

Collaborative Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme

Building capacity and capability of academic-based researchers to tackle applied health and social care challenges.

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Webinar Overview

Collaborative Postdoctoral Fellowships Programme (CPFP) 2026

- Objectives
- Research scope
- Funding model
- Applicant team and greater consortium
- Eligibility
- Funding and duration
- HRB Fellows
- Application and review process
- Leadership team narrative CV

Objectives

Objectives

- Build capacity and capability at **early and mid- postdoctoral level** by supporting researchers from a broad **range of disciplines** who want to make a commitment to contribute to **applied health and social care research** and who have the motivation and the potential to advance on an academic **path towards independent investigator** status.
- Build on existing investments at PhD level by **providing opportunities for postdoctoral level researchers** to conduct applied health and social care research under the **guidance of mentorship**.
- Tackle an identified problem in the context of **health, public health or social care** from a variety of perspectives with a collaborative and complementary approach.
- **Foster partnerships** within and between academic institutions, service delivery organisations and/or policy and health service decision makers, as appropriate, with a view to making outputs useable and timely for translation into policy and/or practice.

Research Scope

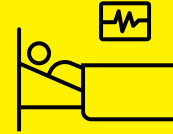
Research Scope

Applied health and social care.

For the purposes of this scheme, **applied health and social care** research is defined as

‘research with an emphasis on providing evidence that will impact healthcare policy and practice leading to better health outcomes in Ireland and beyond.’

- **Clinical research**



- **Health services research (HSR)**



- **Population health research (PHR)**



Out of Scope

The Scheme will not fund:

Basic biomedical research

Research involving cell lines, animals, or their tissue

Pre-clinical studies, which involve the evaluation of potential therapeutic interventions in cell lines, animals, or human samples where the primary outcome is exploratory

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 from individuals applying for, holding, or employed under funding received from the tobacco industry

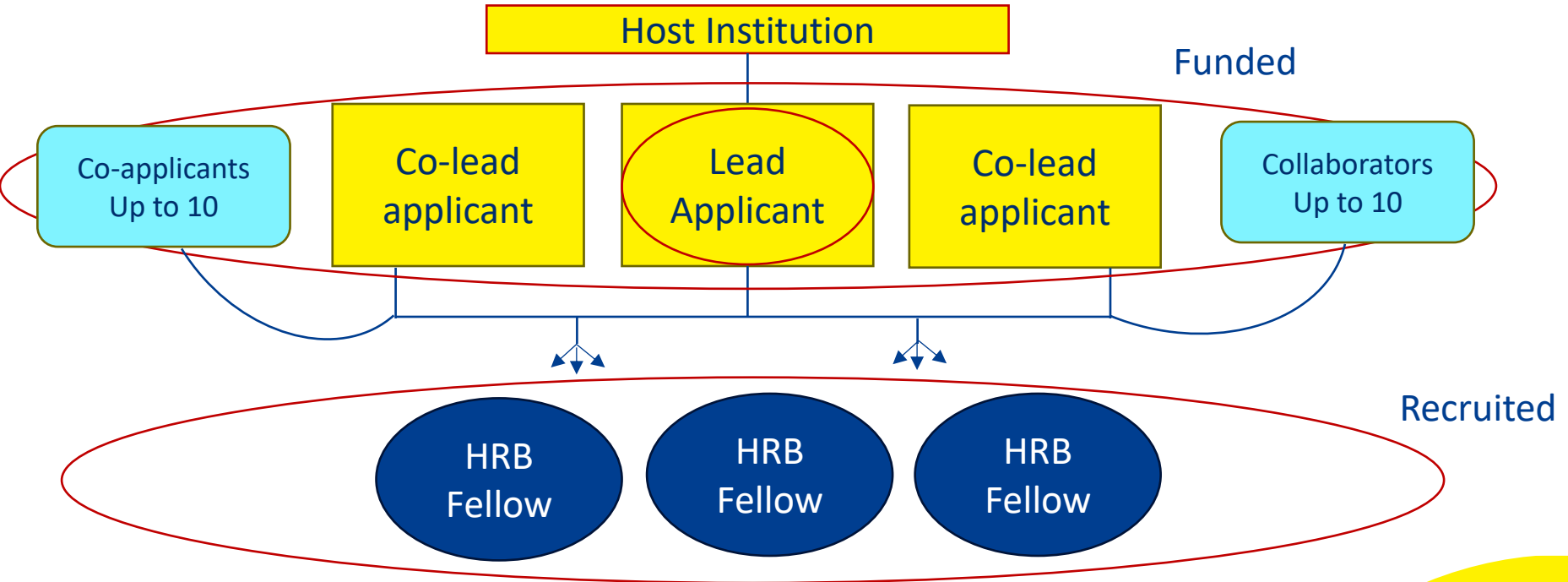
Research intended to create human embryos solely for the purposes of research or for the purposes of stem cell procurement, including by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer

