

NIHR Newcastle Biomedical Research Centre Mentoring Pilot

Overview and FAQs

Overview

NIHR Newcastle Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) is piloting a new mentoring initiative that aims to support researchers' personal and professional growth, develop careers and build connections, across the breadth of disciplines within our BRC community.

The NIHR Newcastle BRC Mentoring Pilot is being piloted by the BRC's Research Capacity Development Group and draws on best practice of the NIHR Mentoring Programme.

This document outlines general guidelines for mentors and mentees to support colleagues through the process and to outline expectations, time commitments and responsibilities.

We recognise mentor volunteers may also seek mentorship benefit from the Pilot as a mentee. Mentees may wish to develop mentoring skills too. We welcome expressions of interest from individuals as both mentor and mentee.

Whether sharing your experience as a mentor or gaining insights and guidance as a mentee, our vision is that the Pilot should offer a valuable opportunity to develop, gain new perspectives and expand professional networks in this setting.

Objectives

The BRC Mentoring Pilot aims to:

- Foster professional growth and collaboration
- Build a supportive and inclusive network
- Encourage mutual learning
- Support interdisciplinary collaboration, as the mentor does not need to be from your discipline
- Provide resources to support mentoring relationships to maximise success

Eligibility

Mentees

- The Pilot will offer mentorship to all post-doctoral researchers (post thesis-submission), spanning career stages and professional backgrounds from the BRC community, including Mid-Career and/or BRC Leadership Track colleagues.*

- Must be supported as members of the BRC by their BRC Research Theme Co-Lead(s).
- Colleagues should endeavour to be available to attend an in-person BRC Mentoring Orientation Event on **Wednesday 28 January 2026, 14:00 – 15:30**.

*The BRC Mentoring Pilot will not include doctoral students who have support and mentoring via their supervisory team but we hope to include doctoral students in the future.

You can complete the mentor expression of interest form [here](#).

Mentors

- Mentors are expected to include (but not be limited to) BRC Research Theme Co-Leads, BRC Leadership Track colleagues and Cross-Cutting Area Leads
- Colleagues should endeavour to be available to attend an in-person orientation event on **Wednesday 28 January 2026, 14:00 – 15:30**.

You can complete the mentee expression of interest form [here](#).

Timelines

Applications Opens	Friday 14 November 2025
Applications Close	Monday 5 January 2026, 12:00
Outcome communicated	Monday 19 January 2026
BRC Mentoring Orientation Event	Wednesday 28 January 2026, 14:00 – 15:30

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

We have compiled FAQs from mentoring initiatives. If you have any other questions, please email BRC Training, Education and EDI Manager at cissie.tsang@newcastle.ac.uk

General FAQs

Will there be support available?

There will be an in-person BRC Mentoring Orientation session for mentors and mentees on **Wednesday 28 January 2026, 14:00 – 15:30, Great Gable, Room 1.01 1st Floor Biomedical Research Building, Campus for Ageing and Vitality**. A member of the Organisational Development team will guide mentors and mentees through mentoring best practice. Guidance materials will be provided and the Research

Capacity Development Group will be available throughout to answer any questions you may have to support you.

How much time do I have to commit?

The Pilot will take place over a 6-month time frame with a recommended time commitment of a minimum of 3 hours in total. This equates to 30 minutes per month on average. Each mentoring relationship is different, and flexibility is built within the Pilot depending on individual schedules.

How are mentors and mentees matched?

Mentors and mentees will be matched by the Research Capacity Development (RCD) Group based on the expression of interest forms. It helps to include as much information as possible to help with this process as matching will be based on goals, knowledge and experience. The RCD Group will aim to facilitate pairings to ensure alignment.

What if the mentoring relationship isn't working?

If any questions or challenges arise, mentors and mentees can get in touch with the RCD Group for support. We may be able to re-match or the mentoring relationship could be ended early if required.

Will there be an evaluation of the Pilot?

Feedback will be collected through short surveys and optional interviews to assess the effectiveness of the Pilot to help inform future iterations.

We will also invite mentors and mentees to share their experiences as part of a wider communications plan through video interviews, blog posts and talks. Conversations between mentors and mentees are confidential unless both parties agree to share information and experiences.

What is the difference between the NIHR Newcastle BRC Mentoring Pilot and the NIHR Mentoring Programme?

The NIHR Newcastle BRC Mentoring Pilot is a local initiative with colleagues who are familiar with the Newcastle BRC community, regional infrastructure and have place based knowledge. The Pilot aims to foster professional development, knowledge sharing and inclusive support networks. It is designed to test and refine a mentoring model before a wider rollout. Our intention is that it should be complementary to national initiatives such as the NIHR Mentoring Programme.

How do I sign up?

You can complete the mentor expression of interest form [here](#).

You can complete the mentee expression of interest form [here](#).

The form will ask about your research interests/ expertise, experience and goals to help with matching.

Mentee FAQs

What is expected of a mentee?

As a mentee, your role is to take an active part in your development by setting goals, seeking feedback, and engaging in open and honest conversations with your mentor.

How do I benefit from being a mentee?

You will be matched with a mentor who will offer guidance, support and insights. This can help you to expand your network, navigate your career path, build confidence and perhaps explore new topics of interest. Mentors are not expected to provide all of the answers but rather, help you reflect and explore options.

Are conversations with my mentor confidential?

Conversations between the mentee and the mentor should be confidential unless you both agree to share specific information. The RCD Group will collect general feedback but any in-depth information is optional.

Can I be a mentor and a mentee in this Pilot?

Yes you can! Many people find value in both roles e.g. sharing experience as a mentor whilst also learning and growing as a mentee.

The eligibility criteria requests mentees to be supported as members of the BRC by their BRC Research Theme Co-Lead(s). What does this mean?

Prospective mentees should liaise with their BRC Research Theme Co-Lead(s) before applying. The mentees expression of interest form will ask you to name the Theme Co-Lead you have gained support from.

Mentor FAQs

Can I be a mentor if I don't have previous experience of mentoring?

Absolutely. You don't need prior mentoring experience to be a mentor. The BRC Mentoring Pilot is a learning opportunity for everyone, including first time mentors.

What do I gain from being a mentor?

Mentoring is a valuable opportunity for personal and professional growth. We hope it is an opportunity to share your experience whilst also learning something new from the mentee(s). You can:

- Develop leadership and mentoring skills
- Contribute to a culture of learning and inclusion
- Enhance your communication and active listening skills
- Expand your network across the BRC Community
- Gain new perspectives
- Reflect on your own career journey