

NIHR Academy

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Dear NIHR Academy Member,

We are writing to you at what is a very difficult time for the NHS and the country as a whole. We are aware that many of you will have been requested to return to full time frontline care to support the response to COVID-19. Given the various communications that you may have received around returning to clinical practice we thought it would be helpful for you to hear directly from NIHR on our position and the actions we will look to take in future to support our members who may be or might wish to return to full time clinical practice in the short term.

Firstly we wanted to say a massive thank you to all of you who have already returned to full time frontline care to support the national effort or planning to do so in the near future. We want to support any of our members who are looking to do this and want you to feel completely assured that you have the full backing of NIHR in doing so.

We also want to reassure you that by supporting the national effort you won't be unfairly penalised in terms of your current NIHR award or your future clinical academic career. It is very important that once the current acute situation is over those who have returned to frontline services are able to quickly and smoothly return to their clinical academic career, whether that be continuing an ACF post, completing a PhD or applying for further research funding from NIHR. Further details of how we are supporting those returning to frontline care in the short term can be accessed here: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/covid-19-message-for-all-nihr-academy-members/24477>.

In the longer term we are also looking at ways to help ensure your clinical academic career isn't unfairly disadvantaged. The details of this are still being worked out as this is a fast moving situation, but we are, for example, looking at making sure assessments of future fellowship and grant applications take account of research breaks due to supporting the COVID-19 response. We are continuing to run funding competitions for our Fellowships during the outbreak but with extended competition deadlines and relaxed sign off procedures. We recognise this won't always be

enough to allow people to submit an application they were perhaps planning due to being pulled away from their research and training, but will make sure that when you do look to submit an application in a future date the delay in submitting an application won't affect your eligibility or competitiveness. We're also looking at what additional support we might be able to provide in future for people specifically in this situation, for example additional workshops or access to training materials.

Finally we wanted to say the team at NIHR Academy is always on hand to provide support and advice to you, as are your local training leads with whom we have also been in contact with, so please do not hesitate in contacting us.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Dave Jones
Dean of the NIHR Academy



Dr Lisa Cotterill
CEO, NIHR Academy