Coton (Research Manager) and Anett Kiss (Research Manager)

Joint Clinical Research Office

2nd October 2025



Remit and areas of expertise

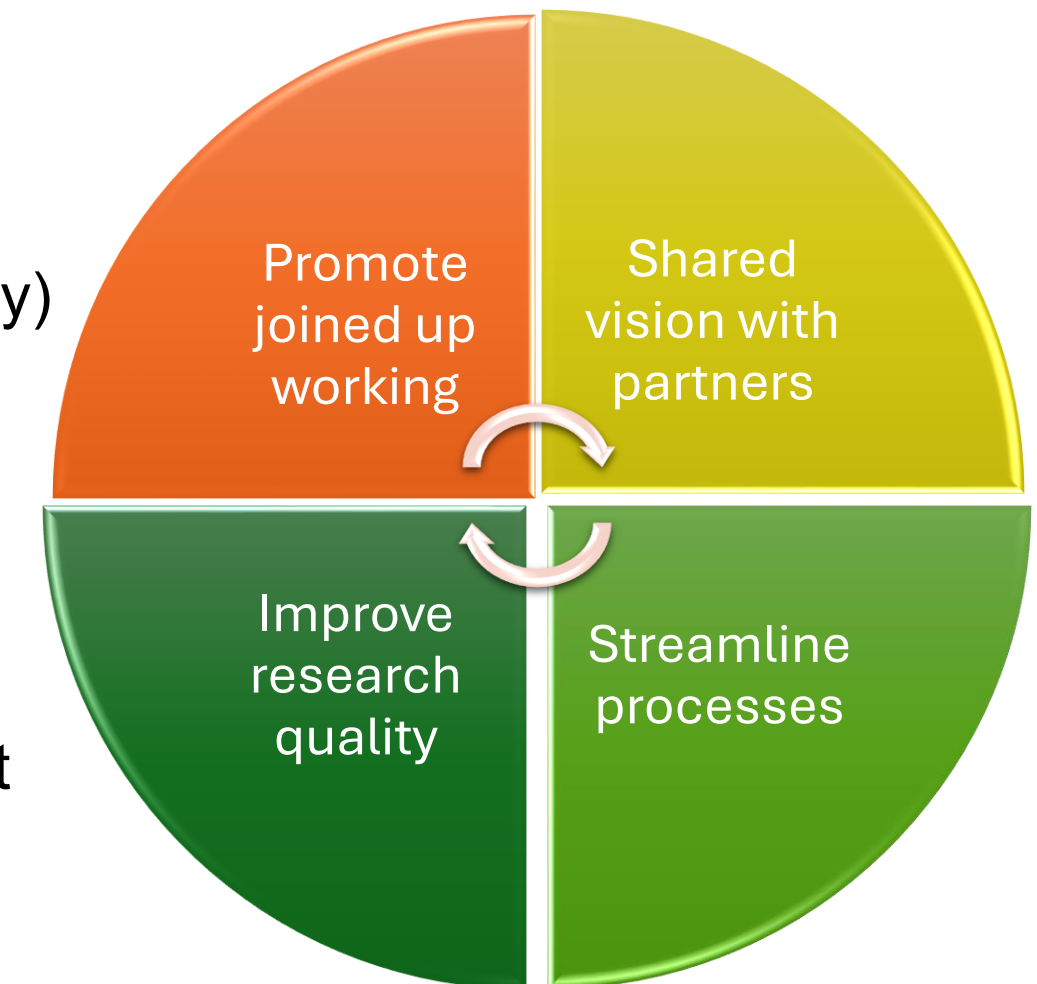
Research management support across the project life-cycle for all health and care research which meets all the following criteria:

- Research involving a PI / Co-I / CI employed by one of the partner organisations
- Involves one or more of the partner Universities and an NHS Trust or care setting
- Sponsored by a non-commercial organisation (e.g. NHS Trust, University or Local Authority)
- Is within the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research.

Includes research as part of an Educational Project (e.g. PhD, MD or Fellowship)

How we make a difference

The JCRO has been instrumental in bringing partners together to establish successful joint practices. It has helped to streamline and enhance grant applications, contracting, finance and governance for health and care research studies.



What is health and social care research?

