



[REDACTED]

02 January 2020

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2019/00021

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 6 December in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I'm looking to make an FOI request on clinical research to help inform a product idea to support the healthcare system.

Is it possible to provide answers to the following or direct me to relevant sources:

- How many clinical research studies or pilots were supported by MRC in 2017, 2018 and 2019?
 - How many of those were conducted by an NHS trust? (Broken down by each trust)
 - How many of those were conducted by a university? (Broken down by each university)
- What were the top 20 domains with the most research studies conducted in 2017, 2018 and 2019? e.g. disease/therapy area etc.
- From NHS staff in 2017, 2018 and 2019
 - How many applications were made for funding to MRC?
 - How many were accepted?
 - How much was the total funding secured?
- From university academics in 2017, 2018 and 2019
 - How many applications were made for funding to MRC?
 - How many were accepted?
 - How much was the total funding secured?
- Over the last 12 months, what was the average time it took someone to secure funding for clinical research (from application to funding)?

Our response

I can confirm UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hold information relevant to your request.

We estimate that the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate statutory limit as specified within Section 12 of the FOIA which for UKRI is set at £450. This represents the estimated cost of 18 hours of staff resource on locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

We have determined that we do not hold the information in the format you have requested as we have not undertaken any recent analysis of clinical research data. Whilst we do hold raw data for some of the questions you have posed, this is currently held in several areas such as within applications and electronic systems (which would first need to be identified and extracted), whilst other data would require the investigation of individual proposals and person records to confirm what information is held for the period requested.

Our reasonable estimates suggest that it would require a minimum of 21 hours of staff resource to extract the data that is already identifiable, with a further 6-10 hours required for a more detailed investigation of the less well-defined data aspects together with the relevant Programme Manager's involvement.

Consequently, as the cost of complying with your request exceeds the appropriate limit, UKRI is not obliged under Section 12 of the FOIA to respond to your request.

That being said, there are several public sources of information available that may be of use and below we have outlined these in the context of each question posed, together with advice and guidance as to how your request could be further refined and resubmitted for reconsideration.

- 1) *How many clinical research studies or pilots were supported by MRC in 2017, 2018 and 2019?*
 - *How many of those were conducted by an NHS trust? (Broken down by each trust)*
 - *How many of those were conducted by a university? (Broken down by each university)*

We do not have a portfolio report that identifies clinical research, however if there is a specific focus for your request we may be able to determine if a new report can be developed.

It would be particularly helpful to know what you would specifically define as “clinical research studies” and “pilots” as there are a number of different approaches, this could include focusing on clinical trials or different research activity areas of the Health Research Classification System (<https://hrcsonline.net/research-activities/7-management-of-diseases-and-conditions/>).

It would also be beneficial if you are able to refine whether the information you require is focused on awards made in each of the years identified or of projects that are live during those periods; the latter would include projects that started prior to the dates identified (and which may impact on the time needed to analyse and validate the data).

You may also find it useful to review information already published on MRC awards on the UKRI Gateway to Research and the MRC website. The Gateway to Research includes information on all awards, including the organisation holding the award and the HRCS Research Activity classification and Health Area (<https://gtr.ukri.org/>), this data can be downloaded from the site. On MRC's website the spreadsheet entitled 'Grants and Fellowships awarded' at the bottom of the Funded Research page (<https://mrc.ukri.org/research/funded-research/>) provides information on the date of award and provides an indication of the number of awards made each year.

- 2) *What were the top 20 domains with the most research studies conducted in 2017, 2018 and 2019? e.g. disease/therapy area etc.*

It would be helpful you are able to confirm whether this information is requested for the whole portfolio or just for clinical research.

- 3) *From NHS staff in 2017, 2018 and 2019*
 - *How many applications were made for funding to MRC?*
 - *How many were accepted?*
 - *How much was the total funding secured?*
- 4) *From university academics in 2017, 2018 and 2019*
 - *How many applications were made for funding to MRC?*
 - *How many were accepted?*
 - *How much was the total funding secured?*

MRC awards are made to Research Organisations rather than to individual researchers and information on the employer of investigators named in MRC proposals, either as Principal Investigators or Co-Investigators, is not routinely analysed.

Information relating to employment may be held in either the application or the individual's contact record; however, the information you have requested is not easily accessible and may not be comprehensive. It is also common for researchers to be employed at one organisation but to apply for an award at another organisation; this may be more likely for some schemes which are specifically directed to clinicians, such as clinical research fellowships.

As for Q1, if there is a specific area which is the focus for your request we may be able to determine if a new report can be developed. Information on success rates by Research Organisation is routinely published on the MRC's website and may be useful to you in refining your request. The data can be found at the MRC's website <https://mrc.ukri.org/research/funded-research/success-rates/all-published-success-rate-data/>.

The most recent data available from this page is the 2017/18; this provides information on the number and value of applications and awards for each Research Organisation, including proposals from NHS Trusts. An update for 2018/19 can be provided.

5) *Over the last 12 months, what was the average time it took someone to secure funding for clinical research (from application to funding)?*

The approach to this question would depend on the scope agreed for the previous questions as a new report would be needed to identify and extract the relevant information.

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek a review of the decision, please contact:

Head of Information Governance


Email: foi@ukri.org or infogovernance@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints policy: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,


Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
foi@ukri.org | dataprotection@ukri.org