

Research in-Practice Fellowships for Health and Social Care Practitioners (RPF) 2026

Webinar

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Research. Evidence. Action.

Webinar outline

- Aim and objectives
- Scope
- Key changes from CSF
- Funding, duration & start date
- Eligibility criteria
- Application assessment process
- HRB Narrative-style CV
- Timeframe

Scheme aim

Aim

To provide opportunities for talented health and social care practitioners from a variety of professional backgrounds to conduct research at post-PhD level while continuing to deliver health care or social care as practitioner researchers.

Doctoral research
training

Post doctoral
research

Transition towards
research independence

Transition towards
research leadership

Who do we target

*The HRB defines **practitioner researchers** as health and social care practitioners who combine research with health or social care practice and whose work spans the academic and health and social care settings.*

Scheme objectives

The **main objectives** of the scheme are to:

- Support practitioners to **consolidate their research skills and expertise post-PhD** and to progressively **develop themselves as more independent practitioner researchers, research managers and future leaders**.
- Enable the prospective fellows to **form multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary collaborations** with academic partners and knowledge users in relevant policy and/or practice organisations.
- Provide fellows with **direct experience in the conduct of applied health and social care research projects** aimed at **finding practical solutions to specific problems** or **reduce the evidence gaps in their area of practice**, with a **clear pathway to impact** on the quality and experience of service users and, ultimately, health outcomes.

Scope

The scheme will support fellows to advance **applied health and social care research** projects where specific problems or evidence gaps are documented and where the project is focused on practical solutions, with a clear pathway to impact. The eligible areas are:

- Clinical research
- Health services research (HSR)
- Population health research (PHR)

Scope: examples of ineligible research projects

- Basic biomedical research
- Research involving cell lines, animals, or their tissue
- Pre-clinical studies
- Applications seeking to evaluate a clinical trial or other intervention.
- Applications which are solely literature reviews, stand-alone systematic reviews, audits, surveys, needs assessments or technology development (although these elements may be part of an integrated research study)
- Applications which are solely or predominately developing the infrastructure for biobanking, databases or patient registers without a predominant research element

Key changes from CSF

1. Change of scheme name
2. Introduction of two funding streams - medical practitioners and health and social care practitioners (non-medical)
3. Change in the assessment criteria weighting
4. Increase of research-related costs cap to up to €80,000
5. Shortening of the gap between the end of PhD and the start of post-PhD period
6. Change in PhD eligibility criteria
7. Extension of the application stage to 18 weeks

Funding, duration & start date

Funding

1. **Pro rata salary-related costs of the fellow between 0.3 to 0.5 FTE**
2. **Research-related costs**
Up to maximum €80,000 over the lifetime of the fellowship.

The HRB does not pay an overhead contribution in fellowships.

Start date

Between January
and December
2027

Duration

48-60 months

Lead applicant eligibility criteria

General eligibility

Lead applicant must:

1. Apply from a HRB approved HI based in ROI. This call is **not open** to the HRB HI from **Northern Ireland**.
2. Submit a single application to the scheme
3. Maintain **0.5 FTE in health or social care practice** and dedicate **0.5 FTE protected research time** to the fellowship.
 - A reduced practice commitment of no less than 0.2 FTE may be considered if strongly justified.
 - HRB will buy out a minimum of 0.3 and a maximum of 0.5 FTE of clinical or academic non-research time of the LA
4. Fulfil eligibility under qualifications, employment status and career stage criteria.

1. Qualifications

Lead applicant must:

- Have completed their professional training (medics may be at Specialist Registrar (SpR) level).
- Hold a PhD or demonstrate PhD equivalent research experience or defend their PhD thesis **before 31 May 2026**.
 - Written evidence of successfully passing the PhD viva is required by shortlisting and no later than **5 June 2026 (at time of shortlisting)**.

HRB PhD equivalent research experience

Lead applicant must demonstrate:

- Four years FTE postgraduate research experience, measured from the date of obtaining a primary degree.
- The research resulted in an original, verifiable contribution to knowledge, supported by documented outputs (e.g. publications).

Applications for PhD equivalent research experience **must be submitted by 30 January 2026**. The application form is available on the HRB website.

2. Employment status

At the time of the application, lead applicants may be employed in ROI or any other country or on a career break or in the final stage of their PhD.

Lead applicants who are **not be employed in ROI at the time of application must:**

- Have the support of a HRB approved host institution.

AND

- Be able to demonstrate they have already obtained or are negotiating a post in a health care or a social care services organisation in ROI.

