

NIHR Clinical Research Network

National Specialty Lead¹ – Ageing

Reference: NSL Ageing 2023

Reports to: NIHR CRN Deputy Medical Director

Employed by: Current employing organisation

PA allocation: Reimbursement of 1 PA (or its equivalent) to employing organisation, enabled through the relevant LCRN

Tenure: From date of appointment to 31 March 2024, subject to review

Location: Current place of employment
Post holder will be expected to travel nationally and, on occasion, internationally

Introduction

The NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) supports patients, the public and health and care organisations across England to participate in high-quality research, thereby advancing knowledge and improving care. This includes assisting researchers and funders to deliver their studies in the NHS and wider care environment and supporting the research community to maximise the value of leading-edge approaches and techniques, so that patients can benefit from new and better treatments.

The CRN is a managed network supported by a national CRN Coordinating Centre (CRNCC) and funded by the Department of Health and Social Care through to the end of March 2024. The CRNCC is hosted as a Consortium between Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Leeds. The Consortium is part of a broad Alliance including Imperial College London, University of Liverpool, King's College London and PA Consulting, bringing excellence from the NHS, university and private sectors. National academic and clinical leadership for all CRN research specialty areas is provided via National Specialty Leads and supported through a 'Cluster' structure delivered through the Alliance's university partners.

¹ This role description will be used to support the appointment of National Specialty Leads, as well as National Sub-Specialty Leads and any other national leads appointed by NIHR CRN to oversee an area of the NIHR CRN Portfolio

In conjunction with the CRNCC Medical Director, Deputy Medical Directors, and Local CRN (LCRN) Clinical Directors, National Specialty Leads are high calibre ambassadors for the NIHR CRN. In collaboration with teams across CRNCC the NSLs proactively develop effective relationships with decision-makers in the public sector, charity and life science organisations (non-commercial, pharma, medtech, diagnostics and biotech) and other related external stakeholders to further the aims of the NIHR CRN. With knowledge and experience of the full scope of the NIHR, they collectively ensure that the NHS and wider care sectors are seen as organisations that excel in the consistent delivery of high-quality clinical and care research. Further details on the role are included below.

National Specialty Lead – Ageing

The National Specialty Lead (NSL) will operate across relevant research settings and stakeholders to communicate effectively about the CRN in order to promote the services offered by highlighting impactful case studies, and to identify strategic research delivery challenges and opportunities to which we can respond. The NSL will be credible, competent and able to command the respect of senior stakeholders, both internal and external to the organisation.

The NSL must understand DHSC and wider health and care research policies and priorities and the opportunities and challenges within their specialty area. The NSL will be an experienced strategic clinical and social care research leader with the ability to lead and develop highly talented health and care professionals. Working with patients, health and care professionals and academics, and life sciences partners the NSL will ensure a focus on the continuing improvement of research experience in the NHS and wider care environment.

By working with the local and national research delivery leaders and the Local Specialty Research Leads (LSRLs), the NSL will maintain a strategic oversight of the specialty's portfolio, and work with NIHR CRN teams and external stakeholders to recognise and address national delivery opportunities and challenges that exist within and across Specialties.

Providing leadership of the specialty at a national level, the NSL will promote engagement, placement and subsequent delivery of studies with the NIHR CRN. In a strategic partnership with the Business Development and Marketing, and Research Delivery Directorates, the NSL will (on request) advise on horizon scanning for future areas of research and current areas of research delivery within their specialty from a clinical and/or care perspective.

Responsibilities

Supported by the Cluster offices and working closely with NIHR CRN Directorates and external stakeholders, the NSL will be responsible for:

1. Identifying and developing strategic opportunities and projects to improve the capacity and capability of the delivery environment
2. Ensuring the specialty portfolio is accessible to all communities, across geographical and demographic boundaries
3. Capturing the impact of the specialty portfolio
4. Supporting processes to ensure studies are feasible and deliverable
5. Assisting in promoting the specialty area to funders including life science partners, public sector, charities

