Pilot Digital Health Hub- Information Webinar FAQs

1. **Were you planning to share your slides after the Webinar?**
   Yes, a copy of the slides is available here: https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/digital-health-hub-pilot-scheme/

2. **Could you indicate the value of the digital health portfolio?**
   We don't have a figure for 2022 but in 2019 there were a total of 86 grants which were related to digital health that had a total value of £154m.

3. **Data access across various stakeholders remains a challenge. Can digital health hubs have funding allocated in developing data access infrastructure?**
   Support may be requested for any costs related to research data management which will be incurred during the project and not be covered by directly allocated or indirect costs. Data access costs can also be requested as well as any infrastructure needed for this, as long as these costs are justified.

4. **What is the difference between a 'hub' and a 'network plus''?**
   A hub is a critical mass investment with a long-term vision, and a key characteristic of the hub model is that the research is driven by the long-term research challenges of users. Whereas the main objective of a network is to create new interdisciplinary research communities.

5. **Partners from different disciplines and sectors will be included in proposal; would it be possible to add further partners to grow Hub, if funded.**
   Yes, growing a hub by the addition of further partners is welcome, although we would not alter the original offer of a grant.

6. **If new partners can come on and are encouraged can you keep a cost for that to engage with these new partners?**
   Yes, as long as you are able to justify this cost and how you will manage it within your application.
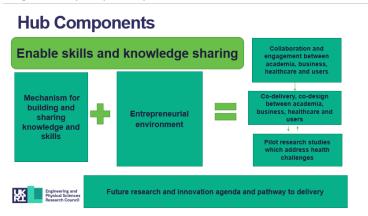
7. **Can a project partner who is providing in-kind funds also request costs (as a sub-contract)?**
   No, project partners cannot normally receive funding directly from the grant. The two exceptions to this are:
   - *where a project partner is providing services or equipment that will go through a formal procurement process audited by the host research organisation*
   - *the project partner can receive small amounts of funding from the grant, such as for travel and subsistence to attend project meetings. These will need to be requested by the PI and will need to be fully justified.*

8. **The EoI asks for "Clinical/ healthcare partner", how do you define these (as compared to non-clinical partners)?**
   We would define non clinical partners as any industrial/business/academic partners.

9. **We've majored on 'knowledge and skills', but the scope of award seems to incorporate 'co-creation of solutions', 'enabling accelerated technology translation', 'building partnerships', 'fostering leadership', 'innovation strategy', 'early-stage research', 'early**

commercialisation', etc. These are all very different requirements. What 'exactly' are you looking for?

The main aim of the Hub is to promote knowledge and skills sharing across healthcare, academia and business, and drive future innovation in digital health. The elements described above are building blocks to foster the knowledge, skills, and collaborations at the hub. This diagram may help to explain our vision:

10. **Can you elaborate on the scope of digital health skills? Are these related merely to data.**
    A list of skills we found that were of importance to digital health can be found in our digital health skills survey report: https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EPSRC-300322-Funding-Opp-DigitalHealthHubPilotScheme-SurveyResults.pdf.

11. **How important is the public engagement/science dissemination element in the proposal?**
    The assessment criteria are available in the call: Expression of interest: digital health hub pilot scheme – UKRI. *One of the criteria is* about the applicant and partnerships, including the team's ability to establish and exploit strong connections with all relevant stakeholders including patients and the public. This is a secondary criterion which will be assessed at the full proposal stage.

12. **Are the digital health hubs envisioned to have a local/regional focus or is it preferred they are at a national scale?**
    As this is a pilot opportunity, we are open to hubs that are either regionally or nationally focussed. EPSRC don't have specific requirements as long as you are able to demonstrate how your approach will meet national strategic needs by establishing or maintaining a unique world leading research activity (see "Importance" in the assessment criteria).

