

Paper 1: 2023-24 Research Capability Funding (RCF) Spending against the Spending Plan

Date: 28/03/2024

Author: Paul Roy & Kat Bagi

Purpose

This paper shows the 2023/24 RCF Spending Plan and our actual spending. The aim is to identify and explain any variance between the Plan and the actual spend.

Section 1 shows the total spend by Category showing the planned spend (recommended by the Advisory Group) and the actual spend. This section identifies any variance and provides an explanation.

Section 2 shows the itemised spend listed by category for transparency of spend. ***Please note this version of the paper has personal information redacted.***

With the intention of highlighting any questionable or inappropriate use of funding, and providing advice where use could be improved, the Advisory Group members are asked to:

1. Consider the variance presented and the reasons provided in Section 1
2. Scrutinise the within-Category spend in Section 2
3. Any missed opportunities that future spending plans should incorporate

Section 1

The Spending Plan and actual Spend by Category

Category	Planned Budget	Actual Spend	Variance	Explanation of variance
1. Responsive Calls	£195,000 (£255,000)	£304,238	£109,238	In November the Advisory Group recommended increasing the budget from £195,000 to £255,000. We received 14 applications valuing ~£300k for the January Round of Responsive Call RCF applications. We identified further underspend and CMO approval was provided to re-allocate these to Category 1.
2. Career Development posts	£156,000	£154,651	-£1,349	Minimal N/A
3. Departmental Development posts	£378,000	£378,487	£487	Minimal N/A
4. Career Fellowship	£155,000	£181,161	£26,161	Salary costs of Launching Fellowship and Academic Career Award post holders were higher than anticipated. Underspend from Category 6 was used to meet the increased costs.
5. Researcher in Residence	£45,000	£28,059	-£16,941	Further three projects were planned, due to slow progress these were moved to Financial Year 2024/25. Underspend was reallocated to Category 1.
6. ICS Research and Evidence	£95,000	£65,057	-£29,943	Underspend incurred on PHM Coordinator/Data Science Manager role because the Secure Data Environment (SDE) funding met majority of these costs. Underspend reallocated to Category 4.

7. Research support and Hosting	£358,000	£345,395	-£12,605	Some staff reduced their %FTE for the Research Team. Underspend was reallocated to Category 1.
8. Bridging funding	£3,000	£0	-£3,000	No applications received. Funding was reallocated to Category 9.
9. Maternity Sickness backfill	£3,000	£6,171	£3,171	One application was received that was double the amount allocated in this category, underspend from Category 8 & 13 was used to meet increase.
10. Extensions to existing awards	£8,000	£10,289	£2,289	4 applications were received, contingency funds (Category 13) were used to meet overspend.
11. Senior Investigator Awards	£75,000	£0	-£75,000	The Senior Investigator Award scheme ended as of March 2023. £75,000 was re-allocated for the Category 1 Responsive Call as reported to the Advisory Group in November.
12. Bristol Health Partners Annual membership	£75,000	£75,000	£0	No variance
13. Contingency	£2,901	£2,901	£0	Contingency funds were used to cover additional funds requested for Categories 9 & 10
Total	£1,548,901	£1,548,901	£0	

Table 1: Entire RCF spending in 2023/24 by BNSSG ICB, segmented by Category.

Re-Allocation of underspend from previous RCF Awards

Underspend of multiple previous RCF Awards at UWE with a total value of £14,623.10 returned to us and, as per our agreed process, we have reallocated these funds to other uses in line with RCF spending rules:

Costs covered from funds returned	
Laptop for Health Economist (UWE)	2,400.00
Laptop for Researcher in Residence (UWE)	2,400.00
GP Deep End pipeline pilot project 1	4,896.00
GP Deep End pipeline pilot project 2	4,896.00
Balance	£31.10

