

Guidance notes on completing the PFCSG award form. January 2010

The form is based on a general version of the NIHR forms, and includes most of the key fields you should expect to see when applying to the NIHR. For the PFCSG award, we do not expect a full, refined protocol. Rather you should state the elements you would anticipate being necessary in the NIHR application and how you would plan to develop these elements in sufficient time to submit to the NIHR. The text boxes are not space-constrained, but some of the NIHR programmes (notably RISC) have very tight and fixed limits. Once you have decided which NIHR scheme appears most suitable, read these notes in conjunction with the NIHR's own guidance notes for the scheme in question, and state the scheme in your PFCSG application.

Title; Succinct and headline-grabbing

Lead applicant; fields are self explanatory

Co-applicants; do not need completion for the PFCSG application unless two people are submitting jointly. For NIHR applications, this section will incorporate key individuals e.g. major collaborating physicians, representatives of the Regional Design Service, Statistician, public involvement.

Abstract; a brief overview which should emphasise the anticipated research to be undertaken and potential NHS benefits resulting. Writing a succinct and pithy abstract is a really valuable skill.

Background; The clinical setting, patient group, what is known, weaknesses of current management, why you are right to be leading research in the area, etc.

Aims and objectives; Aims can be broad statements, but the objectives should be listed as key outputs ("deliverables"). State which NIHR scheme you anticipate submitting to (for the nocturia project, this is the NIHR Programme grant scheme)

Timescale; anticipated start and completion. Tip; don't have an immediate start- for example, consider that ethics permission is needed for research on patients (which takes about 3 months)

Methods; Reviewers will expect to see key aspects of a research protocol. For example, in a randomised controlled trial, you should have inclusion and exclusion criteria, state how blinding will be achieved, how patients will be randomised, data analysis methods, etc.

Sample size calculation; This is the statistical process whereby you ensure enough patients participate to enable the demonstration of statistical significance (i.e. to show that differences between studied groups is a result of the treatment and was unlikely to have arisen by chance). You are advised to discuss this section with your local R&D, as they will know precisely what is intended for this section, and you will be sensible to discuss with them for one of the later text boxes in this form.

Lay/ plain English summary; This section is crucial- the NIHR strongly prioritises this. It is difficult to write clearly for non-specialists, but these are intelligent people and have a big say in where awards are given.

Ethical committee approval; this will be needed if planning to work with patients. Contact the secretary of the local ethics committee to get instructions on the application process.

R&D approval; The local R&D will be keen to support this application, as it is intended to deliver an NIHR bid. Give them a call; they are usually very approachable!

Public and patient involvement; as crucial as the lay summary. They should be involved at the start of the design, not just a token person stuck in as an afterthought.

Anticipated costs; In this section you should outline the costs (very rough estimate) of the intended NIHR application. You should also **state where you plan to use the £9,000 the PFCSG award** brings to develop the NIHR application.

Future relevance to NIHR funding streams; there is no clear guidance on this section. You need to argue how fundamentally important this area is; argue it from the NHS and health economic perspective.

References; self-explanatory.