**NIHR Imperial Biomedical Research Centre (BRC)**

**Round 3 CALL FOR Respiratory Theme PILOT PROJECTS / ECR SPRINGBOARD AWARDS**

**Deadline: 5PM, 16th May 2025 by email to** [**c.tytgat@imperial.ac.uk**](mailto:c.tytgat@imperial.ac.uk)

The NIHR Imperial BRC Respiratory Theme has funding available to **support small pilot projects, up** to £25,000 that align to the Themes Core Objectives ***OR*** **ECR springboard awards,** up to £42,000 to support fellowship development.

**1. Scope and Criteria**

**Proposals will be assessed against the following key criteria:**

* Will the proposed work help deliver clinical and biomedical research that meets the Respiratory Theme objectives, as well as the objectives of our cross-cutting themes- **highlighted in the figure below.**
* **For pilot awards** we are looking **in addition** for proposals that are led by PIs and ECR and meet the additional pilot award eligibility criteria outlined below (see ‘additional eligibility’).
* **For early career researcher (ECR) springboard awards** we are looking **in addition** for proposals that are led by an ECR and meet the additional ECR eligibility criteria outlined below (see ‘additional eligibility’).

**Respiratory theme objectives**

**Drivers, determinants and early detection**

**Acute respiratory infections and**

**Exacerbation Science**

**Precision medicine and novel therapeutics**

**Public/patient engagement**

**Biological mechanisms**

**Research Programmes**

**Cross Cutting Themes**

**Convergence science**

**Digital health**

**Precision medicine**

**Early diagnosis**

**\*Eligibility for round 3:**

1. **Lead applicants** must not have received any prior direct BRC support from the respiratory theme budget to date or have received a previous pilot or ECR award in earlier rounds.
2. **Applicants are invited from Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and the Royal Brompton Hospital** – subject to the research proposal being aligned to one of the core BRC subthemes (**see figure above**). **ICHT/RBH lead applicants must hold an honorary contract with Imperial College OR apply with a substantive college employee as co-applicant.**
3. Non-clinical applicants **must** demonstrate evidence that their proposal will lead to research that has **direct patient benefit** (NB: animal model work will not be funded).
4. **All applications should consider Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE).**

Successful applicants will be expected to:

* Incorporate Theme Community Partner feedback into their lay summary;
* undertake the PPIE set out in the application as well as whatever else was suggested in the Theme Community Partner comments;
* present to the Community Partners and receive feedback into their scientific presentation, direction of research and PPIE activities;
* report the impact the PPIE had on the research (positive/negative) which is then reported to the Theme Community Partners;
* attend a future Respiratory Community Partner meeting and verbally confirm all the above as well as include it in the BRC report at the end of the project.

We recommended visiting the Patient Experience Research Centre (PERC) Public Involvement Resource Hub for guidance <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/patient-experience-research-centre/ppi/ppi-resource-hub/>). We also suggest that successful applicants attend one of the [Public Involvement in Health Related Research training sessions](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/academic-support/graduate-school/professional-development/doctoral-students/research-impact/public-involvement-in-health-related-research/) (https://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/academic-support/graduate-school/professional-development/doctoral-students/research-impact/public-involvement-in-health-related-research) delivered by the Patient Experience Research Centre (PERC).

For further advice please contact PERC [publicinvolvement@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:publicinvolvement@imperial.ac.uk) or Katherine Lodge k.lodge@imperial.ac.uk (Respiratory PPIE Lead) or Mary Abkir [m.abkir@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:m.abkir@imperial.ac.uk) (Respiratory PPIE Lead).

1. **The pilot and ECR applications can be awarded for a maximum of 6 months and that eligibility and funding will be allocated as a priority to those applications that can demonstrate that they will feasibly deliver and spend the funds within 6 months with no extensions permitted.**
2. **Cross cutting BRC proposal with other themes (**[**https://imperialbrc.nihr.ac.uk/**](https://imperialbrc.nihr.ac.uk/)**) are encouraged** - with applicants expected to have co-developed their proposal (and discussed co-funding) with a second theme.
3. **Lead applicant must submit a 2-page CV** in addition to the core application form outlining research track record, funding (if applicable) and publications.

**-Additional eligibility criteria that will be considered pilot awards:**

1. Pilot awards are open to all PIs and ECRs.
2. Proposals should be scientifically sound and innovative.
3. Applicants should **not** have received funding from the Imperial NIHR BRC for a previous ECR pilot award.
4. Proposals should aim to deliver benefits to the NHS and its patients.
5. Plans should be sufficiently realistic and detailed to deliver the proposed outputs.
6. Risks to delivery have been identified and mitigated.
7. Track record & performance in acknowledging the BRC in prior publications.
8. Evidence provided of how the work will lead to leveraged funding.
9. **In lay language the application should outline plans to appropriately engage and involve people affected by the research/the public.**
10. Applications that show **evidence of matched funding where possible with other BRC themes or centres will be shortlisted for funding**.

