

Guidance notes for applicants that ensure all primary research is informed by a review of the existing literature

We will only fund primary research* where the proposed research is informed by a review of the existing evidence.

Where the request for research to address a specific research question is via a commissioning brief advertised through a commissioned call, the review of the existing evidence will have already been undertaken by the funding NIHR Programme to inform the commissioning brief. Applications in response to commissioned calls will need to address the commissioning brief requirements specific to the NIHR Programme.

For researcher-led or researcher-initiated proposals that are not in response to a specific commissioning brief as part of a commissioned call, if these include primary research then they should include reference to the existing evidence and explain how this evidence has informed the proposed research. Where a systematic review already exists that summarises the available evidence this should be referenced, as well as including reference to any relevant literature published subsequent to that systematic review. Where no such systematic review exists it is expected that the applicants will undertake an appropriate review of the currently available and relevant evidence (using as appropriate a predetermined and described methodology that systematically identifies, critically appraises and then synthesises the available evidence) and then present a summary of the findings of this in their proposal. All applicants must also include reference to relevant on-going studies, e.g. from trial registries.

***Primary Research defined as:** Original research conducted to collect new data to answer a research problem. Source: Health Technology Assessment Programme A-Z of useful terms.
<http://www.hta.ac.uk/atozusefulters.shtml>

