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NIHR Open Access policy - for publications submitted on or after 1 June 2022

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For articles submitted before 1 June 2022, please refer to the [current NIHR Open Access policy](#).

Introduction

Open access makes published academic research freely, immediately and permanently available online for anyone to read, share and reuse. This maximises the societal, academic, and economic impact of publicly funded research, and enhances the integrity and rigour of research through greater openness and transparency. This policy supports the Government [R&D Roadmap](#) and our commitment to [adding value in research](#), one aspect of which is ensuring that research results are published in full in an accessible and unbiased report. Through the [NIHR Journals Library](#) and [NIHR Open Research](#), we enable findings, including negative findings, from all NIHR funded research to be made open access.

The NIHR Open Access Policy is focused on our expectations in relation to publishing academic, peer-reviewed journal articles – but this is just one way in which our researchers may choose to disseminate their research

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findings. We recognise and encourage a diversity of approaches to disseminating research findings so that people can make use of them. We are also committed to making sure that when we assess research outputs during funding decisions, we consider the intrinsic merit of the work and not the journal in which it is published (see our [position on responsible use of metrics](#)).

4. Principle 4 - NIHR will pay reasonable fees to enable immediate open access
4. Policy review

This policy applies to peer-reviewed articles describing NIHR funded research findings submitted on or after 1 June 2022, when it will supersede the [NIHR open access policy introduced in 2014](#). The revised open access policy follows extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including the academic, publishing and health and care sectors and patients and the public. This included an open survey in autumn 2020 to inform the future of NIHR open access policy, public contributor workshops to capture the views of patients, carers, service users and the public on this agenda, a roundtable for health and social care organisations in collaboration with Health Education England, and an independent report on the challenges and opportunities of open access in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. Find out more about the [Review and its supporting evidence](#). Key terms are explained in the [glossary](#).

Scope

This policy applies to all peer-reviewed research articles, including reviews not commissioned by publishers and conference papers, submitted for publication on or after 1 June 2022 arising from:

- [NIHR Programmes](#), [NIHR Personal Awards](#) and [NIHR Global Health Research Portfolio](#): Research studies where the research costs are funded in whole or in part by the NIHR. Personal awards that do not fund research are out of scope of this policy.
- For [NIHR Infrastructure](#) (including NIHR research units and schools): Research studies where the majority of the research costs are funded by the NIHR.

Research costs, as defined by the [AcoRD system for attributing the costs of health and social care research](#), are the costs of the R&D itself that end when the research ends. They relate to activities that are being undertaken to answer the research questions. (For the Global Health

Research portfolio researchers should also consider the [Global Health Research Finance Guidance](#)).

Peer-reviewed research articles which are otherwise out of scope (e.g. NIHR Infrastructure research studies with minority NIHR funding), but which acknowledge NIHR support/funding must be deposited and made freely accessible through [Europe PMC](#), as soon as possible, but no later than 12 months post the official final publication date.

Monographs (with the exception of [NIHR Journals Library](#) publications), book chapters, edited collections, or forms of non-peer-reviewed material, such as pre-prints, are considered out of scope of this policy. However NIHR reserves the right to ensure the use of preprints in the context of emergencies.

Policy

Principle 1 - Articles must be immediately, freely and openly accessible to all

The most up to date Version of Record or the Author Accepted Manuscript of in-scope articles must be made freely available through [PubMed Central \(PMC\)](#) and [Europe PMC](#) by the official final publication date, without any embargo period.

If an open access fee, such as an article processing charge (APC), has been funded by the NIHR, a condition of the funding is that the publisher takes responsibility for making the Version of Record (and any corrected versions thereafter) freely available on the publishing journal platform and to have an [agreement with the National Library of Medicine \(NLM\)](#) to deposit the Version of Record in PMC and allow that content to be shared with Europe PMC at the time of publication.

The above should not prevent researchers from also depositing a copy in their institutional or another subject-based repository.

For the [Global Health Research portfolio](#), NIHR encourages authors to deposit in Europe PMC in line with the standard NIHR open access policy, although an appropriate and

sustainable local institutional, national or regional repository may be used instead, where available.

Principle 2 - There should be no barriers to the re-use and dissemination of NIHR funded articles

All in-scope articles must be published under the [Creative Commons attribution licence \(CC BY\)](#), or [Open Government Licence \(OGL\)](#) when subject to Crown Copyright, to ensure maximum impact. This will permit all users of NIHR-funded articles to disseminate and build upon the material for any purpose without further permission or fees being required.

NIHR may permit, on a case-by-case basis, the use of a more restrictive [Creative Commons Attribution No-derivatives licence \(CC BY-ND\)](#) for the open access version of a research article.

These licensing requirements do not apply to any materials included within a research article that are provided by third-party copyright holders. The third-party materials in the article can be subject to more restrictive copyright licences than outlined in this policy.

Submissions to subscription journals must include the following text in the funding acknowledgement section of the manuscript and any cover letter/note accompanying the submission:

"For the purpose of open access, the author has applied [a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence] [an 'Open Government Licence'] (or where permitted by the National Institute for Health Research) [a Creative Commons Attribution No-derivatives (CC BY-ND) licence] to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising".

Principle 3 - Articles must be freely discoverable

All articles must be long-term archived and freely discoverable through PMC and Europe PMC to those that may wish to read, share and reuse the outputs of NIHR funded research, including patients, service users, carers

and the public. This includes machine readability and accessibility to ensure full utility of NIHR funded articles.

To ensure research articles are findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable, NIHR expects in-scope articles to be published in journals, publishing platforms and repositories which meet standards that relate to aspects of high-quality journals including technical requirements that support metadata, discoverability, author and funder-attribution. These standards are described in [the technical standards for journals, publishing platforms and repositories](#).

In-scope research articles must include:

- **A data sharing statement** describing how the underpinning research data can be accessed. Where there are reasons to protect access to the data, for example commercial confidentiality or sensitivities around data derived from potentially identifiable human participants, these should be included in the statement. Read more about [our position on the sharing of research data](#).
- **Appropriate acknowledgment** of NIHR, unique award identifier and disclaimer in the funding or acknowledgments section of the manuscript and included in the funding information requested by the publication on submission. Read more on [how to acknowledge the NIHR in research outputs](#).

Principle 4 - NIHR will pay reasonable fees to enable immediate open access

When an open access payment is applicable, for example an APC, NIHR will pay reasonable fees required by a publisher to effect publication in line with the criteria of this policy. Where relevant and appropriate, additional funding will be made available to active contracts that budgeted based on the previous open access policy scope. Guidance on open access funding eligibility and process will be published by March 2022.

NIHR recognises the role that publishing transitional arrangements play in achieving a sustainable and cost-effective transition to open access for the sector. NIHR is exploring opportunities, by working with [Jisc](#), for the NIHR-funded research community to access publishing transitional arrangements. NIHR will monitor its open

access publishing expenditure to ensure it provides value for money as part of broader public investment in research.

Policy review

NIHR is committed to continuous improvement in the field of research openness and transparency. As such, NIHR will monitor the policy from its implementation with the next review point to commence by 2024.

Any queries with regards to the NIHR open access policy should be directed to openaccess@nihr.ac.uk.

[Read the technical standards for journals, publishing platforms and repositories.](#)

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