

## Bristol NHS Foundation Trust Research Sponsorship Guidance

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### 1. Introduction

From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026, NBT will be acquired by UHBW, forming a new organisation, Bristol NHS Foundation Trust (BFT). Prior to 1<sup>st</sup> July both UHBW and NBT have taken on the role as sponsor for a number of research studies which will continue in the newly formed organisation as described in *BRDS\_001 Interim Standard Operating Procedure for Research at BFT*.

In the absence of a formal BFT policy on research sponsorship this guidance document is intended to outline the top level principles upon which decisions will be made as to whether BFT will consider sponsorship. It supersedes the principles outlined in appendix 2 of the NBT policy R&D - (PO2) Sponsorship & Central Trial Management Fees Policy

### 2. Purpose and Scope

#### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the principles that underpin which studies will be considered for BFT sponsorship.

## 2.2 Scope

This applies to all R&D staff who process BFT sponsorship requests and to research staff when preparing new sponsorship applications for BFT after the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026.

## 3. Definition of Terms

Bristol NHS Foundation Trust (BFT)	The organisation formed following the acquisition of North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT) by University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW), effective from 1 July 2026.
HOU	Hospital Operating Units
NBT	North Bristol Trust
R&D	Research & Development
UHBW	University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust

## 4. Procedure

The following Table outlines the top level principles which BFT R&D staff will use in order to make a decision on whether a study is suitable for sponsorship:

Principles	Comments
UK based only	Please ask your University or other collaborator – we do not hold insurance to sponsor research outside the UK.
Chief Investigator has either a substantive or honorary contract with BFT	Sponsors must have a direct contractual relationship with Chief Investigators for the purposes of oversight.
Not for academic qualification	Where an academic qualification is being pursued, the sponsor should be the student's HEI. Exceptionally, a fully funded fellowship may be held and sponsored by the Trust;

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	these are considered on a case by case basis and require early discussion.
Fully resourced to deliver the study	All costs must be identified and have a source of funding to ensure resource is available.
Research which aims to have benefit to patients and/or the NHS	Any burden on patients must be proportionate to the risks of the research, and the research should demonstrate future patient benefit.
Confirmed as Research	BFT R&D must be satisfied that the research meets the definition of research as described in the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research.
Appropriate feasibility has been undertaken	For example, researchers should have early discussions with the research delivery lead for the specialty to ensure deliverability of the proposal; researchers should have engaged patients in study design and should have worked with support departments as needed, e.g. pharmacy
<u>Appropriate methodology</u>	The research team must have the necessary expertise, e.g. statistical, qualitative, data management, analysis, delivery, dissemination

Once a sponsorship request has been submitted as outlined in *BRDS\_001 Interim SOP for Research Compliance* until a fully integrated R&D department is in place and a single set of systems and processes are in place for BFT, the Hospital Operating Units (HOUs) will continue to review applications for their respective sites. The above principles will be used as a basis for decision making and to ensure processes are aligned between the HOUs until such a time that a new single process is in place. Where the above principles are not met, or there is an identified risk, each HOU will follow existing escalation routes as described in *BRDG\_001 interim R&D Operating Arrangements for BFT*.

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- **Associated Documents and References**

*BRDS\_001 Interim SOP for Research Compliance*

*BRDG\_001 interim R&D Operating Arrangements for BFT*