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Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter of the new Research Design Service - South West (RDS - SW). The RDS - SW started on the 1 October 2008 and supersedes the former Research and Development Support Units (RDSUs) across the region.

Following NIHR tender, a bid was produced to provide a Research Design Service in the South West region via a number of sites; this devolved model was developed to ensure that all researchers across our wide geographical area can access high quality and timely support to develop research proposals. The bid was successful, and the RDS - SW was launched in October of 2008.

The RDS - SW is part of the infrastructure of the National Institute for Health Research and is one of ten regional services around the country making up the national RDS. The RDS exists to provide help to people preparing research proposals for submission to peer-reviewed funding competitions for applied health or social care research. The RDS - SW essentially consists of a team of people based in universities and the NHS across the South West who are able to advise and provide practical support when you are developing your grant application.

As the RDS is funded by the NIHR for this purpose, such help is provided free of charge. The RDS team has a wide

range of methodological expertise and all RDS Consultants have many years' experience in working collaboratively to develop grant applications. The RDS will advise NHS researchers, and others working in partnership with the NHS, developing an application to a suitable funding body. Priority is given to NHS researchers applying to the NIHR Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) funding scheme.

I am pleased to confirm that the Residential Research School, which takes place in France, will once again be running this year (see page 2). We are also running a Grant Applications Workshop in Bristol on 15 July (see page 3).

We strive to provide a high quality and timely service to researchers and are always pleased to receive feedback. We would welcome comments and suggestions not only on this newsletter but also on any aspect of the service the RDS - SW provides. Contact the Coordinating Centre on 01823 342792 or email: rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk

We look forward to working with researchers across the South West and producing many successful grant applications.



Dr Paul Ewings
Director, RDS - South West

Residential Research School - Brittany, France

3rd - 9th November 2009

As an integral part of its work of providing advice and support to researchers developing research proposals, the RDS-SW is organising a Residential Research School in November 2009.

With the support of NHS Trusts from across the South West, the Research School will build on five years of experience of running residential research schools for health service researchers, initially in Cornwall and latterly for the whole of the South West.

The Residential Research School will provide an extended master-class in writing successful research proposals through:

- a week of protected time dedicated to the development of research projects;
- the experience of working as part of a professional research team;
- coaching in the skills of writing research proposals;
- teaching and “hands-on” experience of the methodological, technical, and practical issues in planning and explaining research.

The aim of the Residential Research School is that, by the end of the School, participants will have

developed a research proposal which they will be able to take forward as a high quality funding application.



Participants come to the Residential Research School in project teams comprising three members. Selection for the School is through an open competition in which the teams bid for a place in the form of a research proposal. The proposals are reviewed by the RDS scientific committee with appropriate advice from clinical and academic colleagues.

“This is an exciting and unique opportunity”

The primary criterion for selection is the potential of the research ideas to attract peer reviewed funding from a major national research funding organisation.

Teams are expected to meet the costs of attendance at the School, but funding to cover the costs is often available for employees of the Trusts who support the School.

This is an exciting and unique opportunity for research teams in the

South West to develop proposals which will be competitive for research funding, with the dedicated time and support of a team of experts who have over one hundred years’ research experience and many millions of pounds of peer review funding between them.

The Residential Research School will be held in Quimper (Brittany) from 3rd to 9th November 2009 (inclusive). Accommodation is at the Mercure Hotel.

Full details of the School can be found at: www.residential-research-school.org.uk



Applications for the 2009 School must be made using the application form on the website.

The **deadline** for the submission of full applications is **5pm Friday 26 June 2009**.

For further advice or information please contact Debbie Marsh on 01823 344178 or email: Debbie.Marsh@tst.nhs.uk

Involving the Public in Research

The involvement of service users, carers and the lay public in the business of the NHS has been actively encouraged through a number of policy routes. More recently, the NHS Act 2006 created an obligation on NHS organisations to consult with the public when they develop or commission services.

This being the case, it makes some sense that the research information that is used to inform services should also include the views of service users, carers and the public from the outset.

If we don't involve service users, their carers and the public in what's being researched, there

will continue to be a mismatch between what researchers are researching, the evidence available and the unanswered questions asked by patients and clinicians.

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) requires evidence of active involvement in applications to a number of their funding streams. Active involvement in research is different from simply taking part in a study. It means:

- Doing research with service users and carers as part of your project team and members of your steering group. It's not just

about doing research to them or about them.

- That service users, carers and members of the public are involved in the design of studies, development of protocols and the collection of data.

The Research Design Service can provide you with all the support you need to develop active involvement for your research project. You may also find considerable help and expertise within your local NHS Trust's Patient and Public Involvement Office.

For more information, visit our website at: www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk

Grant Applications Workshop - Bristol

The RDS – SW runs a one-day workshop for researchers who are developing proposals with the intention of applying for a grant.

The workshop does not provide detailed training in research methodology, rather it more generally covers the full range of issues inherent in developing a successful grant application.

The RDS has a particular interest in supporting applications to the Research for Patient Benefit (RfPB) Programme, and this workshop will be particularly useful for people wishing to apply to that scheme. However, it is also relevant for those applying to other

NIHR schemes and indeed other funders such as national charities.

Competition for these grants is fierce and the workshop aims to help participants understand how to improve their chances of success.

The workshop is directed more at researchers with some experience than novices, and is intended to allow them to turn good applications into excellent ones.

This **free** full day workshop will be held in Bristol on Wednesday 15th July 2009.

It will comprise short talks and group work on different elements of the application.



To register visit our website at: www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk or contact Debbie Marsh on 01823 344178 or email: Debbie.Marsh@tst.nhs.uk

The **deadline** for receipt of completed registration forms and project proposals is **Friday 26 June 2009**.

Upcoming Events

Joint Health Research Conference: Committed to better research in the NHS

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and South West Strategic Health Authority are organising a joint event to promote the benefits of research in the NHS. This will be held on Wednesday 17th June 2009 at the Bristol Marriott Hotel City Centre, Old Market, Bristol. Registration is available at:

www.profbriefings.co.uk/registration/southwest

These joint events aim to promote the benefits of research, showcase local activity and engage further with local NHS staff and academics so that they can understand more fully the range of opportunities available through the NIHR to undertake and lead health and social care research to improve patient care and NHS ser-

In addition to the plenary sessions there will be an interactive exhibition where delegates can talk to representatives from the different NIHR programmes and coordinating centres, view on-line demonstrations and participate in up to two interactive seminars.

Current Vacancies

Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow in Statistics/ Research Methods Ref: HSC58

Starting salary for Research Fellow grade from £30,594 - £35,469 per annum.

Starting salary for Senior Research Fellow grade from £36,532 - £43,622 per annum.

To find out more and apply online go to:

www.bournemouth.ac.uk/jobs/academic_jobs.html

Closing date: 8 June 2009.

Research Design Consultant Ref: 09095JK

£14,852 - £17,734 pro rata (£29,704 - 35,469 per annum)

Fixed term until 30 September 2013

18.25 hours per week (0.5 FTE)

To find out more and apply online go to:

www.bath.ac.uk/jobs

Alternatively, please email: jobs@bath.ac.uk or call

01225 386924 quoting the reference.

Closing date: 9 June 2009.

Contact Us

Each RDS office is run by an experienced researcher, well equipped to provide practical and user-friendly advice on the research process and applying for funding. If you are unsure of where the nearest office is, or who best to contact, simply get in touch with the **Co-ordinating Centre, Taunton** on **01823 342792** or rds-sw@tst.nhs.uk or visit our website at: www.rds-sw.nihr.ac.uk

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