**RCGP Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Fellowship, Funding Application Guidance**

**Please read this guidance document prior to completing an application for the fellowship.**

### Introduction

**Background to the RCGP Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Fellowship**

The RCGP and Marie Curie recognise that there is a paucity of high quality research to increase the evidence base for palliative and end of life care. In a recent analysis of health research in the UK in 2014, only 0.16% of research funds allocated to health-related research were spent on end of life care research. This is in stark contrast to the number of people needing palliative and end of life care, mostly in the community and often with primary care input needed.

**Theme of the RCGP Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Fellowship call**

Marie Curie recently initiated and led a research priority setting partnership which formulated research priorities identified by carers, patients and health and social care practitioners (http://www.palliativecarepsp.org.uk/). 83 research questions were identified and a top ten list prioritised1. The top research priority was:

- **What are the best ways of providing palliative care outside of working hours to avoid crises and help patients to stay in their place of choice? This includes symptom management, counselling and advice, GP visits and 24-hour support, for patients, carers and families.**

Marie Curie and RCGP are keen to address the dearth of research addressing 24/7 palliative care. Marie Curie and RCGP are also interested in the interface of primary care and social care, for example in examining and improving the interaction of GP practices and care homes or similar.

Funds can be used flexibly and might cover a systematic literature review or qualitative / mixed method study. It could also be used for a knowledge translation or implementation study. We also encourage the use of the funds for developmental work that will lead to a larger grant application e.g. from NIHR, Marie Curie or any other eligible funder.

### Purpose of the RCGP Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Fellowship

This fellowship scheme has the aim of bringing palliative and end of life care more to the

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The fellowship programme hopes to identify and support a future leader in primary care research related to palliative and end of life care.

The award of £40,000 will be available for a period of up to 2 years.

**About these guidance notes**

This document contains information and guidance for applicants for the RCGP Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Fellowship. It is important that you read these guidance notes fully before starting to complete the application form to ensure that you provide the correct information. The activities of the SFB are managed by the Translational Research team in CIRC (RCGP). If you have any enquiries relating to the process please contact the Translational Research team via email (SFB@rcgp.org.uk) or telephone (020 3188 7594).

**The RCGP Scientific Foundation Board**

The Scientific Foundation Board (SFB), established in 1976, reflects the College’s commitment to research. The SFB is the College’s research grant awarding body and will oversee the RCGP Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Fellowship. The SFB is currently chaired by Professor Chris Salisbury and includes experienced researchers and other key representatives in the field of primary care. The application form, supporting documents and relevant deadlines are available on the RCGP website: [http://www.rcgp.org.uk/sfb](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/sfb).

**Eligibility**

Grants can be awarded to people who are not members of the College. The SFB reserves the right to make appropriate awards on an individual case basis, as the prime consideration will be scientific quality.

RCGP and Marie Curie encourage applications which involve multi-disciplinary collaboration and collaboration with academic departments.

A total of £40,000 is available in this round and funding can be used for one large award or several smaller awards.

**Priorities**

Applications must address one or several of the research questions identified by the Palliative and end of life care Priority Setting Partnership and are particularly invited to address the top priority, providing out of hours or 24/7 palliative care (see background section).

RCGP and Marie Curie are also interested in the interface of primary care and social care, for example in examining and improving the interaction of GP practices and care homes or similar.

The SFB encourages applications which involve multi-disciplinary collaboration and collaboration with academic departments.

**Applying for the RCGP Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Fellowship**

Applicants should include in their proposal explaining how their research has potential to improve the quality of life for people with any terminal illness and their carers, families and friends. The award seeks to support a future leader in primary care research related to palliative and end of life care.

