

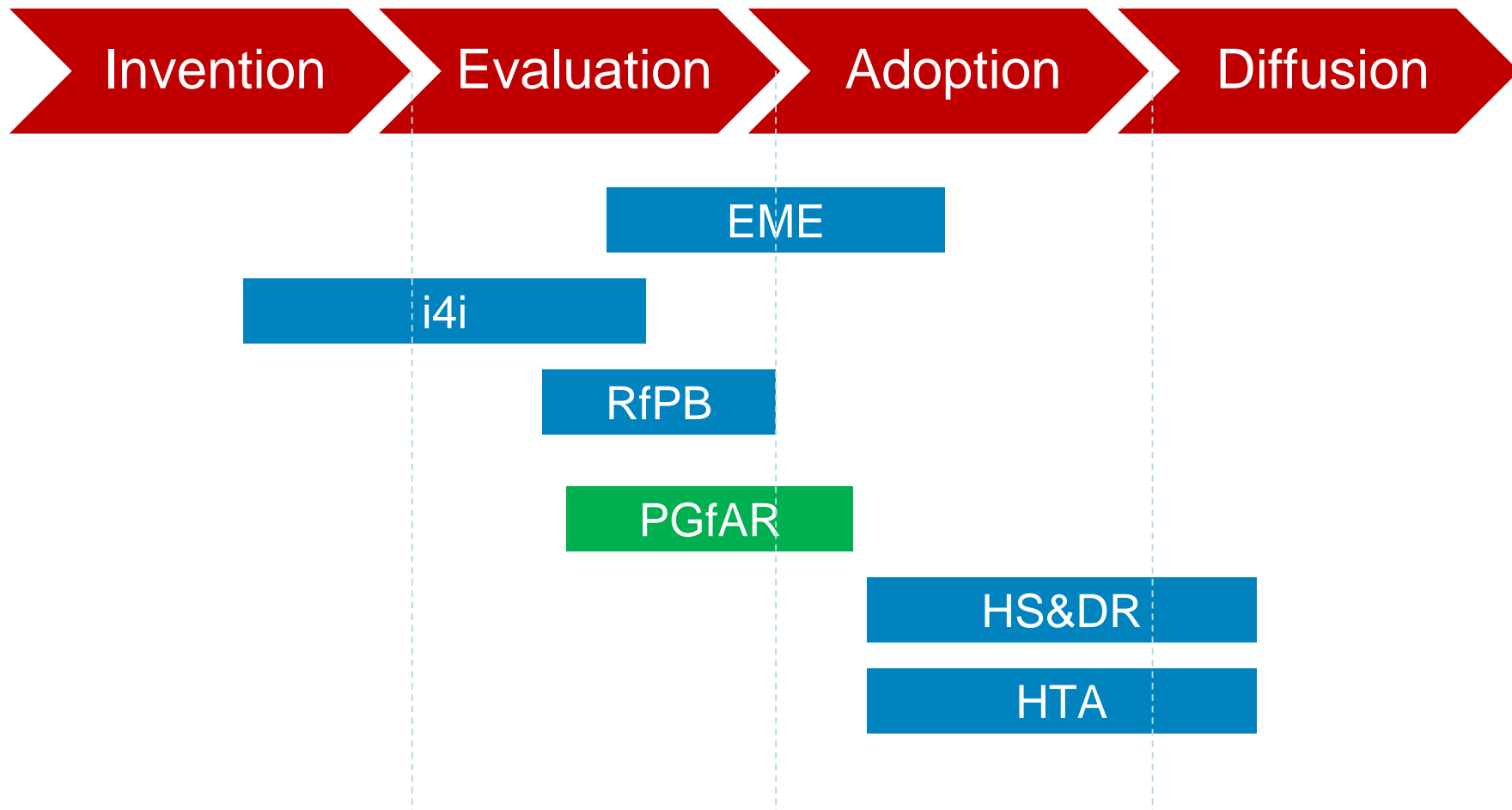


National Institute for
Health Research

Programme Grants for Applied Research

Elaine Hay

NIHR - Funding Programmes



PGfAR - Facts & Figures



2

funding
streams

- Programme Grants
- Programme Development Grants

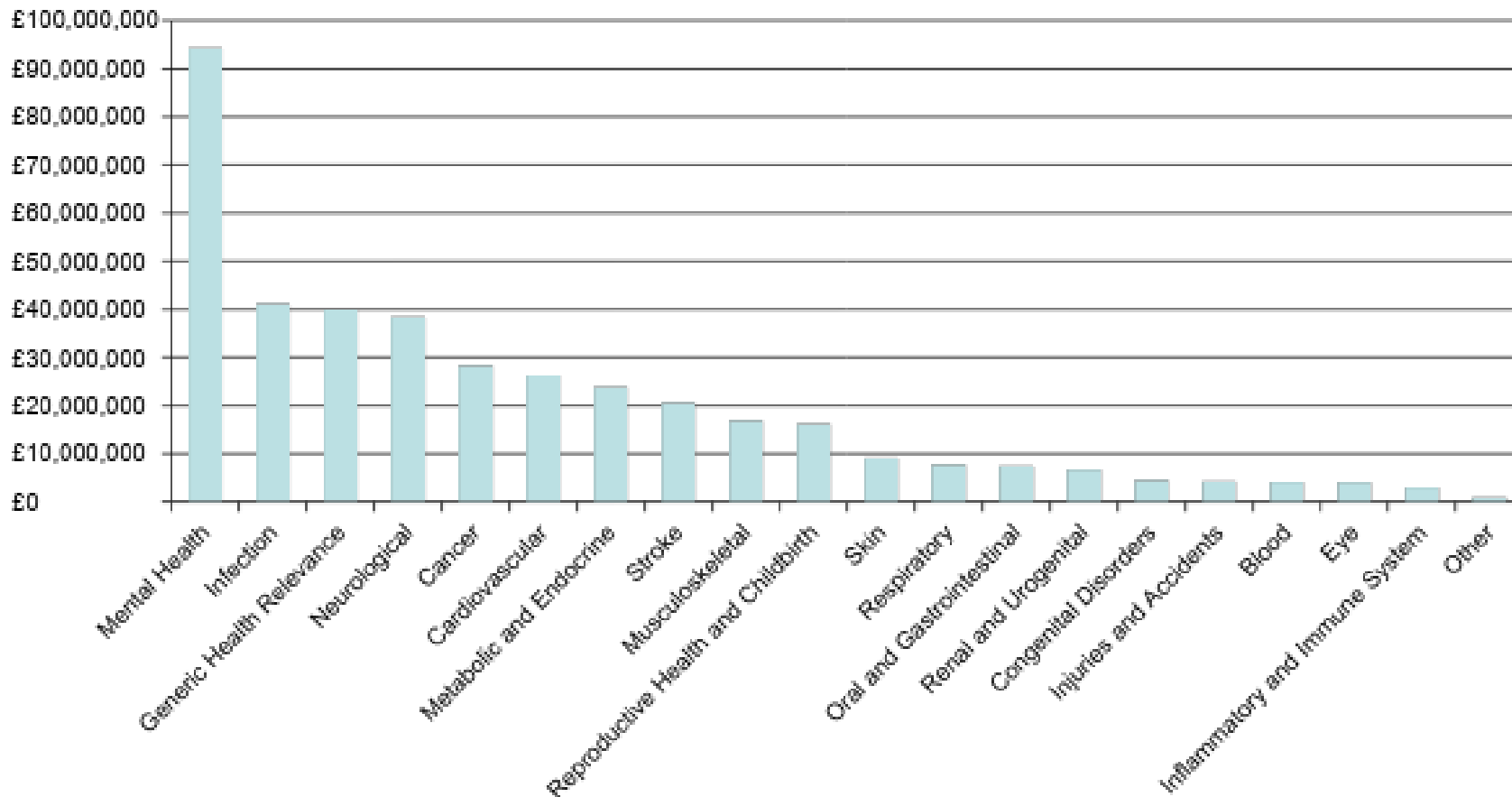
60+
months

102
active
projects

£3.2M
largest
award

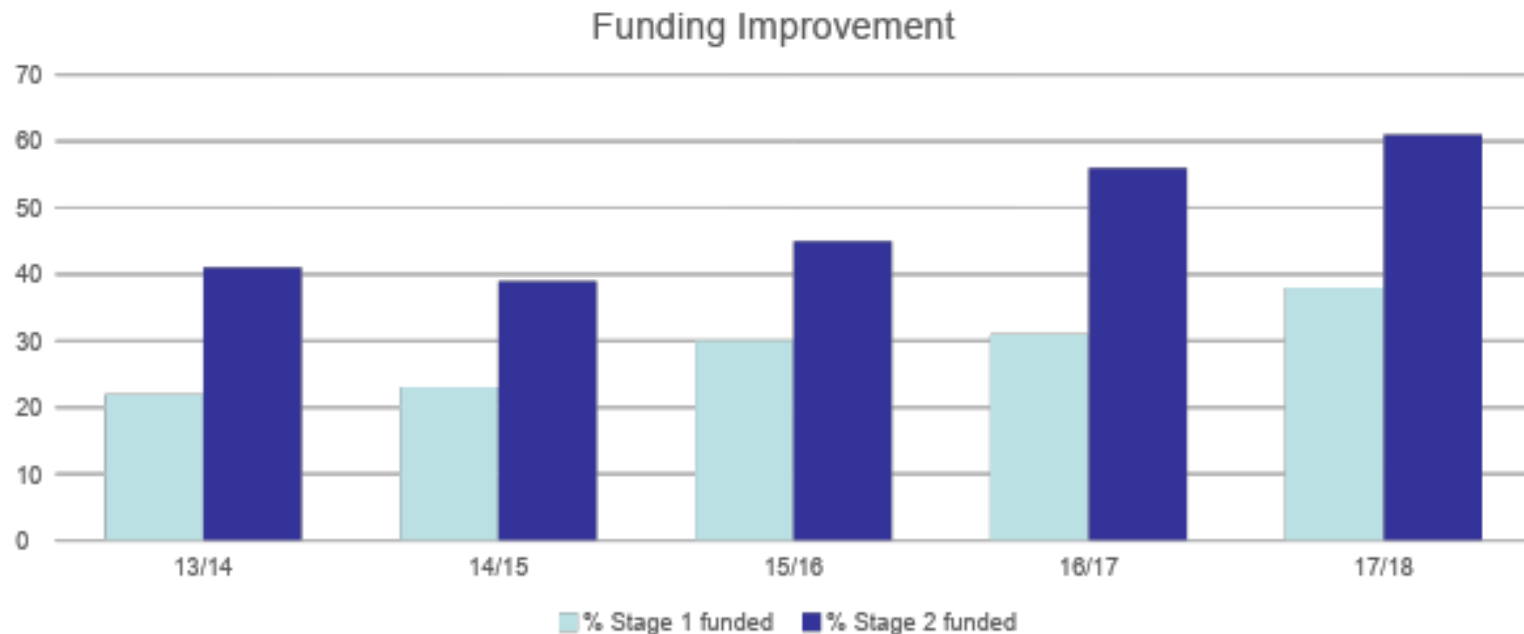
>£490M
total
spend

PGfAR - Facts & Figures



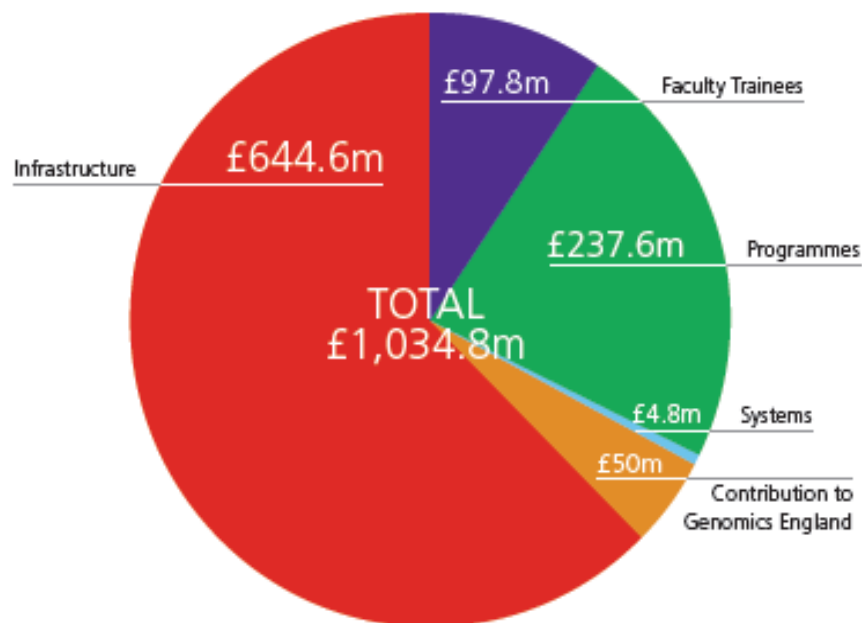
PGfAR - Facts & Figures

Recent success rates by financial year

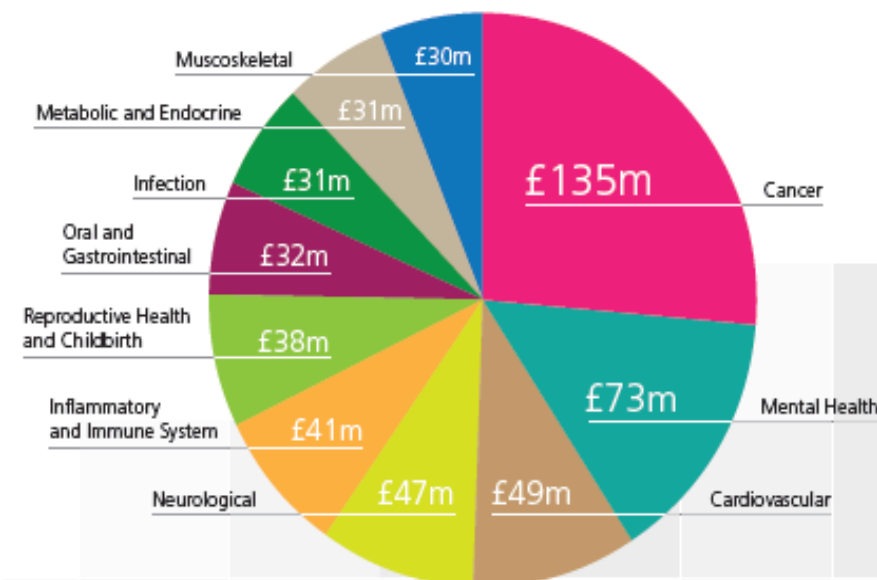


PGfAR - Facts & Figures

NIHR FUNDING: 2014/15



TOP TEN NIHR SPEND ON RESEARCH BY HEALTH CATEGORY, WHERE DEFINED: 2014/15



PGfAR



- Support **programmes of research** rather than individual studies
- **No funding or time limit** for individual awards, although funding in excess of £2.5million over more than 6 years is unusual
- Funding is made to an **NHS Organisation in England** working in collaboration with appropriate academic partners
- **Two-stage** assessment process
- **Three competitions per year** (launching **February, June** and **October**) and participation in NIHR themed calls
- Final Reports published by **Journals Library**