Health and social care research aims to find out new knowledge that could lead to changes to health treatments, policies or care.

Website:

<https://www.bsms.ac.uk/research/support-and-governance/jcro/brighton-and-sussex-joint-clinical-research-office.aspx>

Email:

jcro@sussex.ac.uk

Session Plan

1. Applying for a grant – what information do I need?
2. Why does research costing matter?
3. Staff costs
4. Non-staff costs
5. Health and care site costs
6. Summary



Session Plan

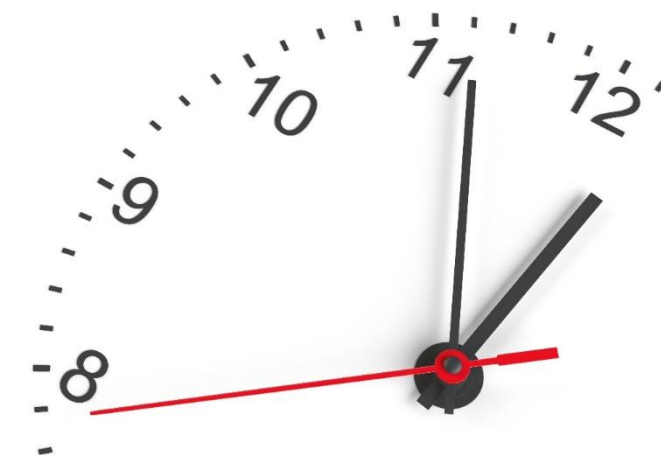
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Applying for a grant – what information do I need?

➤ Early engagement with relevant research support contacts

- costing officer at your employer's organisation
- JCRO
- R&D Manager at healthcare organisation
- Clinical Trials Unit (CTU, if using) – BSCTU
- NIHR Research Support Service (RSS)
- NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN)



Applying for a grant – what information do I need? Cont...



- Finalise project team and key partners
- Patient and Public Involvement & Engagement (PPIE)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Identify funder, is it in remit?
- Study design drafted



Patient and Public Involvement & Engagement



- PPIE is research being carried out 'with' or 'by' members of public, rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them
- Improves the quality and relevance of research
- Clear rationale for PPIE is increasingly a requirement of research funders
- Consider how to involve members of the public throughout your research and consider the associated costs.
 - E.g. including at least one PPIE co-applicant.

Resources: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/briefing-notes-researchers-public-involvement-nhs-health-and-social-care-research>



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Increased emphasis on importance of inclusive research in tackling existing inequalities in health and care
- NIHR has recently made it requirement that funding applications include information on how the research is inclusive of all communities
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/inclusion-now-key-condition-nihr-funding>
- Consider how inclusion is built into all stages of the research life cycle and associated costs.

Resources:

- EDI Toolkit: <https://www.rssleicesterresources.org.uk/edi-toolkit>
- Research Engagement Network: <https://www.bsms.ac.uk/research/support-and-governance/shcrp/ren.aspx>

Pre-grant submission timeline



- *Project idea*
- *Project team*
- *Identify funder*
- *Peer review*

Study design drafted

**6 weeks – 3 months
before submission**

- Health and care feasibility check
- Prepare costings

**1-2 weeks before
submission**

- Final budget ready
- Organisational approvals

PPIE and Inclusion

Research support services

Check with your organisation for specific process and time requirements

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Why does research costing matter?



- Appropriate resources to enable project delivery to target
- Funding limits can influence the scale of a study
- Flexibility in the budget can help overcome unexpected circumstances
- Funder evaluates the justification of requested resources and value for money

Value for money assessment by Funders:



- Will the project be undertaken in an efficient & effective way and is the applicant requesting only resources that are essential to its completion?
- Do the importance and the quality of the research and associated outcomes justify the amount of resource required?



Costing a research project: Cost vs Price

- The cost is how much money it takes to pay for all the resources associated with doing the research project, including infrastructure, staff, direct project costs.

Institutions' own costing rules apply

- The price is how much the Funder will pay for that project to be carried out.

The price will depend on Funder rules, and institutional policies and practices.

Early engagement with the relevant research support contacts is essential to ensure the correct costing and pricing of grants.



The total cost of research

Direct costs:

- Costs are those that are directly attributable to an individual research project, e.g. staff, equipment, consumables, travel...etc.