The application may focus on one or several of the following:

- A research project
Implementation of research into practice

Applicants must be primary care researchers affiliated to an academic department of a university. The SFB encourages applications which involve multi-disciplinary collaboration and collaboration with different organisations / academic departments. A statement of how impact will be demonstrated and justification of expenditure and the length of time (up to 2 years) required

Application Deadline: 31 July 2016
The Fellow will be notified by January 2017
Fellowship will start from February/ March 2017

What the SFB will not fund
It should be noted that the SFB does not fund:

- Audit projects or guideline developments
- Undergraduate students
- Postgraduate fees (although some funding may be available for research costs)
- Time for individuals already in receipt of funding for the same research from another source. For example, the SFB would not normally consider funding protected time for an individual working in a research practice which was in receipt of Research & Development (R&D) support funding*
- Institutional overheads as part of its awards
- Supervision fees
- Top-up funding for studies that have exceeded their budget or are already underway

* The SFB might, however, consider a request for protected time from an individual currently employed solely to undertake one specific research project where such a request would enable them to undertake an additional project. Such an application would be considered on an individual case basis. Applicants requiring locum cover will be required to provide receipts.

General guidance: making an application
Applications for a RCGP Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Fellowship can only be submitted on the relevant application form. Applications should:

- Be typed using Arial font, text no smaller than 10 point
- Be completed and submitted as a Word document (or converted pdf that allows text to be copied from the form) on the form available on the RCGP website. Scanned pdfs will not be accepted
- Not have any sections altered or edited
- Comply with word count/size parameters
- Be submitted electronically as one file (to be sent to SFB@RCGP.org.uk)

Applications submitted after the deadline and applications not submitted in full with supporting documents will automatically be declined. All grant applications must contain appropriate signatures; these can be submitted as electronic documents or posted documents. These must be submitted by the application deadline.

It is essential that the appropriate signatures and statements are obtained from your adviser/supervisor, research sponsor organisation and finance office. The signature and statement from your adviser/supervisor is required as a means of ensuring that they:

- Have read your application
- Confirm that the fellowship will be accommodated and administered in the relevant department/institution
• Are satisfied that your application is ready for review by the SFB

This is an important requirement for early career or relatively inexperienced researchers who do not yet have the skill range of more experienced researchers, and it will lessen the likelihood of the SFB either requiring changes to the application before agreeing to fund a study or of rejecting an application because, for example, of major flaws in the study design.

The signature of the finance office is required to confirm that costings are correct and in accordance with normal practice of the institution. Only the direct costs of the research project will be funded.

**Outcome**

The SFB will aim to notify applicants of the outcome by the end of January 2017. The Fellowship is expected to start within six months of the notification date.

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**Filling in the application form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1A</th>
<th>Principal applicant details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This section requests basic applicant information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you are a member of the College, please provide your membership number and specify your local RCGP faculty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where your research will contribute towards a higher qualification, please include the nature of this qualification (For example MPhil/ PhD/ MD). Research projects carried out as part of an MSc or other higher degree may be funded, but applications should not include any elements that are normally covered by university fees.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Section 1B</th>
<th>Applicant employment details</th>
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<tr>
<td>This section should be used to note your position and highlight in brief any other appointments or positions of responsibility you are holding that may be relevant to your application. It should also include how many hours per week you will dedicate to this project.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Section 2</th>
<th>Research project summary information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Please provide the following summary information about the grant:</td>
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<td>• Title of project</td>
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<td>• Full amount of funding being requested</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Anticipated start date</td>
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<td>• Anticipated end date</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Total duration of project</td>
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<th>Section 3</th>
<th>Principal applicant funding history</th>
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<tr>
<td>Please specify if you have previously received a research grant from the SFB or Marie Curie (or been named as a co-applicant) and provide your grant reference number.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The SFB does not confer new awards to any applicant if their final report from a previously funded project is still outstanding after the twelve month deadline.</td>
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<td>Applications that have been declined for funding are not eligible for resubmission within a three year period. Previous SFB grant applicants may only re-apply for funding within this period if the subject matter for their project has been substantially developed or is significantly different from their original project. For any queries concerning eligibility on these grounds please contact the Translational Research team.</td>
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</table>
If you have applied to another funder for this work, please provide details of whether or not this application has been successful. If the application is still pending decision, please provide dates of when a decision is expected. Such an application would be considered on an individual case basis.

