

Cross-sector Research Opportunities Call for Participation Guidance

Background

NorthHFutures is a collaborative, people-powered research programme that brings together the expertise and resources of six universities in the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) region to provide opportunities for everyone to engage in digital health and health-tech initiatives. These universities are Newcastle, Cumbria, Durham, Northumbria, Sunderland, and Teesside. They lead the academic partners in the hub consortium.

The hub also involves global technology companies, small to medium-sized businesses, and other enterprises and initiatives that have funding to promote research and innovation. We also work with organisations in the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, with advocacy groups, and with citizens.

We are motivated to address healthcare needs in our region that are currently not being met, and work to reduce inequalities and digital exclusion. Through an integrated, regional approach uniting this consortium for the first time, the aspiration is for NorthHFutures to establish research leadership in Digital Health. Widening participation in research is at the heart of NorthHFutures, we are especially interested in fostering collaborations across academic and VCSE partners.

Research Priority Areas

NorthHFutures will facilitate and fund new research collaborations. Collaborative teams will undertake a research project to focus on specific themes that have been identified based on the needs of the NENC region:

- Promoting Health and Nutrition for Children and Young People;
- Developing Digital Surgical Pathways (about care before, during and following an operation);
- Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing;
- Living and Ageing Well with Multiple Long-term Conditions.

Join a Workshop

The workshops will bring together people from different fields to connect, share ideas, and tackle real-world challenges. They will be professionally led, making them accessible for those who are new to research to take part. All experience and expertise relating to the topic area will be valuable; there is no expectation around prior knowledge about research, or being an expert in the workshop topic. In addition to working with others to develop ideas into a proposal, there will be supportive guidance and mentoring from NorthHFutures researchers and collaborators - on hand at each workshop. Please complete this form to apply: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V2ML6JV>.

Project criteria

- To apply for NorthHFutures funding, applicants need to have attended one of our upcoming workshops and formed a collaborative team. It is possible for additional team members to be added to the project team following the workshop, and before submission.
- Projects are expected to last for maximum of 12 months.
- Each project must include a VCSE partner. It is recommended that VCSE partners are costed into the project as a subcontractor. Project funding is not available to support existing research proposals and only for proposals that are generated by the team of workshop participants, based on discussions that arise from one of the workshops.
- Funding is only eligible for research at an early stage. While we would hope that successful research outcomes would be further developed into innovations in practice that may, ultimately, involve some form of commercialisation, the research that we are funding precedes this point of its development.

Applicant Criteria and Description

Project Lead: Project Leads (Principal Investigator, PI) must be eligible for EPSRC funding. For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive this funding, see the EPSRC Funding Guide: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/>.

As this call is a targeted funding opportunity provided via EPSRC funding, higher education institutions, and some research institutes and independent research organisations are eligible to apply including NHS bodies with research capabilities. A list of eligible organisations to apply to EPSRC is provided at: <https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-funding/>.

The Project Lead, along with the Lead Institution, are contractually responsible for ensuring the funds are used appropriately. They must also comply with standard research contract terms, including those stipulated by the EPSRC.

Project Partner: Projects may also include collaborators referred to as Project Partners. Project partners cannot receive funds from the projects beyond expenses of participating in the research, such as travel to research meetings. Project partners can participate through an in-kind contribution (such as staff time for advisory or research participation, access to data or facilities) or through a cash contribution.

Subcontractor: will undertake paid work through specific tasks or portions of the project through a formalised subcontract agreement. This may be most appropriate where it is not possible to contribute through an in-kind arrangement, such as skills and services offered by VCSE partners.

The subcontract will be subject to the procurement rules of the Lead Institution, including compliance with any relevant Subsidy Control legislation, and so should be discussed with the lead institution before submission.

Staff members: If you're applying for a salary for an individual who is either currently employed by, or to be recruited by the academic institutions of the Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Investigator (Co-I), this individual will be classified as staff in your application. This usually applies to post-doctoral researchers. However, PhD students may also be included if suitable. Please note, according to EPSRC regulations, we cannot fund a PhD student to undertake work that could be seen as an extension of their PhD studies.

Costing

Each team can bid for up to £50,000, Applicants will be awarded 80% of the full cost, and the lead institution receiving the award is responsible for the remaining 20%. This includes the remaining 20% for any subcontracted services. When invoices are submitted, they should be for 80% of the full cost and a statement should also be submitted showing the full cost. Please note equipment purchase costs are ineligible. For further details on costings and overheads see EPSRC's Full Economic Costing (FEC) Guides: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/resources/>.

