



Health Research Authority

Communication pathways between HRA Research Ethics Committee (REC) operational staff and NHS R&D staff – Guidance Note

NHS Research & Development Offices (NHS R&D) and the UK Research Ethics Service have a common goal in supporting the set-up of high quality research in the NHS. It is therefore important that there are clearly understood communication channels between REC staff and NHS R&D staff.

The purpose of this Guidance Note is to summarise and make explicit the communication pathways between RECs and NHS R&D so that staff can interact with confidence.

The website links given below were correct on 16 October 2013 but changes to a website may break the links – the principle remains that the information will be available via the webpage of the organisation concerned.

1. For NHS R&D staff – communicating with REC staff

- 1.1. Guidance about REC application processes are given on the HRA website <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/>.
- 1.2. Where there are remaining questions please contact your local HRA Office (London, Bristol, Nottingham, Manchester or Jarrow) for further advice. Contact details are provided on the HRA website <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/contact-us/>.

Please remember that NHS R&D staff should be in a position to confidently advise researchers on all but the most complex issues. If you are unsure of what advice to supply, or think you require further training, please discuss with your line manager.
- 1.3. If you have a study specific query or concern about a REC letter, please contact the REC contact for the REC at which the study was reviewed. REC contact details will be on any REC letter you have and are available through the Contact Us section of the HRA website <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/contact-us/>.
- 1.4. Please bear in mind that from time to time the REC contact details may change so if the query relates to a letter issued some time ago it may be sensible to check the contacts section of the website.
- 1.5. The RECs and their staff in England form the national research ethics service. If you believe that an application has not been reviewed fairly, you have concerns about the way that a REC has dealt with an applicant or application, or wish to raise a wider concern wider about the national research ethics service (NRES) please contact an NRES operational manager in the first instance.
- 1.6. In England, the NIHR Clinical Research Network Research Management team and the NRES operational team meet formally every 6 months to share information, share any identified issues, raise concerns and discuss process changes. If you notice any systemic, rather than study-specific issues, please feed them through to this meeting via your local CLRN Lead RM&G Manager. If the issues relate to studies other than those running on the NIHR Clinical Research Network portfolio the Lead RM&G Manager will be able to advise on who to approach.

- 1.7. In Scotland NHS R&D staff are often co-located with their REC colleagues or are close enough to have regular contact and/or meetings to enable issues or concerns to be shared and discussed at any time. If you notice any systemic, rather than study-specific issues this can be raised with the NHS Research Scotland Strategy Board which meets monthly. Please feed any issues through your local NHS R&D Manager or R&D Director of the NHS organisation concerned.
- 1.8. In Wales, the NISCHR Research Ethics Service (RES) is part of the NISCHR Academic Health Science Collaboration (AHSC). Any identified issues, concerns or discussions about systems or process should be discussed with the NISCHR RES Operational Manager (Email: Corinne.Scott@wales.nhs.uk).
- 1.9. In Northern Ireland any concerns should be raised with the Head of the Office for Research Ethics Committees Northern Ireland (Siobhan.McGrath@hscni.net).
- 1.10. **Dissemination of NHS R&D information to HRA**
 - If you wish to disseminate information to HRA as a whole please do so through the following contacts who will be able to link to HRA channels of communication:
 - England - the RM&G Team at the NIHR Clinical Research Network (Jacqueline.n.mathews@nihr.ac.uk)
 - Scotland – through the local scientific officer (<http://nhsresearchscotland.org.uk/247+Key+Contacts.html>)
 - Wales - the NISCHR RES Operational Manager (Corinne.Scott@wales.nhs.uk)
 - Northern Ireland - the Head of the Office for Research Ethics Committees Northern Ireland (Siobhan.McGrath@hscni.net)
 - If you wish to disseminate information to a specific REC please do so directly via the REC contact – details are provided on the HRA website.

2. For REC staff – communicating with NHS R&D staff

- 2.1. Every NHS organisation is linked to an NHS R&D office which supports research within that NHS organisation. Some NHS R&D offices provide a service for a number of different NHS organisations.
- 2.2. NHS R&D contact details can be found on the [NHS R&D Forum website](#) or on the website of the particular NHS organisation.
- 2.3. In England each NIHR Clinical Research Network has a list of regional R&D contact points on its [website](#) for studies running on the NIHR Clinical Research Network Portfolio. Please go to the region you are interested in and click on the Research Management & Governance section. In IRAS version 3.5 the name of the Lead CLRN for studies applying to the NIHR Portfolio is provided at A68-2.
- 2.4. Another source of information regarding research within an NHS organisation in England is that organisation's Research Support Service (RSS) Operational Capability Statement. These are often available on the Trust's website and may be linked to from <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/systems/Pages/OperationalCapabilityStatements.aspx>.