Applicants requesting locum cover will be required to provide receipts.

### Section 4

#### Ethical approval & research governance

**Research Governance**

All research activities funded through the SFB must be in line with the provisions of the Research Governance Frameworks for Health and Social Care of the UK. Where relevant, the EU Clinical Trials Directive which applies to all trials on human subjects involving medicinal products should be adhered to.

**Research Governance Frameworks for Health and Social Care of the UK:**

- **England**
  

- **Northern Ireland**
  

- **Scotland**
  

- **Wales:**
  

  EU Clinical Trials Directive:
  

For research undertaken in a GP practice it may be useful to become Research Ready accredited [http://www.extension.rcgp.org.uk/researchReady/survey.asp](http://www.extension.rcgp.org.uk/researchReady/survey.asp). Research Ready is an accessible tool that helps GP Practices ensures they meet the UK’s research governance framework. Where the proposed research activity involves NHS patients, staff or resources, appropriate ethical approval and local research governance approval must be obtained. It is essential to ensure that strict confidentiality is maintained and that an assurance is given to participants that this will be done. This will, in any case, be required by all Research Ethics Committees.

Applicants should specify if research governance is required. In the field that requires further details, applicants should provide details of research governance requirements or alternatively explain why research governance approval is not required.

**Ethics approval**

Applicants should specify if research ethics approval is required. In the field that requires further details, applicants should explain why approval is not required, or alternatively specify if approval has been obtained. Where approval is pending, applicants should detail the organisation they have requested approval from and anticipated dates for receiving a response.

Health Research Authority: [http://www.hra.nhs.uk/](http://www.hra.nhs.uk/)

**Confidentiality and data protection**
If a study will use personal data on an individual who can be identified, this may fall under the remit of the Data Protection Act 1998. It is the applicant's personal responsibility to ensure that the provisions of the act are met. Further information on the act may be obtained from the Data Protection Registrar, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Email address: casework@ico.org.uk.
### Section 5  
**Sponsor**

Applicants are required to specify the organisation that has agreed to be the research sponsor of the project in accordance with Research Governance Frameworks. Neither the SFB nor Marie Curie do assume the role of research sponsor. In order to secure a suitable sponsor, it may be useful to consult your Advisor, local academic department, primary care research network or local primary care organisation.

The applicant should ensure that the relevant section (5B) of the form is signed and confirm if the organisation is on the Department of Health list of approved research sponsors.

### Section 6  
**Application summary information**

To support the review process applicants are asked to indicate the main methodologies that are to be used within the proposal. Please use the boxes provided.

**Conflict of interest**

Applicants should disclose any potential conflict of interest with members of the SFB. Conflict of interest may arise from a personal relationship (family/partner/marriage/close personal friend), departmental connections, co-working, collaborations, associations and affiliations with members of the SFB.

### Section 7  
**Research Proposal**

#### Section 7A  
**Research Proposal: Summary**

Applicants should provide a short summary outlining the purpose, aims and activities that will take place along with anticipated outcomes. Please include how your research will impact primary care and palliative care.

This should be no longer than 200 words.

Please also provide a lay summary for the general public as well as describe what benefit the proposed research will bring to patients with a terminal illness and their carers, families and friends.

This should be no longer than 200 words.

#### Section 7B  
**Research Proposal: Aims and objectives**

This section should state the aims and objectives of the proposal, which should be clearly defined and articulated, linking these to the anticipated outcomes.

For the purposes of the SFB the aims are defined as an indication of the intentions of the project, taking the form of a hypothesis, or clear research question(s). There should be an emphasis on what is to be accomplished (as opposed to how it is to be accomplished) to ultimately improve quality of life for people with a terminal illness and their carers, families and friends. This should include how the applicant will use their fellowship to further palliative care research in a primary care setting.