13. **To what extent can the hubs address regionally specific digital health needs - albeit with a view to later national application?**
    We are open to applications focussing on regionally specific digital health needs. We are looking to support a diverse portfolio of hubs. Please consider the criteria for assessing proposals and how to make the case for your hub against those criteria.

14. **Will teams be invited to prepare a full submission after the Expression of Interest?**
    All teams will receive a confirmation of that EPSRC have received their Expression of Interest. All teams meeting the requirements for "who can apply" are expected to submit a full proposal. Please start to prepare the full proposal alongside the Expression of Interest.

15. **If there is high demand at the EOI stage, will EPSRC select a number of proposals to go through to full stage?**
No, we are not sifting proposals at the EOI stage, however we will use the EoIs to ensure the review process is appropriate and in case we need to add an additional panel at the full proposal stage. We also reserve the right to contact people where it is unclear about how the proposal relates to the scope of the call and remit of EPSRC.

16. **How do you expect hubs to take account of health as devolved issue in other parts of the UK - governance, planning, delivery etc can all be quite different to England?**
We expect hubs to form appropriate partnerships with health authorities in the UK to mitigate the risk around these issues.

17. **The focus on industry involvement seems key and important. Can industry partners draw down funding or are they sub-contractors of an HEI?**
EPSRC does not fund industry directly, so any costs will need to be funded as a sub-contracting cost. For more information, please find details here:
https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/costs-you-can-apply-for/directly-incurred-costs/.

18. **How important is it to have a portfolio of existing Digital Health or other EPS projects for the Hub?**
Proposals will be assessed on applicant and partnerships (secondary criterion) this includes assessing the appropriateness of the track record of the applicants. Therefore, applicants should have a track record in the digital health area, but previous research does not have to be EPSRC-funded.

19. **Both NHS Trusts and AHSN networks (and others) are running various programmes to try and join these dots and involve industry / academia in the dev of digital solutions - how is this going to be different / avoid replication?**
EPSRC would like the focus of these hubs to be on early stage engineering and physical sciences research (Technology Readiness Levels 1-3, or up to proof of concept) and training for the EPS community. Therefore, we believe our initiative will be complementary and has potential to link into these other programmes but not duplicate them. We would like proposals to include how the hub will fit with existing initiatives, where appropriate.

20. **How defined does the pilot projects need to be? Could it just be a holding budget for later allocation? Do you have a guide on value?**
Pilot projects do not need to be defined; we would expect projects to be formed from new collaborations made at the hub. We haven't specified a particular value or proportion for pilot projects, but a total budget for these pilot projects should be given in the application.

21. **Could the funding for pilot projects be combined with other additional financial contributions (i.e., additional to the requested budget)?**
Funding for pilot projects should be estimated within the application as EPSRC would be unable to add additional funds after the awards have been made.

22. **How does this call link with the ambitions of HDRUK?**
We would encourage hubs, where relevant, to link with HDRUK. As a funder of HDRUK, EPSRC recognises the importance of its role in connecting the UK's health and care data and enabling scientific research.

23. **Given the diversity of the activity supported by a Hub, would you expect in-depth focus upon a specific specialisms/conditions?**
EPSRC are open to different approaches as this is a pilot activity and we would like to fund a diversity of proposals. Hubs should demonstrate how the focus they have chosen will align to the vision of the funding opportunity and how this approach will add the best value to the UK.

24. **Why focus on pre-competitive research?**
EPSRC funding can only be used for pre-competitive research. We fund early-stage research into chemistry, engineering, information and communications technologies, materials, mathematical sciences and physics. More information on our remit can be found here: https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/epsrc-remit/.

25. **You are allowing requests for funding for pilot scale pre-competitive projects, but the hubs seem to be primarily about creating that innovation framework - what balance between these two elements are you expecting?**
Hubs should primarily be in EPSRC remit, but they should have a plan for how research will be translated, any research funded at the hub should be at technology readiness levels 1-4. More information on where we fit in the technology readiness levels can be found here: https://www.ukri.org/publications/technology-readiness-levels-and-the-role-of-healthcare-funders/. We are open to applicants deciding what the balance should be between these two elements to ensure the most impact for the UK and achieve the aims of the funding opportunity.

