

UKRI/NIHR COVID-19 RAPID RESPONSE INITIATIVE – ROLLING CALL

Summary

- **Building on the initial calls of their Initiative, DHSC, through the NIHR, and UKRI are jointly launching a rolling call for proposals for rapid research into COVID-19**
- **For UK-led academic, SME and wider industry research that will address a wide range of COVID-19 knowledge gaps/needs, and which will lead to a benefit in UK, and potentially international, public health within 12 months**

Scope

Short term (up to 12 month) proposals are sought. All proposals will need to be able to show how progress within the period of award could make a significant contribution to the understanding, prevention and/or management of the COVID-19 outbreak and lead to a benefit in UK, and potentially international, public health. The research scope of this call is as below:

- **Virology, Immunity and Pathophysiology** - Research as part of an experimental medicine and/or clinical study focused on defining critical biological/pathological parameters necessary for the prioritisation of preventative, supportive and/or therapeutic interventions.
- **Diagnostics** - Rapid point of care diagnostics for use at the community level. Proposals will need to robustly justify their added value, in the context of significant existing activity, and to provide strong evidence in terms of deliverability and route to commercialisation, at scale and speed.
- **Epidemiology**
 - **Transmission** - Research that will enable better understanding of the nature of transmission of and exposure to the virus, including via surfaces and aerosols.
 - **Disease Susceptibility and Severity** – Understanding susceptibility of different populations (age, sex, ethnicity, demographics, underlying health conditions, etc), including vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as the homeless and drug users. Characterization of the spectrum of clinical manifestations and disease severity of SARS-CoV2 infections, including potential contribution of viral load, kinetics and genotype, sites of infection and associated immunopathology, variability in immune responses, collateral tissue damage, and associated factors (demographics, etc.).
 - **Control and Mitigation** – Research to understand social distancing measures that are most effective at preventing or reducing spread of SARS-CoV2, and how such distancing and isolation measures may be most effectively relaxed. With comparative studies particularly welcomed.
- **IPC and PPE** – Studies to optimize use of personal protective equipment and other infection prevention and control measures in health care and community settings.
- **Public Health, Media and Communication** - research to better understand how to enhance and implement acceptability of and adherence to management, IPC and public health measures, and simultaneously how to minimize stigma and prejudice. This being essential for putting evidence-based measures into practice.
 - **Public Health** - including what are relevant, feasible, effective approaches to promote acceptance, uptake, and adherence to public health measures for COVID-19 prevention and control, and how secondary impacts, including mental health, social isolation and domestic violence, can be rapidly identified and mitigated, including special attention to vulnerable groups.
 - **Media and communication** - Studies into and implementation of the most effective ways to address the underlying drivers of fear, anxieties, rumours, stigma regarding

COVID-19, and how to improve public knowledge, awareness, and trust during the response, including strategies to combat misinformation. Studies into the potential benefits of increased use of digital technology, for both communication and data capture.

- **Clinical Management** – Rapid assessments of available data from studies to learn what standards of care are the most effective for patients at different stages of the disease, including effective triage, and taking advantage of all available technological innovations to improve survival and recovery.
- **Primary, Adjunctive and Supportive Therapies** – Evaluation of the effect of primary, adjunctive and supportive therapies, including immune modulators. Proposals will need to be placed in the context of work already underway in this area, including as listed in the WHO directory of clinical trials.
- **Vaccines** - Evaluation of investigational vaccines and passive immunological approaches, improved collaboration and comparison across different studies. Proposals will need to robustly justify their case for funding, given significant existing international activity in this area.
- **Health and Care Delivery**
 - Research which requires the real time pandemic context for delivery of the proposed study design.
 - Evaluation of innovations in health and social care delivery prompted by the pandemic, which can be generalised and actioned in the pandemic context.
 - Evaluation of implementation, acceptability and feasibility of workforce interventions to support physical and mental health wellbeing.
 - Evaluation of different approaches to resource use and deployment of the workforce across the whole health and social care eco-system.
 - Research to support ensuring and optimising access to health and social care services by people from different sociodemographic groups and ethnic groups.
- **Underpinning**
 - Assays and Animal Models - Development of assays and animal models required to support the development of therapeutics and vaccines. Proposals will need to be placed in the context of work already funded in this area.
 - Provision Infrastructure – Platforms supporting sharing of information, reagents, tools, protocols and standards. Proposals will need to be placed in the context of work already funded in this area.