



Department
of Health &
Social Care

NIHR | National Institute for
Health and Care Research

7th Floor
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

6th April 2022

Dear colleagues and partners

It is now more than six months since I became Chief Scientific Adviser to DHSC and CEO of the NIHR, taking over from Chris Whitty. It has been an exciting but challenging time and I am enormously thankful for the support and guidance given to me by Louise Wood and the senior management team in DHSC's Science Research and Evidence directorate as well as by NIHR's leadership team. I will sorely miss Louise when she leaves us at the end of May.

[Best Research for Best Health: The Next Chapter](#) was published shortly before I joined, laying out NIHR's priorities for the coming years. I had the opportunity to give input into this document and fully endorse the bold directions it sets out for the organisation. I am excited that the recent spending review settlement will enable us to advance these priorities, as well as emerging priorities most notably in the area of sustainability and climate change.

One of the areas of strategic focus highlighted in The Next Chapter relates to building the nation's capacity and capabilities in social care research. To signal our commitment, I am delighted to announce that we are today changing NIHR's name to the **National Institute for Health and Care Research**. You will see from the new logo at the top of this letter that we will continue to be known as NIHR.

NIHR already has a strong foundation in adult social care research. Since our establishment in 2006, we have invested over £200 million into more than 470 projects, with £90 million of this spend since 2020. In particular, we are proud of our [School for Social Care Research](#), our annual [Research for Social Care](#) funding call, our [Health and Social Care Delivery Research](#) programme, our [Social Care Incubator](#), and the social care research being undertaken through our [Applied Research Collaborations](#) and [Policy Research Units](#). But we know there is much more we can and must do.

We are today investing additional money in social care research, enabling us to hold two Research for Social Care calls each year with a higher funding limit. The scope of RfSC will be expanded to include children and young people, and we look forward to working in partnership with the Department for Education to drive forward much-needed research.

By investing in social care, we are confident that we will also be able to make progress against some of our other areas of strategic focus: supporting the recovery of the health and social care system post COVID-19; improving the lives of people with multiple long-term conditions through research; bringing research to under-served regions and communities

with major needs; and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion across our research, systems and culture.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to update you on another programme of work we are undertaking at NIHR, which we term our **'One NIHR' programme**.

In The Next Chapter, we commit to 'improving our ways of working, making it easier for people to understand and work with us'. We also promote 'effectiveness' as one of our operating principles, stating: 'We have a culture of continuous improvement, finding ways to simplify and streamline our processes, improve our communications and accessibility, harness the power of digital technology, and enhance people's experience of working with and for us'. This is what One NIHR is all about.

Based on conversations with many of you and my own experience as a researcher, I am aware that the breadth and scale of NIHR inevitably bring complexity and this can make NIHR quite difficult to navigate. The aim of One NIHR is to provide a consistent, high-quality experience to the whole health and care research community.

We are undertaking a number of projects including: standardising, shortening and simplifying our funding application forms; streamlining standard operating procedures across the organisation; introducing a single application and award management system; and providing industry with a single point of entry. Our coordinating centres will also be aligning their business planning processes and working towards a more cohesive internal culture. We expect most of this work to be complete within 12 months and will be consulting widely.

Much of this work links with the independent review of research bureaucracy initiated by BEIS, which focuses on unnecessary paperwork, arduous funding applications and research selection processes. We are working with UKRI to ensure our approaches are as consistent as possible and look forward to the upcoming publication of Professor Tickell's review.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, NIHR demonstrated how successful it can be when we all work together towards a common goal. We want to bring that same energy and focus to social care and our other areas of strategic focus and to remove those elements of bureaucracy that distract us and frustrate you.

I hope you will welcome these two key announcements and look forward to working in partnership with you over the coming months and years.

Best wishes



Prof. Lucy Chappell
DHSC Chief Scientific Adviser
NIHR Chief Executive Officer