26. **How many hubs are your expecting to fund?**
Up to £8 million in total is available for projects lasting up to three years. A hub's full economic cost can be up to £4 million, so we would expect to fund 2-3 proposals. However, we are open to bids for hubs of different sizes and applicants should request funding for the resources required to carry out the hub's vision.

27. **If there is high demand at the EOI stage, will EPSRC select a number of proposals to go through to full stage?**
No, we are not sifting proposals at the EOI stage, however in the event of this funding opportunity being substantially oversubscribed as to be unmanageable, we may need to add an additional panel at the full proposal stage.

28. **Are you expecting proposals that can address all elements of the broad call remit, or are you also interested in seeking proposals that are more specialist and bite off one part of the challenge?**
We are looking for proposals to address all elements listed in the call.

We expect applicants to describe, in their proposal, why they have selected their focus and how that meets all the assessment criteria.

29. **Is care out of scope in this call?**
    Social care is not out of scope for this call.

30. **Is a CV required for a potential project manager for the hub?**
    No, CVs are not required for a project manager.

31. **Are we limited to five applicants and co-applicants (per EOI form)?**
    No, you can have more applicants in the full proposal, the EOI form had a technical limit.

32. **How will reviewers and panel members be selected? Will they be academic peers (as would normally be the case for EPSRC programmes), or will they also come from other backgrounds? If so which background/organisations?**
    We will use our normal EPSRC process to select panel members and reviewers. For more information on how we select panel members please find details here: https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-reviewers/peer-review-panels/panel-member-selection-and-participant-roles/. More information on how we select reviewers can be found here: https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/what-happens-after-you-submit-your-proposal/reviewer-selection/#contents-list.

33. **Will the panel members list be available online to view?**
    Yes, after a panel has been held and the funding decisions have been communicated, EPSRC publishes panel member names on grants on the web: https://gow.epsrc.ukri.org/ (see "panel Information").

34. **Will the EPSRC funding cover delivery of training modules, or must trainees and their organisations cover the cost of this?**
    Yes, you can request costs for training delivery. As with all other costs, it must be described in the "justification for resources" document that will form part of the proposal. This will be seen by reviewers and you may wish to anticipate questions about why some costs are sought from EPSRC rather than other sources.

35. **Is there an expectation for matched contributions from applicants and if so, what form can that take?**
    There is no expectation for applicants to provide matched funds.
    There are different ways to collaborate with organisations outside the host university. To be shown as a "project partner", an organisation should be contributing to the project and this may include cash or in-kind contributions such as expertise, staff time or use of facilities. Further guidance can be found here: https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/what-to-include-in-your-proposal/project-partners-letter-of-support/

36. **We are a personal data platform and have been asked to provide our services to several potential applicants. I assume as a platform (PAAS) multiple bidders can utilise us. Are we able to collaborate directly and on how many bids?**
    You can collaborate directly and on any number of bids that you wish. Costs can be requested under the directly incurred fund heading, see more details here: https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/costs-you-can-apply-for/directly-incurred-costs/.

37. **You say that you can fund NHS costs - what about public health (Local authority) or social care costs?**
    Details of costs you can apply for can be found here:
    https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/costs-you-can-apply-for/#contents-list.

38. **Do partnerships need to be in the UK, or can international partners be involved and contribute to the Hub?**
    International partners can be involved in the hub. Support for international collaboration can be in any research application to EPSRC, for research staff to visit or have extended work placements to a partner's laboratory overseas, including travel, subsistence, and consumables. Further details can be found here:
    https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/types-of-funding-we-offer/international-funding/funding-for-international-collaboration/.

