

**NIHR Themed Call: Specification Document
Prevention and Treatment of Obesity**

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) will issue a call for research into the evaluation of interventions or services for the prevention and treatment of obesity in adults and children in December 2015.

Issues of particular importance for this call include the prevention of type 2 diabetes and increasing levels of physical activity.

Preventing obesity and type 2 diabetes is a priority for the UK Government. With over 60% of the adult population either overweight or obese and more than 2.7 million people diagnosed with type-2 diabetes, the health burden and economic impact of obesity in the UK are increasing.

This call is an initiative by the NIHR in recognition of the need for further research-based evidence to underpin the prevention and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children.

The following seven NIHR managed research programmes will be participating:

- Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME)
- Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR)
- Health Technology Assessment (HTA)
- Invention for Innovation (i4i)
- Programme Grants for Applied Research (PGfAR)
- Public Health Research programme (PHR)
- Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB)

In addition the following three NIHR research training programmes will be participating:

- Fellowships
- Research Professorships
- Clinician Scientist

Research proposals must be within the remit of one of the participating programmes and applicants should carefully consider the remit described for each programme. However, this call provides opportunities to evaluate interventions which cross NIHR programme boundaries and applications which span the remit of one or more NIHR programme will be welcomed. The inclusion of patient and public views and experiences are considered important by each participating programme.

NIHR would welcome applications for new primary research studies and also research that synthesises evidence to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of new, promising or existing interventions*
- support the translation of effective interventions into practice
- improve adherence to individual, family or group health behaviour interventions or treatments
- investigate the durability of effect, or undertake longer term follow up of pre-existing research for existing interventions.

High quality applications proposing the use of novel and efficient study designs are encouraged, as are proposals that:

- will make use of pre-existing data sets
- investigate through models the impact of effective interventions on patients, the NHS or wider population.

*Interventions can be both pharmacological and non-pharmacological. All applicants should take note of the existing NIHR portfolio of published and funded projects in these areas to avoid duplication of research.

In addition:

EME Programme: Applications to the EME Programme may test novel interventions used in the prevention, diagnosis or treatment of obesity. Applications should concentrate on determining the efficacy of interventions and may also include the evaluation of mechanisms. Applications should have the potential to contribute work of significant benefit to the clinical management of patients. Applications may investigate novel or repurposed interventions and technologies, but studies of incremental or minor improvements to existing technologies or the discovery of new biomarkers are not within the remit of the EME Programme.

Researchers should note that a particular area of interest for EME concerns the mechanisms underlying the development of insulin resistance in obesity and interventions that may prevent or modify its development, though applications across the whole field of obesity are welcome.

HS&DR Programme: The Health Services and Delivery Research (HS&DR) Programme funds research to produce evidence on the quality, accessibility and organisation of health services. Robust mixed methods studies are invited with a focus on weight management services including (but not confined to) bariatric surgery delivered by the NHS, with a focus on organisation and delivery of services, costs, quality and patient experience.

Evaluation is needed of new approaches to delivery of multi-component lifestyle weight management for people with long term conditions particularly those underserved by condition specific patient education programmes. Bariatric surgery is being offered to wider patient groups following NICE guidance. New research should complement the HS&DR and HTA on bariatric surgery. This could elaborate how services can assess and address the decision-support needs of patients who may be offered bariatric surgery, and of their post-surgical psychological and weight management support needs.

HTA Programme: As part of this wider call for research for the prevention and treatment of obesity, the HTA programme is also interested in receiving applications concerning the management of obesity and overweight in people with Type 2 diabetes to contribute to better health and to reduce the morbidity resulting from the two conditions.

i4i Programme: The i4i Programme encourages applications aiming to develop innovative non-invasive technologies with the potential to improve patient outcomes through prevention, early intervention and diagnosis, rapid decision making and active monitoring. Solutions which will be integrated into primary and/or secondary care pathways are of particular interest. Any mobile or remote monitoring should demonstrate integration with NHS systems and compliance with the Interoperability Toolkit (<http://systems.hscic.gov.uk/interop/itk>).

PGfAR Programme: Applications to the PGfAR Programme are likely to describe substantial programmes of research involving a number of discrete but inter-related components or activities which together have potential for benefits to patients and the NHS within 3-5 years of the end of the grant.

PHR Programme: The PHR Programme evaluates non-NHS public health interventions intended to improve the health of the public and reduce inequalities in health. The programme will consider proposals aiming to generate evidence to support interventions to prevent or reduce overweight and obesity, and to prevent type-2 diabetes. We particularly encourage applications which focus on population level interventions, including those to tackle obesogenic environments and reduce excess energy intake, interventions to prevent excess weight gain in childhood, and scalable interventions to promote long term maintenance of weight loss. Proposals may focus on specific populations where justified.

RfPB Programme: Applications to the RfPB Programme should arise from daily practice in the NHS and must demonstrate a trajectory to patient benefit in the short to medium term. The programme supports applications which are regionally derived and applications for feasibility studies are welcome.

NIHR Research Training Programmes: Three NIHR research training programmes are participating in the call; Fellowships, Research Professorships and Clinician Scientists. All NIHR research training programmes are aimed at developing tomorrow's research leaders and are available at a range of levels depending on the applicant's background and experience. The programmes participating in this call will particularly welcome applications which include a research project or programme focussed on the prevention and treatment of obesity.

For further information on the participating programmes please visit:
<http://www.themedcalls.nihr.ac.uk/>

The call will open on **9 December 2015** and completed forms must be submitted by **6 April 2016 at 1pm**. However, after this initial call has closed the participating programmes will continue to be interested in receiving proposals addressing the prevention and treatment of obesity in areas not otherwise well covered in their portfolios.

Please note opening and closing dates for the participating research training programmes will differ with all details published on the NIHR website (www.nihr.ac.uk/funding/training-programmes.htm).