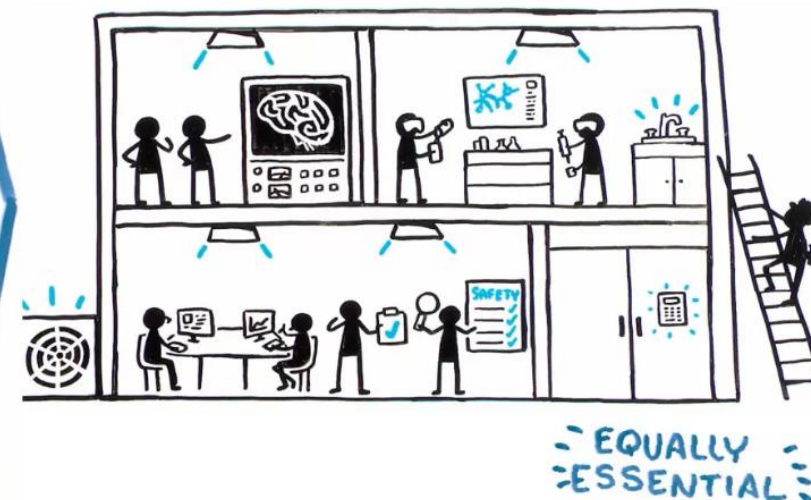
Indirect costs:

- Infrastructure, buildings, administration and support services, etc.

DIRECT FUNDING



INDIRECT FUNDING



Funding rule examples

NIHR:



- Often funds different organisations at different rates: e.g
NHS and non-academic organisations at 100% direct costs,
Universities at 80% direct + indirect

UKRI (Research Councils, e.g. MRC or ESRC)



- Usually all organisations at 80%, including indirect costs

Charities (e.g. Wellcome Trust, Cancer Research UK...etc):

- 100% of direct project costs

Note: funding rules may differ from scheme to scheme

Session Plan

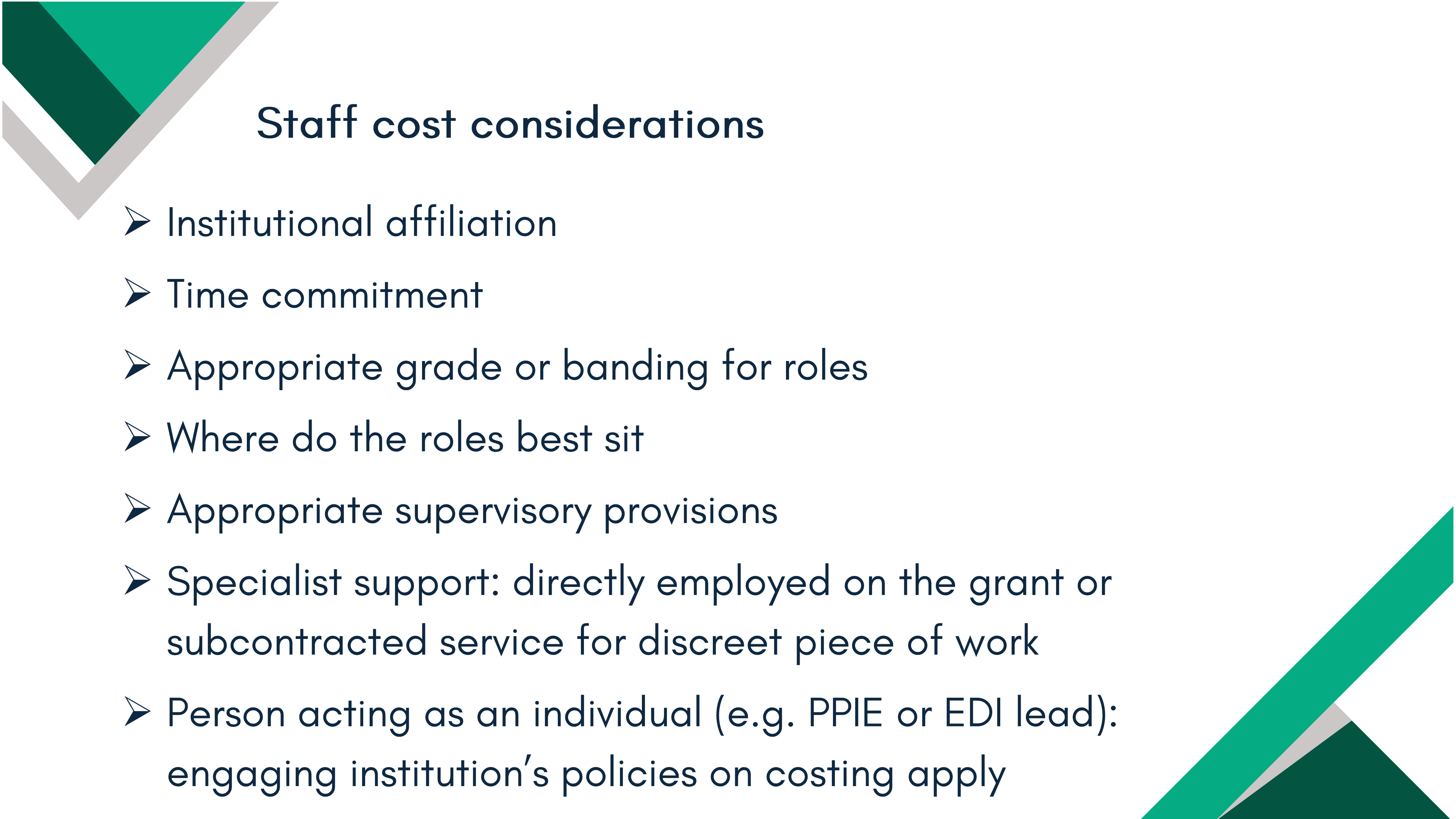
1. Applying for a grant – what information do I need?
2. Costing and Pricing
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Core research team