Table 2: RCF underspend reallocation

Section 2

Category 1: Responsive Calls

Lead applicant	Topic	Organisation
Vikki Wyld	Project to identify and understand the musculoskeletal research priorities for people from ethnic minority backgrounds.	UoB
Kushala Abeyssekera	What is the most efficacious, acceptable and cost effective way to screen for liver disease in the community?	UoB
Sarah Denford	How can vaccinations be delivered opportunistically in primary care and community settings in a way that is feasible, accessible, and acceptable, and leads to increased vaccine uptake in adults?	UoB
Praveen Kumar	Could rehabilitation exercise videos be given as part of standard care by health care professionals (HCPs) to people with stroke (PwS) prior to discharge from the hospital?	UWE
Kerstin Nothnagel	Clinical- and cost-effectiveness of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-guided ultrasound (US) in the primary care setting to usual care Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) diagnostic pathway.	UoB
Melanie Smith	What does effective and efficient healthcare navigation look like in multi-specialist GP Practices?	UWE
Berrou & Jones	Research capacity among the pharmacy workforce.	UWE
Madeleine Cochrane	Exploring stakeholder concerns around children and young people's access to community mental health care.	UoB
David Williams	Functional Neurological Disorders – Ambulance services recognition, care and management of FND patient presentations.	UWE
Matthew Jones	Joint Voluntary, Community, Faith & Social Enterprise Support Services (VCFSEs) and the North & West Bristol Locality Partnership (LP) to improve the health and well-being of residents	UWE

Sam Creavin	Ddevelop a way for testing cognitive symptoms in primary care to increase expertise in the diagnosis of dementia in the community.	UoB
Alex Pearce	Could self-directed gaming device (GripAble) enhance the practice of self-directed arm exercise and upper limb (UL) activity in people recovering from stroke in the community?	UWE
Alice Berry	Understanding factors impacting the uptake, acceptability, and effectiveness of implementing a digital musculoskeletal self-management intervention into primary care: A Realist Evaluation	UWE
Katherine Kearley-Shiers	Menopause; Perimenopause, awareness, knowledge and support for women experiencing menopausal symptoms.	Hartcliffe Health Centre
Hyunkee Kim and Polly Duncan	Continuity of care in General Practice.	UoB
Helen Nicholson	Paramedic Active Lives Promotion for Older People (ParAde)	UWE
Michael Daly	Process and outcome evaluation of preconception health promotion through sexual and reproductive health services	UoB
Sahdia Parveen	Implementation and evaluation of the ADAPT toolkit to improve the dementia care pathway for South Asian Families (ADAPTi)	Bradford
Tom Allport	'Find your village' - culturally-coordinated understanding and action for communities with migrational heritage	UoB

Table 3: Breakdown of Category 1 spend.

Other spends within this Category are shown below:

Description of activity	Amount paid
PPI review on quarterly applications – paid at INVOLVE rates as per NIHR funding guidance	£625

Table 4: Breakdown of Category 1 spend on any/all items not included in RCF application forms received.

Variance

Significant overspend on the original budget is reported. We had exceptionally high numbers of applications in April and July, meaning we had to cancel the October funding opportunity. In November 20223, the Advisory Group recommended using £60,000 underspends identified to increase the available budget to provide an opportunity in January, bringing the total Category 1 budget to £255,000.

In January we received 14 applications. It is worth noting that this is as many applications as we previously received per annum. We identified further underspend and obtained CMO approval to increase the total available budget for category 1 to £304,238.

4 applications were jointly ranked 1st and we were able to award all of these.

A further 4 applications were jointly scored as next highest, and insufficient budget available to fund all 4 of these applications. Scores were reviewed on individual factors prioritised by the Research Team in the order of Practitioner Assessment, Health Inequalities, System Priorities and PPI. Two further applications were awarded.

Category 2: Career Development Posts

Post	Organisation
Career Development Fellow in primary care mental health research	UoB
Public Health Career Development SRA	UoB
GPs at the Deep End	UoB
Matt Ridd's professorship - Systematic reviewer	UoB

Table 5: Breakdown of Category 2 spend.

Variance

Negligible, nothing to report.

Category 3: Departmental Development Posts

Post	Organisation
Post in Knowledge Mobilisation and Musculoskeletal Health	UWE
Senior Research Fellow in Health Economics	UWE
Senior Research Fellow to build capacity amongst social care staff	UoB
Information specialist	UoB
Bristol Trials Centre Senior Research Project Manager	UoB
Lecturer in Health Economics and Economic Evaluation	UoB
Database Analyst	UoB
Population Health Sciences - Statistician	UoB
People in Health West of England	UoB

Table 6: Breakdown of Category 3 spend.