In general, the research question(s) should be clearly stated as testable hypotheses if the study is an experimental one. In some types of study design (e.g. descriptive studies), research questions rather than hypothesis testing may be more appropriate.

Applicants should detail the impact they expect their proposal to have on primary care or general medical practice and patient care or outcomes.

For the purposes of the SFB, objectives should be defined as measurable activities from which it can be determined whether or not the aims of the project have been accomplished. It is recommended that objectives are presented as up to six succinct bullet points. These should be precise, focused, outline the more immediate project outcomes and place weight upon how
the aims are to be achieved. The objectives should demonstrate a clear link to the rest of the proposal.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 7C &amp; D</th>
<th>Proposal: Background and rationale</th>
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<tr>
<td>This section should include a brief literature review and explain how you expect to add to the body of knowledge. Evidence of a thorough review of relevant background literature should be provided to support the research proposal. Citations should be provided in Vancouver style. It is expected that the literature review will be up to date and cite recent examples of primary research papers that facilitated a balanced, objective and comprehensive review of the field and demonstrate how this informs the research proposal. A good review would normally cite a minimum of 20 peer review references (subject to the maturity of the field being researched).</td>
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<th>Section 7E</th>
<th>Proposal: Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td>This section should include a plan of the investigation and details of the methodology that is to be used. Applicants are required to include a time line that demonstrates the main activities of the project and indicate whether PPI (Patient and Public Involvement) is included in your research. Applicants may wish to refer to the information provided on the form in Section 6 classifying the methodologies as qualitative and quantitative. Definition of terms: The factors or variables to be studied should be carefully defined and, if applicable, the applicant should demonstrate how these will be measured. If measuring outcomes (for example, of a treatment or intervention) these must also be rigorously defined. It may be necessary to conduct preliminary work in order to define terms or devise or test methods of measurement. In this circumstance, an explicit application may be made to the SFB for funding of preliminary work. Instruments: The means by which the applicant will obtain data should be validated, unless the application is for the construction or testing of a new instrument. This applies particularly to the use of questionnaires, especially where these are scaled to produce scores. Construction and validation of a new instrument is likely to be beyond the ability and resources of a novice applicant. It is almost always necessary to use an existing well validated instrument even if this is not completely suitable. Copies of any novel questionnaires and other instruments should be attached to your application. Design: The SFB expects a well written design to produce an answer to the research question posed or meet the specified aim. A good introductory text should be used to explore various designs that may be used and their respective advantages and disadvantages, prior to seeking expert advice. Where qualitative techniques (for example, interviews) are to be used, the applicant should demonstrate familiarity with the rigorous application of these methods and have sought appropriate advice and supervision. Sampling: The methods needed to draw samples may be more complex than anticipated and expert advice is strongly advised. If the research is to be applicable and relevant to the group from which it is drawn (study population) a properly drawn random sample is usually the best method. Where the intention of the study is to detect a clinically meaningful effect (for example, a treatment or other intervention), expert help should again be obtained to calculate the necessary sample size (statistical power).</td>
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It is not, however, always necessary or desirable that samples should be randomly drawn. In particular, in qualitative research it is likely to be important to seek a wide range of views rather than a representative sample.

Applicants are required to include a time line that demonstrates the main activities of the project.