- Principal Investigator/ Fellow
- Co-Investigators
- Specialists: statistician, health economist, data/database manager, project manager, clinical trial unit staff, medical supervision, patient and public involvement lead, EDI lead, community engagement worker...etc.
- Dedicated research posts: research assistants, technicians, nurses, practitioners...etc



Staff cost considerations

- Institutional affiliation
- Time commitment
- Appropriate grade or banding for roles
- Where do the roles best sit
- Appropriate supervisory provisions
- Specialist support: directly employed on the grant or subcontracted service for discrete piece of work
- Person acting as an individual (e.g. PPIE or EDI lead): engaging institution's policies on costing apply

Calculating salary costs

Salary costs include:

- Basic salary
- On-costs (employer's contribution to national insurance, pension, allowances)
- Future pay awards and inflationary increases to be factored in according to Funder and Institutional rules

Salary costs are always to be provided
by the employing institution



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6. Summary and Top Tips

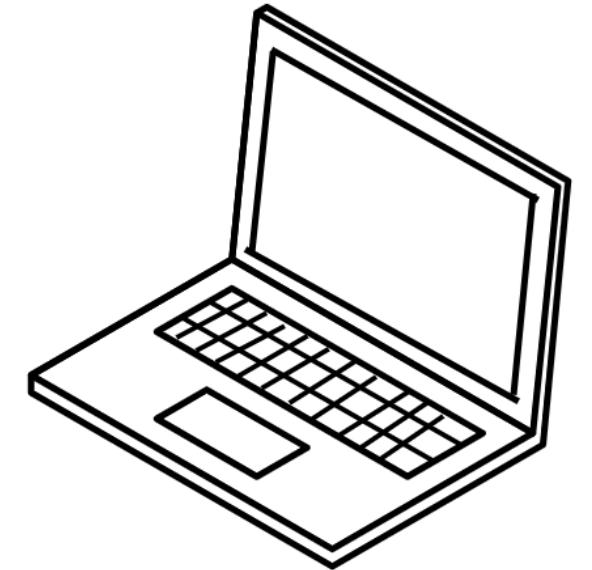
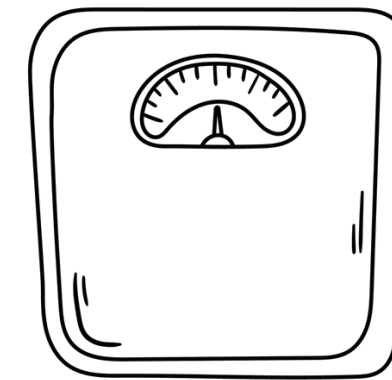