39. **Is EPSRC expecting to see applications focussing on only one Grand Challenge or can we cover more than one if relevant?**
    You can focus on more than one if relevant.

40. **Does there need to be a strategy for the hub to sustain itself post funding?**
    We would expect hubs, once funded, to put in place a sustainability plan. EPSRC will work with the funded hubs to discuss this.

41. **For the funded pilot projects can these be used to work with industry collaborations.**
    Yes, more information on how EPSRC projects can work with industry can be found here:
    https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-collaboration/supporting-collaboration-epsrc/working-with-business/.

42. **Would you look to fund post docs /PhDs?**
    You can request funding for researchers to be employed to deliver pilot research projects. EPSRC do not fund project students on grants so we wouldn't be able to fund students as part of the hubs. Information on the ways in which we fund students can be found here:
    https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/career-and-skills-development/studentships/.

43. **Would it be in scope to research new ways of doing skills development and entrepreneurial environments to assist that delivery? Or are you looking at applying more traditional training to this problem?**
    Yes, it would be in scope to do that as part of the hub programme.

44. **Is further activity to explore the skills gaps in digital health over and those already stated eligible?**
    Yes, that activity would be eligible.

45. **Is there a limit to the number of submissions from any one given University?**

No, we have not put a limit on the number of submissions. We assume that proposals of this nature must be prepared with your research and commercialisation offices and that they will ensure the university could host any hubs proposed.

46. **Is there a register of NHS bodies with research capacity?**
UKRI doesn't have a register available for NHS bodies, however, there are details on criteria which make an organisation eligible here: https://www.ukri.org/about-us/who-we-fund/universities-and-other-organisations/.

47. **Is there any restriction on the funds that clinical partners can draw down on the assumption that University would lead the application?**
EPSRC can pay the research costs associated with the NHS component of a proposal, more information can be found here: https://www.ukri.org/councils/epsrc/guidance-for-applicants/costs-you-can-apply-for/nhs-costs/#contents-list.

48. **Re innovation and commercialisation, how much is EPSRC expecting to see evidence of this during the initial life of the Hub?**
Hubs should primarily be in EPSRC remit (technology readiness levels 1-4) but we would expect to see evidence of an innovation/commercialisation plan for research at the hub.

49. **Can applications be led from the medical academic area with significant input from ""traditional" EPSRC remit and industry or should the lead be someone who would normally apply for EPSRC funding?**
Yes, applicants can be from any relevant background as long as they can provide evidence of the ability to deliver the proposed project.

50. **Can you confirm that skills development is not restricted to the EPSRC Community i.e., those in clinical or industry settings/organisation can be funded to develop relevant skills.**
Yes, this opportunity is not restricted but the majority of the application should be focused on developing skills for the EPSRC community.

51. **How important is in-kind or institutional support for a bid?**
There is no expectation for applicants to provide a specific amount of institutional support. EPSRC are looking for institutions to provide an appropriate environment and level of access to facilities and equipment to meet the needs of the hub's vision.

52. **You talk about a two-phase programme, with a mid-point review. Are we bidding for the first phase or for both, and how likely is it that funding will be withdrawn at the mid-review phase?**
Applications should address the delivery of the hub over the full 3-year period, so proposals should be for both phases. A midterm review will take place halfway through this period and full guidance will be provided to successful hubs. It is unlikely that funding would be withdrawn unless there were major concerns.

53. **Is there support for networking amongst applicants/potential applicants?**

EPSRC will support networking amongst successful hubs, and we may run events once the hubs are funded. With the current funding delivery timeline, we are unable to support networking prior to the applications being submitted.

54. **What is the max amount which can be requested per hub?**
    £4m (80% fec)

55. **Can we commercialise the skills packages we develop?**
    Guidance on EPSRC rules around commercialisation can be found here:
    https://www.ukri.org/publications/intellectual-property-and-commercialisation-guide/.