General

- Act as the key clinical contact for the specialty, within the NIHR and to external partners, advising and representing the NIHR CRN and proactively promoting health and care engagement and awareness of research within the specialty at a national level
- Provide and coordinate clinical leadership and advice for specialty activities at a national level to maximise opportunities for participation in NIHR CRN portfolio studies, for example ensuring studies are accessible and deliverable
- Promote the aims, objectives and successes of the NIHR CRN and of the specialty at national and international levels
- Contribute to national NIHR CRN initiatives, for example to reduce inequalities and to share best practice to address strategic priorities such as multiple long-term conditions.
- Facilitate translation by engaging with other elements of the NIHR infrastructure including experimental medicine centres and facilities and Applied Research Collaborations (ARCs)
- Champion a culture of innovation and continuous improvement across the specialty and the NIHR CRN as a whole, leading projects and initiatives as appropriate
- Support the Deputy Medical Directors, Medical Director and senior management team of the NIHR CRN to ensure best value for money and appropriate use of resources to deliver optimal specialty performance in light of current national priorities, challenges and opportunities

Clinical Research Leadership

- Provide visible, dynamic and effective senior health and care research leadership, direction and oversight for the specialty, both within and external to the CRN
- Lead and support the LSRLs, establishing and maintaining a coherent and effective national network for the specialty
- Ensure the effective continued development and functioning of the specialty, promoting health and care engagement
- Ensure succession planning within the specialty
- Ensure that there is strong engagement of trainees with the NSG including appointing trainee members of the NSG where appropriate
- Work with LCRN colleagues to identify, appoint and induct LSRLs
- Chair national meetings of LSRLs and contribute to other national leadership groups and events as appropriate
- Champion the importance of delivery for the life sciences industry, promoting the important contribution commercial clinical research makes to the health and wealth of the nation
- Review opportunities for cross-specialty collaborations
- Explore opportunities to link with other elements of the infrastructure including experimental medicine and applied health research to support the research life cycle
- Participate in the development of relevant procedures, guidelines and protocols as appropriate, ensuring the NIHR CRN service complies with relevant research, clinical and care quality standards

Supporting health and care research delivery

- Maintain a strategic oversight of the national portfolio for the specialty, working nationally to support the timely and effective delivery of the specialty's research portfolio, liaising with LSRLs and Lead LCRNs as and when necessary. National Specialty Leads should also be available to support Chief Investigators as needed
- Have a strategic overview of the volume, balance and accessibility of studies on the specialty's research portfolio, providing expert intelligence and advice to research delivery teams, research sponsors, Chief Investigators and other NIHR CRN staff on request
- Take a strategic overview of the national infrastructure required to support the specialty, with an emphasis on identifying opportunities for improvement and addressing nationwide blocks to successful delivery, and sharing examples of good practice across the LCRNs
- Identify the strengths, capacity and capability of the specialty to ensure the portfolio maximises the ability to offer research participation opportunities to patients and the public
- Support the CRNCC (Performance and Research Delivery functions) in the performance monitoring of the CRN, including understanding how the Specialty contributes to the national High Level Objectives

- Provide input into national specialty-specific business processes, including national feasibility assessments for studies, identifying potential sites/investigators that could conduct the study and the assessment of the risks of successful study delivery
- Identify specific specialty expertise for strategically important studies as requested and identified by CRNCC or DHSC
- In conjunction with the Business Development and Marketing Directorate, work proactively with life sciences industry companies in a coordinated manner (both nationally and internationally) to promote engagement with the NIHR CRN and ensure that high quality commercial studies are successfully placed within, and delivered through, the network
- Advise the CRNCC Research Delivery Director and Medical Director on national issues related to portfolio delivery (e.g. clinical pathways and needs), national infrastructure requirements, and national challenges / opportunities for research in the specialty. Take responsibility, where appropriate and agreed, for the resolution of issues relevant to the specialty or across the wider NIHR CRN
- Advise and assist the CRN with horizon scanning to identify new and future research opportunities within the specialty
- In collaboration with the CRN CC Patient and Public Involvement & Engagement (PPIE) team and advocacy groups within the specialty, promote and lead initiatives that encourage incorporation of the patient/public's voice and experience into the NIHR CRN's approaches to delivery and access to high quality research
- Embrace and promote equality, diversity and inclusion in research and its delivery

Stakeholder Engagement

- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with Royal Colleges, Faculties and professional societies relevant to the specialty
- Work with external stakeholders (e.g. Royal Colleges and research funders) to develop the national research infrastructure for the specialty and link with portfolio development groups to promote continuity between study development, support and delivery
- Work with other elements of the NIHR's infrastructure and wider scientific and academic leadership, and other funders (both within and outside the UK), to increase the flow of high-quality clinical research studies onto the NIHR CRN portfolio
- Develop a close relationship with the senior clinical leaders of NHS England and Devolved Administrations as appropriate
- Promote the involvement and engagement of patients, carers and the public in the specialty's research portfolio
- Engage with NIHR Faculty, including Chief Investigators and Senior Investigators

Undertake any other duties commensurate with the role of a senior member of the NIHR CRN.