Applications which are solely or predominately developing the infrastructure for biobanking, databases or patient registers without a predominant research element

Applications from individuals applying for, holding, or employed under funding received from the alcohol industry and related actors

Funding model

Funding Model



Consortium

- Leadership team (2 – 3)
- Co-applicants (≤ 10)
- Collaborators (≤ 10)



Necessary breadth and depth of research and/or methodological expertise.



Appropriate interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral representation



International collaborations

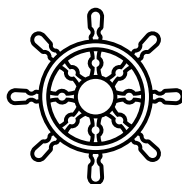


A strong public and patient and other relevant stakeholder involvement.

Leadership Team

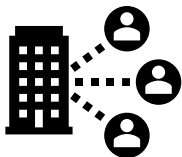
Experienced, research established team of two or three members holding equal leadership of the programme:

- Lead applicant
- Co-lead applicant(s)



- Strong track record in applied health and social care research demonstrated by their contribution to knowledge and expertise in accelerating the transfer and application of research evidence into real-world applications.
- Complementarity of disciplines, skills and expertise as relevant to the research and training programme, including from under-represented professions/disciplines relevant to the strategic leadership of the programme.
- Clear strategic vision for the research programme.
- Strong collaborative and networking expertise.
- Strong track record in training, supervising and mentoring early and mid-career researchers.

Co-applicants



- Researcher,
- Knowledge user,
- Data controller/processor, or
- PPI contributor

- A co-applicant has a well-defined, critical, and substantial role in the conduct and steering of the proposed research.
- Co-applicants from outside the island of Ireland are welcome where this is appropriately justified in terms of added value for the project.
- A co-applicant may receive funding for items such as running costs and PPI costs but will not receive support towards their own salary.
- The terms of any co-application should be determined early, and relevant agreements should be in place by the onset of the project. Consideration should be given to issues such as relative responsibilities, governance arrangements, intellectual property rights, reporting and access to data and samples when working up co-application agreements.

Collaborators

- A collaborator is an individual or an organisation who will have an integral and discrete role in the proposed research.
- Collaborators may include investigators or organisations from outside the Republic of Ireland
- Collaborators can come from a range of backgrounds such as:

- academia,
- the private sector,
- a healthcare organisation,
- the charity sector,
- or a patient group



- Individuals or organisations should only be named as collaborator if they are providing specific contributions (either direct or indirect) to the programme activities.
- A collaborator may act in an advisory capacity
- A collaborator may provide or supply:
 - training,
 - samples or kits,
 - access to specific equipment or specialist staff time,
 - staff placements,
 - access to data and/or patients, instruments or protocols,
 - industry know-how,

Eligibility

Eligibility – Leadership team members

Lead applicant

1. Lead applicants must hold a post in a HRB approved host institution in the Republic of Ireland.
2. Be listed as lead applicant or co-lead applicant on only one CPFP 2026 application.

Co-lead applicants

- 1a** - Hold a post (permanent or a contract that covers the duration of the award) in an institution of higher education on the Island of Ireland as an independent investigator. **OR**
- 1b** - Be an individual who will be recognised by their institution upon receipt of the HRB CPFP grant as a member of the academic staff or a contract researcher as defined above. **OR**
- 1c** - Be trained in clinical or social care practice and hold a jointly clinical/social care and academic post in a health organisation on the Island of Ireland (permanent or a contract that covers the duration of the award). **OR**
- 1d** - Be an individual who provides a non-academic perspective as a person affected by the research, a professional working on the topic, or a representative of an organisation active in the area.
- AND – 2** - Be listed as lead applicant or co-lead applicant on only one CPFP 2026 application.