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<tr>
<th>Section 7F</th>
<th>Guidance on costing applications</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The maximum sum available for this award is £40,000</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicants should provide a breakdown of the costs associated with the research project aiming to use one page only (for complex/detailed costings a supplementary document may be submitted). Applicants are required to itemise costs under the relevant headings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicants are also required to provide a total project cost and a quarterly breakdown of anticipated withdrawal throughout the project. The funding given by the SFB is in respect of the direct attributable costs of the research and it will not fund accommodation, Human Resources, IT or Finance Department support or any type of hosting fee – full economic costing is not applicable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budgets for salaries, running costs and equipment costs should be shown separately with a detailed cost calculation and itemised breakdown for funds being requested in the field entitled ‘provide a breakdown on anticipated costs for this project’. Applicants are also required to ensure that appropriate arrangements have been made to enable any national pay awards or inflationary pressures occurring over the course of their project to be honoured.</td>
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<td>The SFB will examine all requests for office costs including postage, stationery, photocopying, telephone usage and mileage. Mileage will be paid at the College rate, currently 45p per mile.</td>
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<td>Requests for payment for the transcribing of tapes will also be funded at a standard rate, to be decided from time to time by the SFB. Currently the rate is £1.25 per minute of audio and payment will be limited to six hours work for a one hour tape.</td>
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<td>When funding for the provision of consultancy services is requested it should be noted that the SFB will only reimburse the actual salary costs (i.e. salary plus National Insurance and Superannuation costs) of that individual. The SFB will not pay consultancy rates which include an element for institutional overheads and/or a profit element. Individuals acting as a consultant to a project are requested to confirm that they are not in receipt of any other source of income for the hours they are contributing to the project. This confirmation must be included with the application.</td>
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<td>The SFB will consider funding appropriate expenses to respondents or research subjects, provided these are fully justified and are in proportion with the scale of the study.</td>
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<td>Time taken by NHS staff in relation to the research may be funded through NHS R&amp;D support funding mechanisms and applicants should explore the availability of such funding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The SFB also has discretion to contribute up to a maximum of £2000 towards open access publication fees, posters, conference costs and peer review papers for the proposal.</td>
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<th>Section 7G</th>
<th>Proposal: Justification</th>
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<td>This section should provide justification and reasons for the support being requested, it is likely that it will draw on information presented throughout Section 7 of the form. It is limited to one page only. Applicants are advised to consider the advice given above for Section 7F.</td>
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### Section 7H Dissemination, publication and future projects

We expect the work supported by the RCGP Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Fellowship to have outputs and demonstrate impact. The fellowship may also form the foundation for future larger projects or a more substantial research fellowship.

The fellowship scheme has the aim of bringing palliative and end of life care more to the forefront of primary care research and applicants are asked to explain how the fellowship will support them to influence and change the field. Applicants are also asked to explain the impact of their research on people with a terminal illness and their carers, families and friends.

In order for research to have an impact on the field it is important for it to be translated into practice. Applicants are asked to consider long term benefits of the research to practice and patients and outline an implementation strategy to support the outputs of the research reaching peers within the profession and potentially other audiences. Applicants should link this ‘outputs’ section to their aims and objectives.

Please also specify any plans for dissemination of work and anticipated publication via peer review publication, presentations at local, regional, national and international meetings, translation into education/training materials and opportunities for wider PR activities.

Recipients of awards are required to inform the SFB and Marie Curie of upcoming publications, presentations and other promotional activity at least one month in advance of this and acknowledge the support of the SFB and Marie Curie. Marie Curie has an open access policy which applicants must follow ([https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/research/funding-research/guidance-for-researchers](https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/research/funding-research/guidance-for-researchers)).

When publication is confirmed the SFB and Marie Curie will aim to support publicity and PR of the research outcomes, where appropriate, to RCGP members and wider national audiences via the Translational Research team in the RCGP’s Clinical Innovation and Research Centre (CIRC) and the Marie Curie Research Management Team.

### Section 8A Sources of support/collaboration

Applicants are required to outline details of any support or collaboration on the project. This should include:
- Name of colleagues supporting/collaborating with the work
- Their organisation and job title
- A description of the support/collaboration or advice provided to support the proposed project.