Employment

1. Qualifications

2. Employment status

3. Career stage

Lead applicants must be employed in ROI by start date of the fellowship and hold:

- A clinical post in the Irish health service or social care organisation (permanent/fixed-term contract); **OR**
- A clinical post in a private practice providing inclusive care to the public; **OR**
- A post in a health and social care organisation (e.g. Tusla) ; **OR**
- A joint health or social care and academic position within a higher education institution and the Irish health services or other social care organisations with a maximum 0.2 FTE of research time.

Applicable to medical doctors only

1. Qualifications

2. Employment status

3. Career stage

- Consultant doctors should not provide private practice during the fellowship. Type B/C contract holders must negotiate a work plan excluding private practice, confirmed in the employer's letter of support.
- Medical doctors without a permanent contract must have endorsement from the Head of Medical School, which must be confirmed in the HI letter of endorsement signed by the Head of the School.
- **'Public-only' contracts** are allowed for new consultant posts. If this is not possible, applicants must provide a letter from their hospital group and HSE confirming no private practice during the fellowship.
- Medical doctors completing their clinical specialty training (SpR level) are eligible to apply even if the clinical contract will not cover the full duration of the fellowship. Once training is completed, the requirements on previous slide apply.

3. Career stage

LAs must not be recognised as independent investigators. They are ineligible if they:

- Received a substantial research grant (€100,000 or more) as lead investigator/applicant or led/are leading a work package in funding schemes from the European Commission.
 - Recipients of personal grants such as PhD scholarships remain eligible; **Or**
- Are leading an existing research team; **Or**
- Acted/are acting as a primary supervisor or sponsor of an early career researcher such as PhD; **Or**
- Secured any research grant as a LA, which supports research personnel and the building of a research team; **Or**
- Are recognised as an independent investigator as confirmed by their host institution.

Applicant team

Mentor – mandatory

- An individual who will provide support and guidance during the grant for the research project, career milestones and research vision.

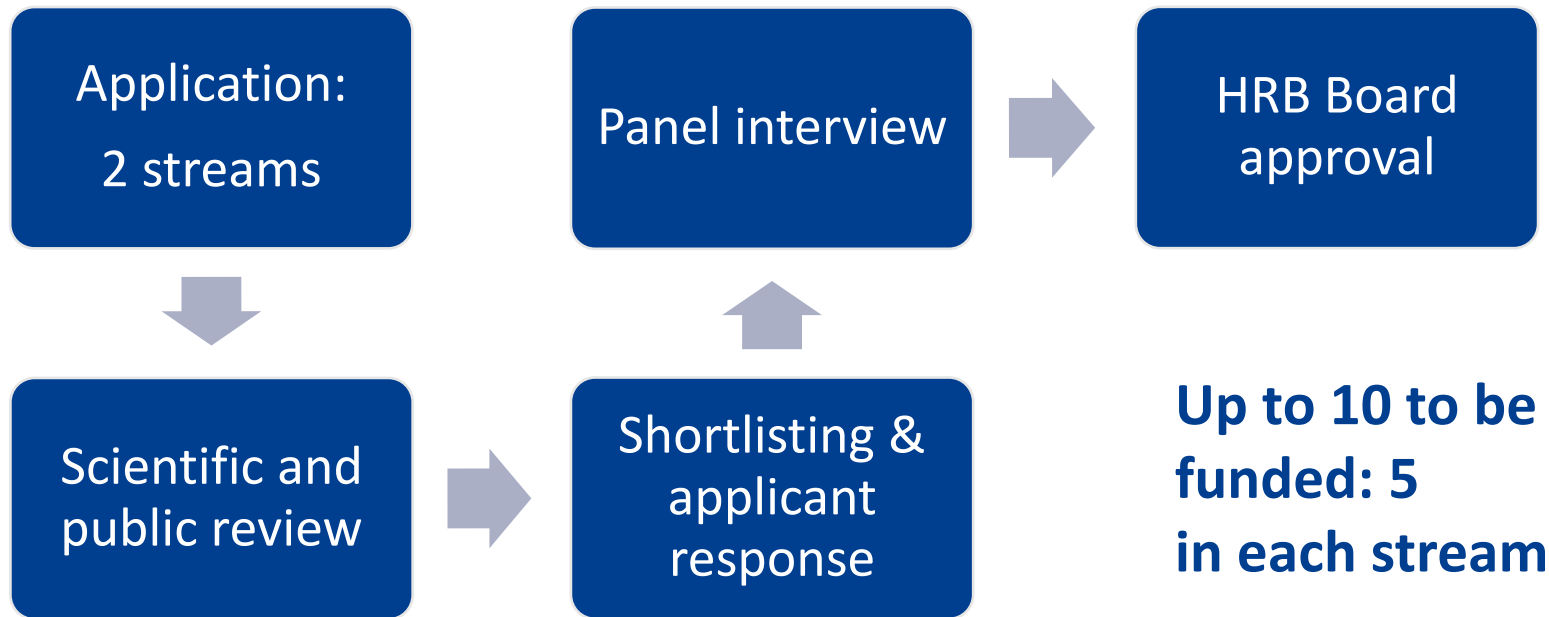
Collaborators - optional

- Individual/organisation with an integral and discrete role in the proposed research.
- May be a researcher, knowledge user, data controller/processor, or PPI contributor
- Up to a maximum of 10 collaborators (can be from outside ROI)

No co-applicants, PhD researchers, MD researchers or salaries staff are allowed in HRB fellowship schemes.