Eligibility – Leadership team – group level

The leadership team must together fulfill the eligibility criteria as a group, with each criterion fulfilled in full by at least one member.

- A **PhD** or PhD equivalent research experience.
- At least **seven years of FTE research experience** beyond PhD viva and prior to the CPFP pre-application deadline (17 December 2025);
- At least **three independently peer-reviewed, research grants** with **at least two** of these grants each of a value equal to or above **€300,000** from recognised national and/or international funding agencies/councils over the last seven years. (includes WPL on EU grant). Travel bursaries are not considered as eligible research grants.
- Primary/principal **supervisor**, as recognised by the higher education authority, of a minimum of **three postdoctoral researchers** for a minimum of 12 months each.
- Experience in bringing together and leading **interdisciplinary and cross-sector collaborations** that have engaged key non-academic stakeholders, such as policymakers, practitioners, voluntary and community organisations, and PPI.
- A record of research outputs, with at least **three publications** of original research in peer reviewed journals.

Funding and duration

Funding and duration

Duration: **42-months**

Funding: **€950,000 in direct costs.**

- **Six months** for programme set-up and recruitment of the postdoctoral fellows.
- Each fellow will have salary support for a total of **36 months at 1.0 FTE.**
- **Salary** and related costs for **three fellows** for three years, based on the IUA PD scales.
- **Research related costs** (e.g. running costs, data management and sharing costs, equipment, dissemination costs, etc) up to €240,000 per grant.
- **Overhead costs** will be added by HRB at contracting stage.

Funded HRB fellows

HRB Fellows

There is an expectation that the three recruited HRB fellows will:

- Be involved in the management of their own research project, by reiterating, shaping and influencing the direction with the support of their leadership team and supervisory team.
- Support the annual reporting of the programme to the HRB.
- Shape and self- manage a network of fellows across the different CPFP grants



HRB fellow career development

- Continue to develop their careers and become more independent applied health and social care researchers.
- Develop clear, independent thinking to manage a future grant in their own right.
- Undertake training and development activities which will support their career progression.
- Deepen existing and/or establish new collaborations and partnerships.
- Receive strong mentorship on their further research development.
- Conduct high quality research projects, as part of a collaborative research programme
- Actively involve patient and public or other stakeholders as relevant in the research programme.