### Section 8B + 8C Principal Fellowship Advisor

Applicants should confirm details of a Principal Fellowship Advisor who supports them in their application and project. The advisor should provide a supporting statement in section 8C and explain in their words how they will provide support and why the applicant should be supported.

### Section 9 CV

Applicants are required to submit a short CV of no more than four pages in length on the provided template.

### Section 10 Co-applicants

Names of all potential co-applicants should be provided, along with supplementary information.
This section can be copied, pasted and completed for each co-applicant. The guidance for principal applicants should be used to support the completion of this section of the form where relevant...

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<th>Section 11</th>
<th>Declarations by applicant, Head of Department and Finance Officer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By signing this declaration the <strong>applicant</strong> acknowledges that they have read and understood the application form, guidance and that the application is eligible for submission to the SFB.</td>
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The **Head of Department** confirms that they have read the application and that, if granted, the work will be accommodated and administered in the Department/Institution for the duration of the funding period.

The Finance Officer confirms that the staff gradings and salaries quoted are correct and in accordance with the normal practice of this institution.

**Further information**

**Decisions**

The SFB aim to notify application by the end of January 2017. Fellowship will start from February/ March 2017
### Outcomes

The outcome of the SFB’s consideration of applications will normally take one of the following forms:

- Approve an application in its entirety
- Approve an application, with suggestions for the applicant that do not impact the award of the grant if they are not adopted
- Approve an application, with conditions for the applicant that must be adopted in order to receive funding
- Request further clarifications prior to making a final decision
- Invite a revised application, prepared in the style requested by the SFB. The SFB will not consider a revised application unless one has specifically been requested.
- Decline funding (for example, where the study falls outside its funding remit, the methodology is inappropriate, the outcome is unlikely to meet the study’s objectives etc.)

### Well written applications

The SFB suggests that particular attention is paid to the following, which are commonly found in well written applications:

- Clear, specified research questions and/or hypothesis
- Project plan and structure that will clearly address the aims of the project
- Project plan that is clearly described and feasible
- Plans for dissemination or other outputs that are likely to be of benefit to patients/outcomes and the profession
- Good value for money

### Common reasons for rejection

Although not intended as a comprehensive guide, the SFB suggests that particular attention is paid to the following matters which are common reasons for rejection of applications, relevant for all parts of the application but particularly in reference to the plans and methodologies:

- Incomplete application forms, missing information and no signatures
- No clearly formulated research question, hypothesis or objectives
- A poorly conducted literature review
- Lack of support/collaboration including the necessary skills
- Unrealistic costing or unachievable timeframes

### Reporting to the SFB

The RCGP Marie Curie Research Fellow will be required to report to the RCGP by:

- Producing four monthly progress reports that will be sent to donors of the award
- Notifying the RCGP of any publications/presentations/PR/guidance/education resources relating to the award (giving at least one month’s notice) and acknowledging the award during any of the above activity
- Attending a meeting to present their research to the award donors
- Submitting a final project report and final financial report within 12 months of completing the project (to be submitted by June, within twelve months of the expected end date of the project)
**Communication with the Board**

Clinical Innovation and Research Centre, Royal College of General Practitioners, 30 Euston Square, London, NW1 2FB.

Email: SFB@rcgp.org.uk. Phone Number: 0203 188 7594

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership of the SFB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor Chris Salisbury (Chair)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Imran Rafi (Honorary Secretary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Helen Stoke Lampard (Honorary Treasurer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Carolyn Chew-Graham</td>
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<td>Dr Kate Dunn</td>
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<td>Ms Gopa Mitra (representative of the RCGP Patient Partnership Group)</td>
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<td>Professor Richard Neal</td>
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<td>Dr Rupert Payne</td>
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<td>Dr Jane Richardson</td>
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<td>Dr Fiona Walter</td>
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<td>Dr Fiona Wood</td>
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<td>Dr Hazel Everitt</td>
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<td>Dr Bill Noble (representative from Marie Curie)</td>
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