**-Additional eligibility criteria that will be considered ECR springboard awards:**

1. Applicants should **not** have received major funding (>£300,000) from a UKRI, Wellcome or or NIHR funder.

2. Applicants should **not** have received funding from the Imperial NIHR BRC for a previous ECR springboard award.

3. Applicants should **demonstrate how the funding will be used to bridge successful fellowship applications and the timescales** for fellowship applications.

4. Applications from researchers with **established protocols, appropriate knowledge and technical expertise and personnel in place to complete and funded grant budget within 6 months will be shortlisted for funding.**

1. **In lay language the application should outline plans to appropriately engage and involve people affected by the research/the public.**

6. Applicants **must** submit a 2-page CV in addition to the core application form outlining research track record, funding (if applicable) and publications.

7. **Applicant would typically be expected to be at the following career stages:** academic clinical lecturer, advanced fellow, lecturer (clinical or non-clinical), non-medical allied health care professional or early NHS consultant stage.

**2. Project Costings**

* Proposal costs should be developed using WorkTribe. Depts should select internal Scheme and costings will need to have been agreed in outline by the relevant Department (an e-mail signifying this will suffice).
* The WorkTribe record should be attached to your application.
* Budgets need to be broken down into financial years (Apr-Mar).
* Applicants are reminded to consider and include any costs that may need to be incurred within ICHT/ RBH to deliver proposals (particularly around the use of the iCARE Trusted Research Environment).
* We ask applicants to be mindful of considering PPIE activity as part of their projects and therefore consider any associated costs. See NIHR’s payment guidance here: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-researchers-and-professionals/27392>
* Projects will be funded for a maximum of 6 months starting no earlier than 01 September 2025.
* Any salary costs requested should not duplicate resources already provided for by the BRC.
* **New posts will not be supported as they are unlikely to be recruited in time to deliver significant value.**
* Eligible costs may include salary support and consumables. **Animal costs and equipment costing more than £5K are ineligible.**
* These awards will not support any estate costs, indirect costs or PI time.
* Projects must adhere to all BRC contractual terms and conditions.
* External collaboration and the use of external samples and datasets are permitted. However, all expenditure must be incurred within the Imperial BRC (College or ICHT).

**3. Eligibility**

Any clinical or academic member of staff with an employment contract with Imperial College London, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, Royal Brompton Hospital may apply. In summary:

* College substantive employee who has a clinical affiliation with ICHT/RBH or any of the other NHS Associate Partners in our application.
* Substantive employee of ICHT/RBH or any of the other NHS Associate Partners, **must either hold** an honorary research contract with the College **OR** apply with a co-applicant that holds a substantive college appointment.

**4. Application Review**

The deadline for submission of proposals is 5PM, **16th May 2025** to *email:* [*c.tytgat@imperial.ac.uk*](mailto:c.tytgat@imperial.ac.uk). Proposals will be assessed by the Respiratory theme Executive Committee **and** affiliated PPIE group. Applications will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria outlined above. Key dates are as follows:

15th April 2025 Call launch

**16th May 2025 Deadline for submission of proposals**

19th May – 4th June 2025 Scientific review by theme development group

4th June - 26th June 2025. PPIE review by theme Community Partners

27th June – 2nd July 2025 Shortlisting and funding decisions meeting

3rd July 2025 Notification of successful proposals

1st September 2025 Earliest Project Start Date

27th February 2026 Project finish date.

**5. Reporting & Monitoring Requirements**

Successful awardees will be required to show evidence of expenditure beginning as indicated within the proposal plan. If progress and/or expenditure is deemed unsatisfactory, continuation of funding may be terminated and funds re-allocated.

A brief final report showing outputs, deliverables and PPIE impact achieved with this funding will be expected within 1 month of project end date

**6. Acknowledgement of BRC Funding**

All publications arising from BRC-funded work (either fully or in-part) **must** [acknowledge support](https://imperialbrc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Acknowledgments-Leaflet-current.pdf) by the NIHR Imperial BRC (<https://imperialbrc.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Acknowledgments-Leaflet-current.pdf>). Failure to do so can result in funding being withdrawn.

**7. Enquiries**

General enquiries relating to the scope and objectives of this call should be directed to the Theme Leads: **Professor Salman Siddiqui** ([s.siddiqui@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:s.siddiqui@imperial.ac.uk) ) and **Professor Jane Davies** ([j.c.davies@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:j.c.davies@imperial.ac.uk))