Equipment costs

- Computers, tablets, mobiles phones, specialist software
- Cameras
- Audio recording, transcription devices
- Measuring devices
- Specialist lab equipment
- Additional/specialist diagnostic equipment

Funding thresholds, requirements, VAT status →

Consult your Research Support Office



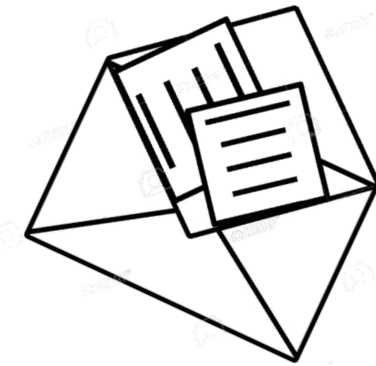
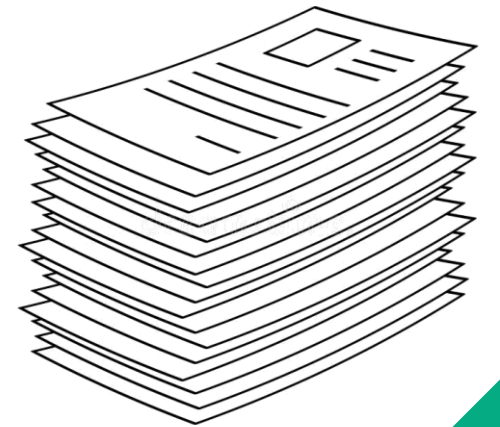
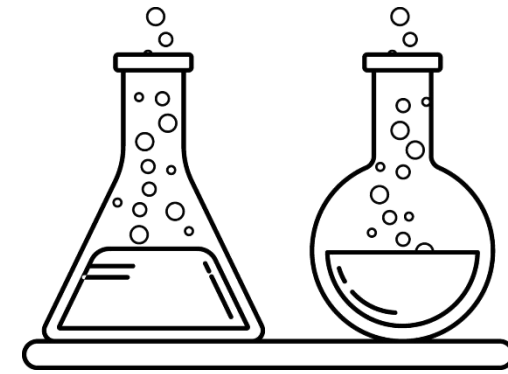
Travel and subsistence

- Research team
- Patient/public representatives
- Participants
- Carers
- Travel to sites, meetings
- Training events
- Conferences



Consumables

- Consumables used for taking/analysing samples
- Lab consumables
- Assay kits
- Stationery
- Printing costs – are specialist documents required?
- Postage
- Couriers
- Catering/room hire for meetings





Other costs

- Training and development
- Participant reimbursement
- Use of research facilities e.g. scanning, Clinical Research Facility, etc.
- Accessing data sets
- Publication costs
- Dissemination and impact activities
- Website development
- Subcontracted services (VAT)

Other costs (continued)

Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE):

- Payment to advisors
- Training
- Meetings
- Facilitation
- Etc.



Payment guidance for researchers and professionals involving people in research

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/payment-guidance-researchers-and-professionals>

Other costs (continued)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):

- Care provision
- Transcribing of materials
- Translator / interpreter costs
- Producing materials in specific format
- Hire of community venues
- Etc.



Other costs (continued)

- Clinical Trial Unit resources → **Early engagement!**
- Randomisation
- Trial committee meetings
- Regulatory fees for drug trials and medical device studies
- R&D set up fees
- Pharmacy costs



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What sites will need to be involved?

- Primary care e.g. GP surgeries, community pharmacy
- NHS secondary care
- Care and nursing homes
- Hospices
- Community Hubs
- Schools
- Etc.



Resources:

- [Setting up and running research studies | NIHR](#)
- RDN [Study Support Service contacts](#)

Set up and feasibility

- What will the role of the site be?
- How many sites will be needed?
- Availability of staff – Will any roles need to be newly recruited?
- Does the time commitment warrant the costing of dedicated posts?
- Will there be the need for multiple people in a role to ensure continuity?