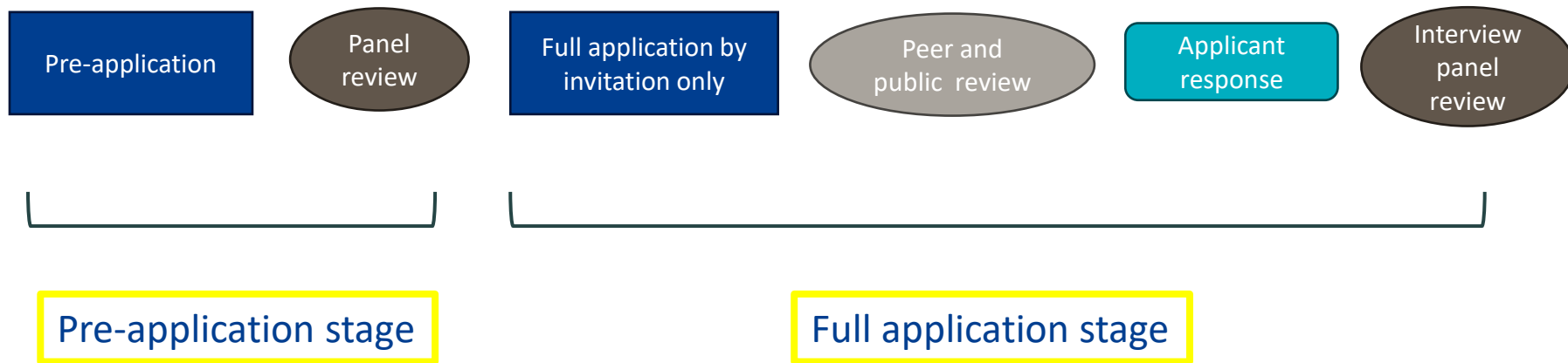
Training and development strategy

- Work in a **team-based environment** tackling an identified problem in the context of health, public health or social care from a variety of perspectives with a **collaborative and complementary** approach.
- Work in **interdisciplinary and trans-sectoral research** in applied health and social care research.
- Facilitate the **application of research findings into policy and practice** in local, national and/or international context.
- Facilitate **progression towards more independent research** and future research leadership.
- **Placements in non academic settings** which might include inter-sectoral and/or international elements aimed at experiential learning, networking and collaborating.
- Travel grant providing opportunities to **travel and work with international collaborators**.
- **Training and mentoring** in contextual, methodological and other issues related to their research.
- Opportunities to **develop professional and transferable competencies**.



Application and review process

Two stage application process



Pre-application stage panel review assessment criteria

The applicant team (40%): strength and suitability

Appropriate track record in applied health and social care research

Experience in training and development of researchers.

Breadth of expertise, skill set and evidence of collaboration with non-academic stakeholders.

Strategic vision and leadership to deliver the programme

The collaborative research programme (40%): relevance and impact

Clarity coherence and relevance of the central research question and thematic area to be addressed.

Use of systematic evidence to justify the research need.

Integration of the research activities and coherence of the programme.

Evidence of a clear pathway to impact and real-world solutions, with strong potential for significant impact on policy, practice, or systems at national and/or international levels.

The training and professional development strategy (20%)

The coherence and quality of the high-level training and professional development strategy.

Full application stage

International peer and public review

- Peer reviewers will focus on the stated assessment criteria for the call and will provide comments as well as a score which is visible to the HRB and to panel members.
- Public reviewers will only assess the quality of PPI in the application and will provide comments and an overall rating which will be shared with the panel. Public reviewers will not provide a score.

Applicant response

- The anonymised peer review and public review comments will be made available to the lead applicant on their GEMS personal page.
- The leadership team through the lead applicant will have 10 working days only to submit their response through GEMS
- The response has a maximum word count of 2000 words only for the peer review response (including references) and 500 words only for the public review response.

Interview-based panel review

- All leadership teams will be invited to attend an interview.
- Each application is assigned a lead and secondary panel reviewer.
- At the end of the interview panel meeting, a final score is collectively agreed for each application, and they are ranked according to score.

Assessment criteria – full application (peer and panel reviewers)

The applicant team: strength and suitability

Complementarity of expertise across the full applicant team (leadership team, co-applicants and collaborators).

Evidence of meaningful collaboration with knowledge users, PPI contributors, and other non-academic stakeholders.

Strategic vision and leadership capacity to deliver the programme, including management and oversight.

The collaborative research programme: Strength, quality and impact

The quality and coherence of the collaborative research programme within the overarching thematic area and strength of the applied health or social care research.

The strong likelihood and potential of the programme to generate **high quality and actionable evidence** that can directly **inform and influence healthcare policy and practice**.

The emphasis should be on the likelihood of delivering measurable improvements in health outcomes, both within Ireland and internationally, through strategic dissemination, stakeholder engagement, and implementation pathways.

The training and professional development strategy

The quality and coherence of the training and professional development strategy.

The quality of the environment in terms of Institutional support, partnering organisations, facilities and infrastructures

Board approval

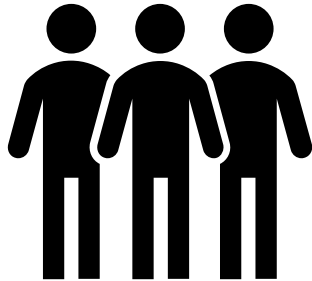
The recommendations of the interview panel will be presented for approval at the next scheduled HRB board meeting.

When the board of the HRB has approved the process and recommendations, HRB staff will contact the lead applicants and host institutions to notify them of the outcome.

