



APPLICATION GUIDANCE

OVERVIEW

The **National Cardiovascular Research Network (NCRN)** is an interdisciplinary community connecting academics, clinicians, health professionals, industry, and charities to accelerate high-quality cardiovascular research. Our mission is to strengthen cardiovascular research across Wales by building partnerships and driving vital research to advance prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart and circulatory conditions. At the heart of the NCRN is inclusive engagement, embedding lived experiences into innovative research and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

The **Research Responsive Fund (RRF)** is a flexible, small grant funding scheme designed to pump-prime the development of innovative research ideas and strengthen applications for larger funding awards such as project, programme or fellowship grants. Projects must align with one or more of NCRN's [strategic themes](#):

Tackling Arrhythmias and Myocardial Disease	Vascular Ageing and Clinical Outcome
Cardiovascular Data and Advanced Analytics	

The RRF's supports short-term, strategic activities that help researchers to develop competitive proposals such as:

- Proof of concept work including preliminary studies to generate or conclude pilot data.
- Travel to build multi and interdisciplinary collaborations and refine research ideas.
- Purchase of small, enabling equipment essential for preliminary work.

This agile fund is intended solely for **priming novel and important research ideas** and will **not support longer-term studies or ongoing projects**.

ELIGIBILITY?

- Applications are welcomed from researchers employed at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) or research active staff within NHS or Social Care organisations in Wales.
- Open to research-active applicants at any career stage, with strong encouragement for early-career researchers.
- Applications would be expected to be collaborative e.g with an NHS partner or evidence a direction of travel aligned to research for patient and/or public benefit.
- Applicants must be a member of the NCRN – follow [this link](#) to register.
- While matched funding is not essential, applicants are encouraged to explore co-funding opportunities (e.g. through internal institutional funding schemes where available).

Expectations

Successful applicants are expected to spend any funds within 6 months of the award and submit a competitive funding application to a major funding organisation within 6-12 months of completing the preliminary activities.

For queries about eligibility or suitability, please contact admin@NCRN.uk

WHAT WILL THIS FUND PAY FOR?

Eligible Costs	This fund <u>cannot</u> be used to pay for
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Travel & Subsistence ✓ Consumables & materials ✓ Staff time – e.g. short-term research assistant, technician, analytical support, administrative support ✓ Small Equipment – must be project specific ✓ Data collection & analysis costs ✓ Consultancy costs ✓ Patient and public engagement costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Permanent Staff salaries ✗ Overheads, estate and indirect costs (FEC) ✗ Conference attendance ✗ Tuition fees or training costs ✗ Laptops and other generic equipment normally provided by employing organisations ✗ Publication costs ✗ SAIL and other data access costs (please see our Secure Research Data Access Fund)

Award Amount: The maximum award for a project will not exceed **£7,500** with all application costs fully justified to ensure the best value for money. Projects focused solely on building collaboration and networking are anticipated to cost **no more than £3,000**

Award Duration: Up to 6 months

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed by the NCRN's Grants Funding Panel, which includes members of the NCRN Leadership Team, Universities, and NHS partners, and people with lived experience, including patients and members of the public. Applications will be assessed against the criteria below:

- ✓ **Relevance & Fit**
 - Does the project clearly support the aims of the NCRN and the RRF initiative?
 - Is the proposed research novel & important?
 - Does the proposal clearly articulate research for patient and public benefit?
- ✓ **Feasibility**
 - Is the plan realistic within the timeframe (up to 6 months) and budget (up to £7,500)?
- ✓ **Potential for Impact**
 - Will the activity significantly strengthen a future funding application in cardiovascular research?
 - Are the outputs clearly defined?
 - Are the plans for securing future funding realistic and well thought out?
- ✓ **Collaborative Potential**
 - Has the applicant engaged with the NCRN to discuss the application?
 - Applications that involve **cross-sector partnerships** (e.g., universities, NHS, charities, industry) are strongly encouraged.
- ✓ **Value for money**
 - Are the costs fully justified and clearly linked to the activities and outcomes described?

HOW CAN I APPLY?

Please submit your signed application to the NCRN Operations team via email: admin@ncrn.uk

Late applications or those exceeding the stated word counts will not be considered.

For application support, contact: admin@ncrn.uk