Person Specification: Essential Attributes

Qualifications & Education

- Registered on the General Medical Council Specialist Register or hold equivalent clinical professional status
- Higher specialist training in a medical discipline or equivalent professional training

Knowledge & Experience

- Experience as an Ageing health or care investigator
- Nationally respected opinion leader within Ageing research, with a breadth of clinical knowledge
- Evidence of managing effective collaborations and partnerships
- Experience of working across complex organisational structures and effective matrix management
- Sound knowledge of how the NHS and the broader care sectors work
- Knowledge of NIHR
- Knowledge of national systems, structures and processes for supporting clinical research (industry and academic sponsored) in the NHS
- Experience of managing clinical teams through a performance management framework in a clinical setting
- Understanding of workforce planning
- Experience of committee work, including as Chair

Skills & Abilities

- Evidence of leadership skills that engage, motivate and develop a wide range of both clinicians and managers
- Effective facilitator who is able to bring colleagues together to work in a collegiate way for the overall benefit of the national community in which they work
- Well-rounded interpersonal skills, including the ability to influence and achieve results through other people
- Ability to work with stakeholders at all levels across a range of organisations
- Ability to develop strong and productive working relationships with senior stakeholders
- Ability to demonstrate influence on others and achieve impact in research leadership, delivery & management
- Ability to prepare and deliver presentations and reports to a high standard
- Ability to analyse and interpret highly complex information and to make judgements regarding a range of complex issues
- Strong problem-solving skills
- Ability to support and champion new models of working

Values/Behavioural/Attitudes

- Flexible approach to working
- Selfless approach to attaining success for the specialty
- Highly motivated, with ability to influence and inspire others
- Demonstrates working relationships based on value and respect for all colleagues
- Outcomes focussed
- Committed to supporting the development of staff
- Demonstrates passion for bringing benefits to patients through the integration of research within excellent clinical care within the NHS
- Ability to act as a champion for patients and their interests, ensuring the patients'/public's voice is at the heart of LCRN activities

Person Specification: Desirable Attributes

Knowledge & Experience

- Experience and evidence of international collaborations
- Experience as an academic investigator
- Executive level experience
- Understanding of the importance of the application of robust business planning and financial management techniques at scale
- Experience as a Chief Investigator of at least one substantial nationwide or international clinical research project

Cluster Office Structure

A: Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes, Gastroenterology, Hepatology, Metabolic & Endocrine Disorders, Renal Disorders, Respiratory Disorders, Stroke. Host - Imperial College London

C: Anaesthesia, Perioperative Medicine & Pain Management, Critical Care, Dermatology, Health Services Research, Mental Health, Primary Care, Public Health, Social Care, Trauma & Emergency Medicine. Host - King's College London

D: Children, Haematology, Infection, Musculoskeletal disorders, Ophthalmology, Reproductive Health & Childbirth. Host - University of Liverpool

E: Ageing, Dementias & Neurodegeneration (DeNDRoN), Neurological Disorders, Genetics, Ear, Nose & Throat. Host - University of Leeds

F: Cancer, Oral & Dental Health, Surgery. Host - University of Leeds

Applications

To apply, please send a CV and a statement (one page maximum) setting out your vision and suitability for the role to g.nestor@leeds.ac.uk. Confirmation from your employer that they are willing to put in place arrangements to allow you to take on this role would also be useful at this stage. **The deadline for applications is midnight on Monday 8th May 2023.**

Shortlisting and interviews will be held as soon as possible after the deadline and are likely to be virtual in the 3rd or 4th week of May 2023.

We welcome applications from all relevant professional groups within the specialty. Information can be made available in alternative formats. Informal enquiries can be made to Dr Gary Nestor at g.nestor@leeds.ac.uk.

We are committed to providing a culture of inclusion, respect and equality of opportunity that attracts, supports, and retains the best students and staff from all backgrounds and from across the world. Whatever role we recruit for we are always striving to increase the diversity of our community, which each individual helps enrich and cultivate.