Ratio of spend

We aimed for a 80:20 ratio of spend in favour of University of Bristol in consideration of the relative contributions of RCF generating NIHR awards.

The ratio of spend in Category 3 was 74:26 in favour of University of Bristol over UWE.

The ratio of total spend on the **combined Category 2 & 3 was 82:18** in favour of University of Bristol.

Variance

None to report

Category 4: Career Fellowships

Awardee	Area of expertise	Organisation
Charlotte Archer	Managing Anxiety in primary care	UoB
Julie Armoogum	chronic pain after cancer treatment	UWE
Helen Cramer	Domestic abuse, mental health, cardiovascular conditions and the delivery of primary care	UoB

Table 7: Breakdown of Category 4 spend.

Variance

The salary costs of the Academic Career Award post holder were substantially higher than the estimated costs based on previous awards. Underspend identified in Category 6 transferred to this category to meet increase.

Category 5: Researcher in Residence

Role	Organisations
Evaluation of Woodspring Locality Partnership integration	UoB
Evaluation of Weston, Worle and Villages locality, One Weston Care Home Hub	UWE
The use of Melatonin to aid sleep in patients suffering with Dementia	UWE
Service evaluation of Self injury Support's ICB commissioned peer support service	UWE

Table 8: Breakdown of Category 5 spend.

Variance

Further three projects were planned, however progress of setting these up slowed down due to lack of engagement by ICB teams. These were moved to Financial Year 2024/25. Underspend was reallocated to Category 1 and Category 3.

Category 6: ICS Evidence

Role	Organisations
ICB Clinical Lead for Data Analytics	ICB
PHM Coordinator (Data Science Manager)	UoB

Table 9: Breakdown of Category 6 spend.

Variance

No substantial change since November 2023: the underspend of £30K that was reported in November 2023 was reallocated to Career Fellowship.

Category 7: Research support and Hosting

Post	Organisations
Senior Research Fellow	UWE
Contracts Manager	UoB
Research Manager	ICB
Research Portfolio Manager	ICB
Research Finance Support	ICB
Research Portfolio Officer	ICB
Research Portfolio Support	ICB
Associate Medical Director for Research	ICB

Table 10: Breakdown of Category 7 spend.

Variance

- 1) As reported in November 2023 £33,308 commitment to the Sponsorship Department at University of Bristol was met through reallocation of previous RCF awards within University of Bristol.
- 2) Although salary costs for all staff members were higher due to incremental progression and inflationary rises, underspend was incurred in this category on the Clinical Lead for Research post because these costs have been shared with the ICB's Secure Data Environment award.
- 3) £5,176 income was received for the Research Portfolio Support for supporting a Tech for Better Care award funded by the Health Foundation.

Category 8: Bristol Health Partners Annual membership

Post	Organisations	Amount
Project Managers (3x)	Bristol Health Partners Academic Health Science Centre	£75,000

Table 11: Breakdown of Category 8 spend.

Variance

No variance to report.

Category 9: Bridging Funding

No applications received. Funding was reallocated to Category 9.

Category 10: Maternity & Sickness cover

Applicant	Organisation	Project	Reason	Amount
Redacted	UoB	PP4M – Managing multimorbidity in primary care	Redacted: to support sickness and/or maternity leave.	£6,171

Table 12: Breakdown of Category 10 spend.

Variance

One application was received that was double the amount allocated in this category, underspend from Category 8 & 13 was used to meet increase.

Category 11: Extensions to Existing Awards

Applicant	Organisation	Original RCF Category	Reason
Sandi Dheensa	UoB	Responsive Call	Due to unexpected circumstances there was not sufficient capacity to analyse data within originally planned timeframe
Christine Ramsay-Wade	UoB	Responsive Call	Additional PPI activity to strengthen grant application
Kirsty Roberts	UoB	Responsive Call	PPI payment to strengthen grant application
Toity Deave	UWE	Responsive Call	Original award holder sadly passed away and Toity Deave has taken the project over. Substantial delay due to these unexpected circumstances, additional staff costs as well as additional PPI activities are planned.

Variance

4 applications were received, and contingency funds (Category 13) were used to meet the increased costs.

Category 12: Senior investigator Awards

No spend to report: as agreed on Research and Knowledge Mobilisation Advisory Committee meeting November 2023, these funds were used to contribute to Category 1.