Early engagement of a site representative is key



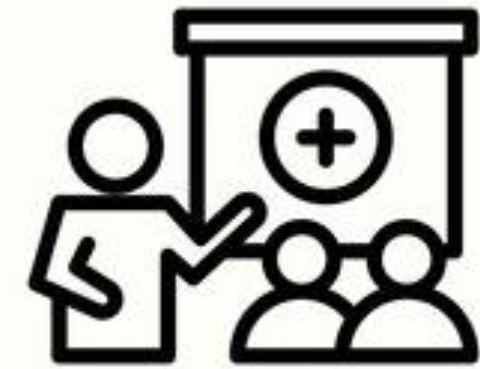
➤ Who will need to be involved?

- Site PI
- Research Nurse
- Administrator
- Clinician
- Practitioner
- Pharmacist
- Social worker
- Care home manager
- Etc.

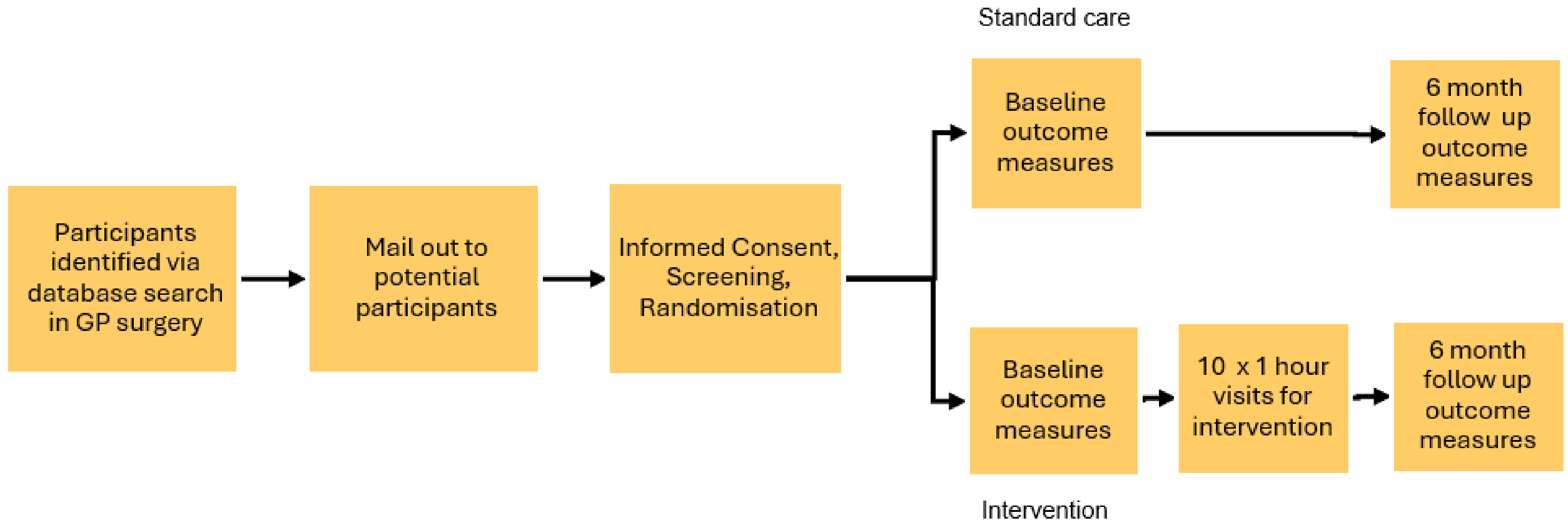


What specific activities will be required?

- Attendance at training
- Database searches, eligibility checks
- Participant contact
- Informed consent
- Tests, procedures
- Intervention delivery
- Questionnaires, interviews
- Accessing health records, integrating data



Participant flow diagram





Schedule of Procedures

Example

Schedule of Activities	Baseline visit	Visit 1	Visit 2
Informed consent process	X		
ROUTINELY COLLECTED DATA			
Height (cm)	X		
Weight (kg)	X		X
Full blood count	X	X	X
QUESTIONNAIRES			
• PHQ-9 • GAD-7	X	X	X
QUALITATIVE			
In-depth interviews		X	

Who pays for health and care site costs?

Participant
Identification

Data
collection
and review

Medical
history

Training to
deliver an
intervention

Informed
consent

Focus
groups and
interviews



Attributing costs for health and care research projects

If the research study will take place in an NHS, public health or social care setting, all associated costs need to be correctly attributed according to the 'AcoRD' principles to identify how the costs of the study will be resourced.