Application assessment process

Application assessment process overview



Application assessment - overview

1. International peer review & public review

- **Peer review** - focused on the **assessment criteria** for the scheme
- **Public review** - focused on the **quality of PPI** in the proposals

Assessment criteria

1. The lead applicant (35%)

- Potential of the lead applicant to become an independent researcher and a potential leader in applied health and social care research.
- Training and professional development strategy

2. The research project (35%)

- Relevance and impact
- Research design and feasibility

3. The support (30%)

- Research team and the mentor
- Host institution and wider support

PPI approaches will be taken into consideration under any of the assessment criteria if considered relevant.

Application assessment - overview

2. Shortlisting & applicant response phase

- Applications **ranked** within each stream based on peer review scores
- The highest ranked 7 applicants in each stream will be invited to respond to reviewer's comments and interviews with the panel.

Application assessment - overview

3. Interview panel review

- Each application assigned to a primary and secondary interviewer
- Panel members review the applications based on the assessment criteria, taking into consideration the associated peer and public review comments and the applicant responses
- Panel recommends for funding up to 5 applicants within a stream to the HRB Board

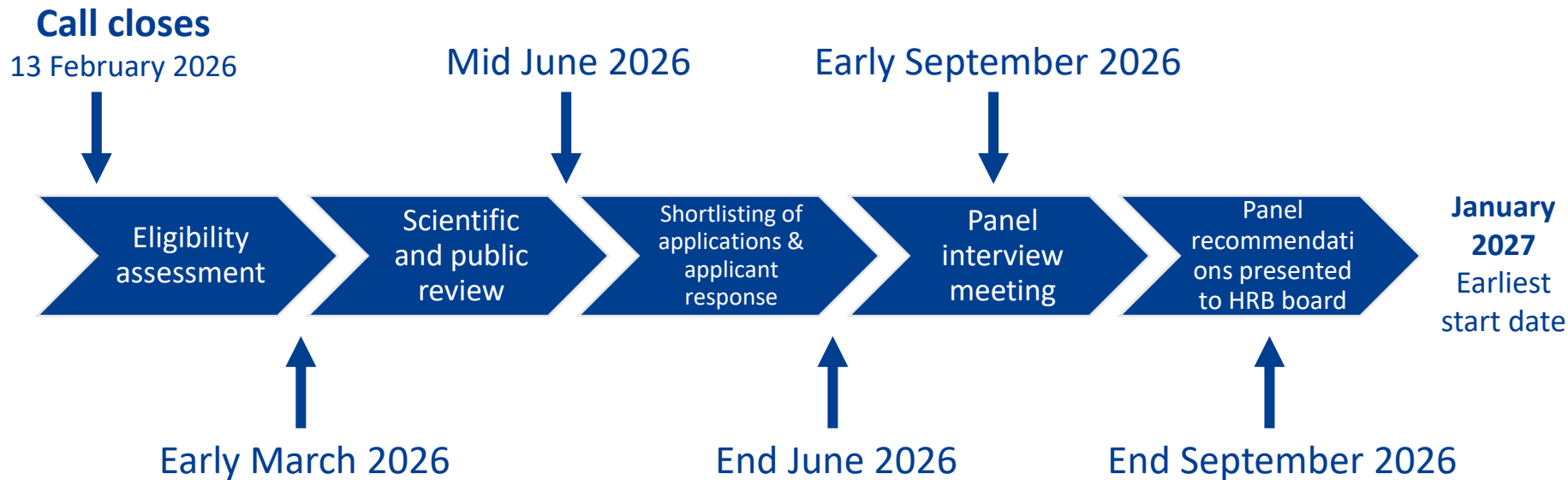
HRB Narrative-style CV

HRB Narrative-style CV

The aim is to highlight your key contributions with the relevant context.

- The questions are standard for lead applicants (and mentors) at all career stages.
 - You are not required to provide information for each of four categories of contributions if not applicable or not yet relevant to your career.
- Do not copy and paste a list of your contributions directly from your traditional CV without providing the relevant context. Highlight how and why you have contributed to a particular area (e.g. research output).
- **Active research experience** will be considered when assessing competitiveness of the track record of the lead applicants by reviewers.

Timeframe



Contact details



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Thank you

Any questions or clarifications?