

Research capability building in primary / community care staff: lessons learned

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Primary care researcher bursary scheme 2010-2013

Aim: to support the development of a research idea for submission to a NIHR funding stream

Support provided

- Funds to cover clinical backfill
- Mentorship from the Research Office
- Links forged with appropriate academic partners

Awardee professional backgrounds

- Clinical psychology
- General practice
- Specialist physiotherapy
- Pharmacy
- Health visiting

Progress of awards



Topic areas

- Obesity management
- Learning difficulties
- Disorders of consciousness
- Asylum seekers and refugees

Achievements

- 3 NIHR submissions
- Publication of a systematic review
- Support to complete NIHR Clinical Research MSc and a CLAHRC fellowship
- Development of a patent

Primary care researcher bursary scheme redesign 2015

Feedback-barriers to completion

- limited managerial buy in
- pressures of service delivery took precedence
- lack of staff to provide clinical backfill

Overcoming barriers

- engagement with senior management- highlighting benefits of research
- engagement with immediate manager/service lead
- ensure a contract signed by manager to protect awardee's time for research

Anticipated benefits of redesign

Individual:
Develop research skills
Refine research question relevant to clinical practice
Apply research skills
Access academic team and mentor

Research Office:
Meet core aims of strategy:
• developing people
• developing research proposals

Employer:
Staff development
Potential to attract research income
Build 'home-grown' research portfolio

Literature review to inform the redesign

Highlighted that the existing scheme provided much of the support and mentorship discussed in the literature.

The review prompted us to clarify the aims and expected outcomes of the bursary for individuals, employers and the Research Office.

We identified successful strategies which adopted a graded approach to support.

Primary care researcher bursary scheme 2016- present

Tier 1	Attend course e.g. Research Methods module of MSc Clinical Research (12 days); mentorship from Development team.
Acquire skills	
Tier 2	3 – 6 months' one day per week secondment to the Research Office to develop reviewing and analytical skills; mentorship from Development team.
Develop skills	
Tier 3	Secondment 1 day/ week for up to 1 year to a UEA research team and academic mentor.
Apply skills	

Now

One tier 2 award in progress- a practice nurse is carrying out a literature review
Capacity to offer one bursary of each tier per year

Future

Continue to engage with HCPs
Continue to advertise
Re-evaluate scheme

Comments from awardees

The bursary experience was exactly what I needed to allow me to turn the theory of my Masters degree learning into practical research activity.

The bursary supported me to develop collaborative projects with experts in my field. This has led to our involvement as a recruitment site in two research studies to date including a large scale multi-site study.

It was the first show of confidence I received that allowed me to pursue my research project. It funded a trip to Cardiff to meet a lead researcher in a small field and from then my project has blossomed. It was the touch paper leading to an explosion of ideas and contacts that have really made things happen and turn an idea into action.