AcoRD = Attributing the costs of health and social care Research and Development <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-attributing-the-costs-of-health-and-social-care-research>

The regional Research Delivery Networks provide specialist advice and support for activity attribution



Attributing costs for health and care research projects

- Three broad costs areas:

Cost type	Cost description	Funding source
1. Research costs	Costs related to the research itself that are being undertaken to answer the research question	Research grant
2. Treatment costs	Patient care costs which would continue if intervention were successful	Usual commissioning
3. Support costs	Additional patient care costs which would end once the study stopped	RDN

Early engagement of the RDN ensures the correct cost attributions.

Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT):

- The SoECAT is a tool that attributes the different activities and costs associated with health and care research in a standardised way. It also informs parts of the grant costing to the Funder.
- Your R&D team or JCRO can help you complete the SoECAT.
- The regional Research Delivery Networks (RDN) provide specialist support for activity attribution and validation of the SoECAT.

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/online-soecat-guidance>

Online SoECAT form

- Detailed breakdown of site activities

ACTIVITY	TYPE	DEPARTMENT	ACTIVITY CODE	STAFF ROLE	STAFF ROLE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	TIME REQUIRED (MINUTES)
<u>Site Initiation Visit (SIV)</u> 	General Procedure	Study Team	NIHR_GPC_005	Nursing/Manager Nursing/Manager Medical Staff	Research Nurse 1 Research Nurse 2 Site PI	60 60 60
<u>Database search</u> 	General Procedure	Study Team	NIHR_GPC_001	Nursing/Manager	First search 1h, Subsequent searches 20min/month for 11 months	280
<u>Eligibility check (exclusions)</u> 	General Procedure	Study Team	NIHR_GPC_002	Nursing/Manager	5 min/potential participant approached, approx. 104 participants per site (624 in total to be approached)	520
<u>Mail-out</u> 	General Procedure	Study Team	NIHR_GPC_003	Nursing/Manager	Phonecall and study info text/email, 5 min/potential participant approached, approx. 104 participants per site (624 in total to be approached)	520

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/online-soecat-guidance>

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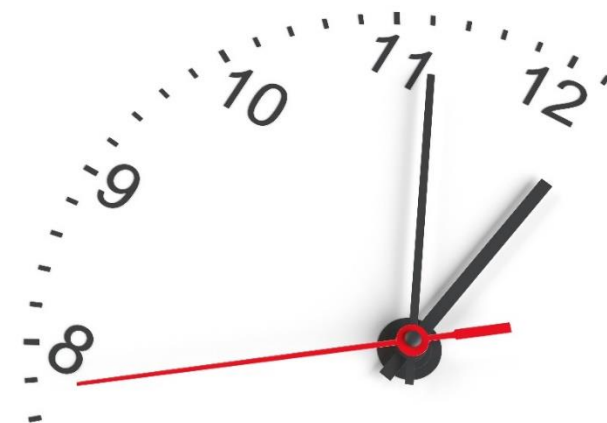
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Summary



- Early engagement with research support contacts, project team and key partners.
- Explain how PPIE and inclusion are included at all stages of research and consider the associated costs.
- Allow time to prepare and review the application and costings.



Summary

- Provide detail about the specific activities happening at sites and obtain support for attribution of costs.
- Present a clear budget breakdown and justification of costs – your research support contact can help with this.
- Allowing flexibility in the budget.
- Ensure grant is adequately resourced but also represents value for money.



Projects and budgets come in all shapes and sizes



Useful Contacts

- JCRO, jcro@sussex.ac.uk
- Research Support Service | NIHR: complete online contact form
- Brighton and Sussex CTU – BSMS, BSclinicaltrialsunit@bsms.ac.uk
- Research Delivery Network South East, se.rrdn@nihr.ac.uk

Useful links

- NIHR Inclusion guidance:
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/inclusion-now>
- Research Engagement Network:
<https://www.bsms.ac.uk/research/support-and-governance/shcrp/ren.aspx>
- PPIE costings guidance from NIHR:
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/payment-guidance-researchers-and-professionals>
- SoECAT guidance: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/online-soecat-guidance>
- [I need help costing my research | NIHR](#)



Any questions?

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Website:

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