Both Directly Allocated and Directly Incurred costs can be part of the projects, and these should be factored into the total budget. All costs must include VAT (if applicable) and any other relevant taxes. The UKRI funding terms and conditions are applicable. Applicants are required to illustrate in the application how the funds will be spent.

It is anticipated that VCSE partners will be costed into the project as subcontractors. This is due to EPSRC and UKRI funding rules. It is possible to be costed as a Project Partner, however all parties should be aware of the limitations of this criteria when looking to receive funding from the project.

Before submitting, proposals need to be costed and approved by the Lead Institution. The Lead Institution, by authorising the proposal's submission to NorthHFutures, confirms the accuracy of the costing and all required internal authorisations have been undertaken prior to submission.

Project Management and Reporting

The project management responsibilities would typically lie with the Project Lead. They will be responsible for budget management, ensuring timely delivery of the project, and keeping in touch with the NorthHFutures team. It is possible to transfer this responsibility to another team member.

The projects will need to submit a short report at the halfway point of their project. This will include updates on progress and outcome.

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In addition to this, the projects will need to complete a final report within one month of concluding. Details of the project, the team, progress and outcomes may be included on the NorthHFutures website, other promotional material, and the team may be required to present a summary of their work at NorthHFutures events and workshops. Any publications or other outputs/dissemination resulting from work carried out under this grant must include acknowledgement of the Hub's funding by including the statement:

"This work has been supported by the Northern Health Futures (NorthHFutures) Hub, which has been funded by EPSRC under grant number EP/X031012/1". Publications must adhere to UKRI's Open Access requirements.

Assessing Applications

Applications for NorthHFutures funding will be reviewed by the NorthHFutures Research Board (involving representatives from Health and Care providers, VCSE sector organisations, and academics from the partnering six universities). Applications will be reviewed by the board using a juried process, which means that board members will discuss applications together to make funding decisions. The board reviews bids using specific assessment criteria, outlined below. Successful bid teams will have the unique opportunity to conduct pilot (feasibility/ scoping) studies, with the purpose of delivering evidence and early impact that could inform applications further research funding to develop work.

Up to £50,000 of NorthHFutures funding will be made available to fund research projects arising from the workshop. Each theme will fund approximately four projects. The projects may each be awarded different amounts of funding.

Application Assessment Criteria

- **Addressing unmet health needs and health inequalities in NENC:** Making sure everyone has the healthcare they need and closing the gap between the health of different groups of people.
- **Interdisciplinarity & capacity for skills development:** Bringing together different areas of knowledge and expertise and enabling skills development.
- **Consideration of health-tech & novelty of technology or its application:** using new and useful health technology or using current technology in interesting ways.
- **Feasibility:** whether the project is possible or practical to do.
- **Responsible Research Innovation:** consideration of ethics, legalities and equality, diversity, and inclusion in activities, to promote professional practice.
- **Value for money:** getting the best possible outcome or benefit from the resources invested.
- **Requirements for data infrastructure use / health data access / cloud-data services:** What you need to use and access health data, and how you might use cloud-based services for health data.
- **Involvement of VCSE partner:** for public and community involvement in project planning and delivery.

Key Dates

- Funding Proposal submission: 15th November 2024
- Notification of funding proposal outcome: 16th December 2024
- Research Projects commence by: 1st February 2025
- Mid-point project reporting: 1st September 2025
- Projects end by: 30th April 2026

GDPR Statement

Data will be processed and stored according to University standards and in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. This study has been approved by a Faculty Ethics Committee, reference number 49407/2023. Data will be accessed by team members at partnering universities: see <https://www.northfutures.org/> for details.

Any personal data collected from you will be securely stored only for the duration of the study or as long as it is required after which point it will be permanently deleted. Research data will be securely stored for up to 10 years after which point it will be permanently deleted. For more information about how data is managed at Newcastle University, please contact: rec-man@newcastle.ac.uk.

Contact

If you have any questions about this Call for Participation, or about your eligibility to take part, please contact NorthH Futures Hub Programme Manager, Jen Wood:

jennifer.wood@ncl.ac.uk.

[northfutures.org](https://www.northfutures.org)

Please visit our website to find out more about the NorthH Futures Hub for the North East and North Cumbria, and sign up to our mailing list to keep up-to-date about wider hub activities and how to get involved. Please also connect via LinkedIn.

 [linkedin.com/showcase/northfutures](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/northfutures)