A summary of panel member comments and the panel discussion comments will be issued to the lead applicant following the board approval stage.

Narrative based CV for the leadership team

Leadership team narrative CV



Enables the leadership team as a whole to showcase relevant skills and experience and demonstrate the team's ability to deliver the proposed collaborative research and training programme.

Relevant skills and experience will differ depending on the nature of the collaborative research programme proposed.

The leadership team should describe only a selection of past contributions that best evidence their ability to deliver on the proposed programme of research.

It is appropriate to highlight specific individuals' achievements (referencing by way of initials) however the contributions described across each section should demonstrate the appropriateness of the overall team.

Narrative team-based CV

CV sections

Pre-application form section 3 – four main narrative sections

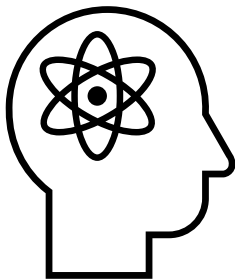
Contributions to the generation of new ideas and knowledge

Contributions to the training and development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships

Contributions to the wider research and innovation community

Contributions to broader society

Contributions to the generation of new ideas and knowledge

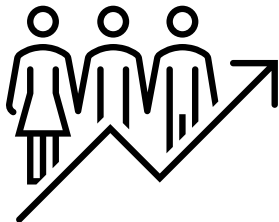


A short statement of the team's overall contribution to the research field and/or discipline and/or policy and/or practice.

Relevant research outputs x 10, each briefly described. Each output should include the specific role of the team member, the significance and influence on the research field and/or discipline and/or to health policy and/or clinical practice and the resulting impact.

Research outputs can include datasets, software, publications, commercial or entrepreneurial or industrial products, educational products, clinical practice developments, policy publications, and other similar items.

Contributions to the training and development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships



Supervision, mentoring or line management of individuals on a research team.

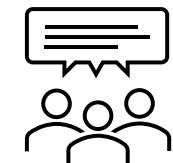
Project management expertise.

Workshop or summer school involvement/coordination or support team members provided to the advancement of colleagues (junior or senior).

Providing expert advice.

Use of leadership skills to shape the direction of a team.

Contributions to the wider research and innovation community, locally, nationally or internationally



Research review committee/panel memberships, editing and reviewing, contributions to the evaluation of research.

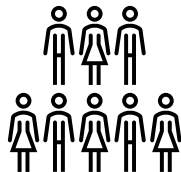
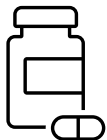
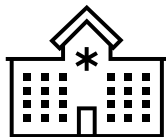
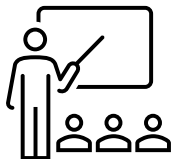
Contributions to increasing research integrity and improving research culture.

Appointments to positions of responsibility.

Establishment of local/national/international collaborations, partnerships and networks.

Strategic leadership by directing an organisation, company, or institution.

Contributions to broader society



Public, patient and carer involvement in research (PPI), and collaborating with community-based groups/organisations.

Contributions to policy and practice development; Working with policymakers and knowledge users.

Science outreach activities for the general public.

Contributing to public understanding.

Engagement with industry and other non-academic stakeholders.

Impacts across research, policy, practice and business and other examples of how the team has ensured research is translated for the good of all.

Timeline and contact

Timeline

Stage	Dates
Call opening (pre-application)	01 October 2025
Call closing (pre-application)	17 December 2025 @13:00
Panel review (pre-application)	January to February 2026
Panel review meeting (pre-application)	Late February 2026
Invitation to full application	Late February 2026
Full application submission	Mid-May 2026
Scientific and public review	May to August 2026
Applicant response	End August to mid-September 2026
Panel review	Mid-September to mid-October 2026
Panel review meeting	Mid-October 2026
Panel recommendations presented to HRB Board	November 2026
Contracting stage (subject to approval)	November 2026 to February 2027
Earliest start date	March 2027

Contact

For further information on the **Collaborative Postdoctoral Fellowships Programme (CPFP) 2026** contact:

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Project Officer

Research Strategy and Funding

Health Research Board

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