- 2.5. In Scotland local NHS R&D contact details can be found on the NHS R&D Forum website.
- 2.6. In Wales every NHS organisation has a R&D office that supports research within that organisation. NHS R&D office contact details can be found on the website of each organisation. The NISCHR Permissions Co-ordinating Unit (PCU) can also assist in identifying the NHS R&D office contacts of NHS organisations in Wales NISCHR.PCU.Allwales@wales.nhs.uk.
- 2.7. In Northern Ireland NHS R&D contact details for the five health and social care Trusts can be found on the NHS R&D Forum website.
- 2.8. If you have a study-specific issue or concern, please contact the Lead NHS organisation using the contact information in the IRAS data set at A68.
- 2.9. If you have a site specific issue please search for the appropriate contact as in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 above.
- 2.10. If you are advising a researcher you should be able to provide basic advice as to the role of NHS R&D in the application process and be able to signpost the researcher to their local R&D office for further advice and support.
- 2.11. If as a REC contact you have concerns about the way that an R&D office has dealt with an applicant or application, or wish to raise a wider concern wider about NHS R&D please raise the matter with your Operations Manager who will be able to escalate the matter appropriately. See appendix for NRES Operations Managers.
- 2.12. **Dissemination of information from HRA to NHS R&D**
 - If you wish to disseminate information to the whole of the NHS R&D please do so through the NRES Improvement and Liaison Manager who will be able to link to NHS R&D channels of communication.
 - If you wish to disseminate information to a specific organisation please do so directly.
 - If you wish to disseminate information regionally please do so through the NRES Improvement and Liaison Manager who will be able to link to NHS R&D channels of communication.

Feedback

Comment and feedback on this document and its contents are welcome. Please email mary.cubitt@nhs.net

Appendix for NRES Operational Managers

1. If you have concerns about the way that an R&D office has dealt with an applicant or application please either escalate up to the Head of NRES or use the pathways below.
 - In England for studies running on the NIHR Clinical Research Network Portfolio please contact the Lead RM&G Manager for the region concerned or, if necessary, escalate to the Head of RM&G at the NIHR Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre (currently Heather Slade heather.slade@nihr.ac.uk). For all other studies please contact the R&D Manager or R&D Director of the NHS organisation concerned.
 - In Scotland please contact the NHS R&D Manager or R&D Director of the NHS organisation concerned.
 - In Wales any concerns about the manner in which an NHS R&D office has dealt with an applicant or application should be raised directly with the R&D Manager of the NHS organisation concerned.
 - In Northern Ireland any concerns about the manner in which an NHS R&D office has dealt with an applicant or application should be raised directly with the R&D Manager of the NHS organisation concerned.

2. If you have a wider concern about NHS R&D systems and processes please escalate up the Head of NRES or HRA Director of Operations who have the following options open to them to work to resolve issues.
 - In England, the NIHR Clinical Research Network Research Management team and the NRES Operational Team meet formally every 6 months to share information, share any identified issues, raise concerns and discuss process changes. If you notice any systemic, rather than single project specific issues, please feed them through to your NRES Operations Manager who can coordinate with the Head of NRES to see if the matter can be discussed at this meeting.
 - In Scotland systemic issues relevant to NHS R&D and ethics functions including topics of common interest, working practice and policy are discussed at the monthly NHS Research Scotland Strategy Board. Please feed any issues to your NRES Operations Manager who can link to the relevant contact at the Chief Scientist Office.
 - In Wales any identified issues, concerns or discussions about systems or process should be discussed with the NISCHR PCU Manager (Email: Christopher.Cotterill-Jones@wales.nhs.uk). The NISCHR PCU Manager liaises with the R&D Managers of the NHS organisations in Wales on a regular basis to address any issues or concerns that impact on both the NISCHR PCU and NHS R&D offices in Wales. Also the NISCHR PCU Manager and NISCHR RES Operational Manager meet formally every two months to discuss any process or systemic issues or changes that affect NISCHR PCU or NISCHR.
 - In Northern Ireland identified systemic issues or concerns about NHS R&D in Northern Ireland should be discussed with the Health & Social Care R&D Division of the Public Health Agency (Email: gail.johnston@hscni.net).