

FAQ for mental health and pain research data hubs

1. How can the data from the hubs be accessed?

The Data custodian organisations that contribute to the data hub will be required to become members of the Health Data Research Alliance, adhering to the Alliance principles for participation. The new data assets produced by the Hub will be discoverable and accessible through the common UK Health Data Research [Innovation Gateway](#).

2. Is this a UK-wide initiative?

It is expected that proposals will include cross-institutional collaborations, reflecting the value of regional data sets and leadership. The data sets and associated services of the Hub should be available to, and of value to, users from across the UK.

3. Are these Hubs being milestone driven in the same way as the existing Digital Innovation Hubs? How will the milestones be monitored and evaluated by the funder?

The milestone approach has had an important role in ensuring delivery and value for public funding, as well as communicating clearly to the external user community. The funded hub will therefore regularly interface with the HDR UK central team and with the funders to monitor the progress of the hub against the milestones set out in the call document. Successfully meeting the milestones will be a pre-requirement for any further funding request to the funders following the initial 3 years of funding.

4. Can data generation from empirical research be included in proposals submitted to this call?

The purpose of the Hubs is **not** to perform original research. The funding available to applicants will be to create “data as infrastructure” that improves access to and quality of data and increases the UK’s future research and innovation capability. While Hubs will support research and innovation activities through the creation of new data and services they provide, the funding from this call will not support specific research projects.

5. How will the Hubs interact with existing relevant initiatives e.g. current data banks?

The Hubs are not designed to duplicate existing efforts but to build on these as relevant and add value. The Hub should be providing data and services that address a currently unmet need. Where appropriate the proposals should clearly highlight where the key interfaces and collaborations with existing activities will take place, how interoperability will be achieved, and how the Hub is adding distinct value.

6. How will the Hubs be expected to interact with the existing Digital Innovation Hubs?

It is expected that the Hubs will develop a technical infrastructure that enables them to undertake linked projects across the network. Additionally, work across specialized fora, such as PPIE, commercial and communications groups, allows for the Hubs to present a coherent picture

7. How can industry/commercial partners work with the Hub? How will IP be managed?

Industry partners can be project partners on the application, however they are not eligible to apply for direct funding. Academic institutions will be responsible for managing their IP arrangements according to the [MICA guidance](#), and Heads of Terms agreements must be included in the application.

Industry and commercial partners can also become involved in hubs after setup, which contributes towards hub sustainability. Current HDR UK hubs have provided a range of services and data assets to commercial partners, and through the HDRUK-run hub network learning and experiences are shared. Previous experience has shown it is important to have a clear single point of contact within the hub structure as first port of call for commercial interest. This should be factored in the hub design.

FAQ for mental health and pain research data hubs

8. Will there be centralised expertise available in the hubs for grant recipients using data?

The Hub proposal should clearly define the services that it intends to offer to the research and innovation users and explain how they will enable those users access to higher quality data. It is up to the Hub to determine what services and expertise will be made available to users.

9. Who will govern the data in the hubs?

All datasets within the hub would have a clear data access policy in line with 5 safe principles. The data custodians are the data controllers and an access panel involving the controllers and others would approve and regulate access to data.

10. How will the data hub initiatives for mental health and pain interact?

The pain data research hub and the mental health data research hub are two separate initiatives and will as such be expected to interact to the same level as the other hubs to enable interlinkages across the network. The psychosocial aspect of pain, which includes mental health, is central to the APDP, and data pertaining to pain that covers psychosocial aspects are expected to be included in the pain research data hub.

11. What kind of data should be included in the hubs?

We expect a broad range of data sources to be included that reflect the multi-dimensional determinants to pain and mental health. This may include biological, clinical, social and environmental data from a range of sources.

12. Are international bids eligible?

International co-investigators can be included and costed according to MRCs standard funding guidance. If you will be including an international co-investigator you must first get in touch with the MRC at the contact details provided to get in principle approval. You will be expected to demonstrate how they provide expertise that is not available in the UK. Any opportunities for international collaboration and partnership to be pursued by the Hub should be detailed in the proposal, including any activities the Hub intends to take over the course of the funding to facilitate this.

13. Are partnerships across the research sector, industry and the NHS required for the calls?

Collaboration across these sectors, and with others (including charities), is strongly encouraged to ensure the proposals are being developed with clear insight into key user needs, thus highlighting impact pathways to emerge from the Hub. While we have not set a strict mandate on formal partnerships required at the application stage, we will expect proposals to demonstrate how they have been driven by user needs across the research and innovation sector and how this will be continually assessed in the lifetime of the award.

14. How have the existing Digital Innovation Hubs approached the long-term sustainability challenge?

Examples of ongoing funding include additional grants received by Hubs from public bodies as well as receiving income from industry and academic bodies for the services they provide. HDRUK has a workstream on sustainability with representation of all currently funded hubs, which the pain and mental health hubs will be able to contribute to and learn from.

FAQ for mental health and pain research data hubs

Pain research data hub specific questions

1. How will the funded APDP consortia interact with the pain research data hub?

The APDP consortia are expected to host the data produced in their own research organisation, however it is a requirement that the consortia will make all data available for the APDP pain research data hub. The hub is expected to create consistent policies and governance frameworks for data access and sharing across the APDP programme and maximise interoperability across the APDP investments.

Mental health data hub specific questions

1. Will the mental health data research hub include a focus on data from children and young people?

The hub is expected to include a focus on data from across the life course, which includes children and young people.

2. Do applications for the mental health data research hub have to be led by an institution in receipt of funding from the MRC Mental Health Data Pathfinder scheme?

This is an open call to all eligible applicants. The Pathfinder scheme was a significant investment aimed explicitly at generating insights, learnings and exemplars to inform the establishment of an integrated informatics resource for mental health. As such, we expect all proposals to demonstrate how they are building on these outputs and this will be considered a key component of the remit for this call. We have provided details of the Pathfinder awards within the call specification to signpost applicants towards the scope and outputs from these projects.