PGfAR Supports



- Work whose emphasis is delivering research findings that will have **practical application for the benefits of patients**
- **Applied health research** (health services research; public health research; behavioural research; economic evaluations; and modelling)
- **Balanced teams** of leading researchers, from the NHS and academia working together, who can demonstrate an impressive track-record of achievement in applied health research

Individual programmes consist of an interrelated group of high quality projects focused on a coherent theme, requiring multidisciplinary approaches including clinical, health economics, statistics, qualitative etc., to ensure that research objectives can be met.



But.....

Perceptions

- 'PGfAR will only fund development and testing of complex interventions'
- 'No point submitting programmes that don't involve a trial'
- Programmes should be one long project with consecutive work streams
- The only patient benefit of interest is the final trial
- Your applicants need to be a 'football' team of professors

Survey of Committees

- Generally happy and enthusiastic about the Scheme
- Mixed views on peer review
- Consistency that we need to try and make things more straight forward for applicants
- **Overwhelming agreement that Scheme needs more diversity – but acceptance this won't be easy to achieve!**
- Happy to see smaller scale programmes (circa £1m)
- Would welcome greater social care research, and engagement with charities
- Remains a role for the PDG scheme but needs discussion to refine and/or re-purpose

PGfAR – actions

RESEARCH: without losing principles of scheme and patient benefit focus, encourage more diverse proposals :

- Proactively encourage areas with limited progress; e.g., social care, public health, end of life care etc.
- Encourage development of new methodology approaches (e.g., proposals led by methodologists) and innovation

Above will require more imaginative definition of patient benefits

PGfAR – actions

Chairs and Director to work with panels to encourage and support diverse proposals:

- This is a big concern for applicants
- **We need to put our money where our mouth is!**
- Less risk averse – outcome measures
- Refreshed guidance for applicants and reviewers
- Commissioned calls – specific panels

PGfAR – actions

Examples to encourage diversity:

- Smaller PGfAR awards to develop current seniors to the next level
- Specific calls for novel methodology – October 2019
- Links with Charities



Examples

Diverse methods

Use of Observational Designs

```
graph TD; A[Use of Observational Designs] --> B[Existing data: EHR, Data Sharing]; B --> C[Natural Experiments]; C --> D[Statistical modelling]; D --> E[Social Science methods];
```

Existing data: EHR, Data Sharing

Natural Experiments

Statistical modelling

Social Science methods

Challenges

How to demonstrate benefits to patients, public, NHS, Social Care

What methodological research is needed to advance the field

What I want!

- Novel programmes that will make a **stepped change**
- Applications from new investigators
- Programmes to **advance methodology** in applied research
- Demonstrate patient benefit the whole way through

- Committees will:
 - Question the need for the research
 - Question the need for a trial
 - Be less risk adverse to other methods
 - Prioritise research following patient need

Discussion

- Do you perceive a problem?
- What do you need the PGfAR Scheme to do to facilitate more diverse applications / successful funding?
- What are the key methodological challenges?
- Is it feasible to embed methodological research / advances within programmes?
- How can we change the behavior of committees?