

Elsie May Sykes Research and Innovation Awards 2026 Guidance for Applicants

Application opens: **09/03/2026**

Application closes: **5:00PM 24/04/2026**

Please note applications received after this deadline will be rejected

****ONLY 1 APPLICATION PER PERSON PER YEAR IS PERMITTED****

****THE FUNDING LIMIT FOR THE ENTIRE CALL IS £15,000.00****

For application advice contact: yhs-tr.elsiemaysykesaward@nhs.net

Please send complete applications to: yhs-tr.elsiemaysykesaward@nhs.net

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Introduction - What are the EMS awards?

The late Elsie May Sykes left a legacy to the former York Health Authority, with the prime recipient named as York District Hospital, for purchasing medical equipment and furthering medical research.

Charitable Funds (who control the legacy) have decided to release £XXXXX to R&I to support research in 2026.

The entire award of £15,000 that can be awarded to one application or divided amongst several applications.

Funding will be awarded on a competitive basis following a process that includes independent expert review. The final decision rests with the York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Research & Innovation (R&I) Group.

1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

| What Research can be funded? | What Research will not be funded* |
|---|---|
| Small standalone research project | Applications which are not specifically medical in nature, |
| Time to allow consultant, health care professionals, nurses, and AHP's to write a research grant/publication about their research | Research involve human organs, egg cell, or embryo transplantation or vivisection of animals, |
| Funding for systematic reviews of research to aid grant submission | Research which does not primarily involve York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals, |
| Of particular interest are Applications from Early Career Researchers | Anything deemed clinical audit, routine service evaluation, or patient satisfaction surveys, |

***Please note the fund does not support educational awards.**

Applications are invited to support any topic in the field of medical research or innovation.

The research must primarily involve York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. This does not rule out collaboration with departments further afield in the Trust, other NHS organisations or academic institutions – appropriate collaboration is encouraged where this is likely to enhance the quality of the work.

The R&I Group will seek evidence of support from collaborators or request other supporting documentation where this may be required to fully assess an application, it is advised that all letters of support from managers and collaborators are included alongside your application.

Please note that the lead applicant must be a permanent member of Trust staff.

1.1 Who decides who receives the funding?

The R&I Group decides whether to award funding and if so, to which applicant(s). This decision is supported by independent R&I reviewers who assess the clinical/scientific merit, methodology, statistics, and budget. Several of our reviewers are lay members so please ensure that you make each section clear to a lay audience so your application can be scored fully. If any sections of your application are difficult to interpret then lay members may not be able to score this section which could affect the outcome of your application.

In the event that an application of insufficient quality is received, the Research and Innovation Group reserves the right to make no award.

2. How to apply - pre-submission

2.1 Guidance

Read this Guidance document to make sure that what you are planning comes within the scope of the Elsie May Sykes Award.

Ensure you address all eligibility criteria and meet the submission deadline.

When submitting an application be sure to include a clear plan how to take your project forward if funding is awarded and ensure you can commit the time to your project. All projects awarded funding via this scheme must progress in a timely fashion and ensure funding is used within a specified timescale.

Please note that where a study is funded, and that study requires the Trust to act as Sponsor then an application for Sponsorship must be made by 18th August 2026 in readiness for the meeting on 8th September 2026. Guidance for this is also on our website - [click here](#).

Our team is available to offer successful applicants support and guidance with next steps. **Applicants must be aware of what would be required and making reference to this in an application may be beneficial.** Any funding award will be made with timeline and progress report conditions attached.

Top Tip - familiarise yourself with the governance information and processes applicable for your proposed study. These are available on the [R&I website](#).

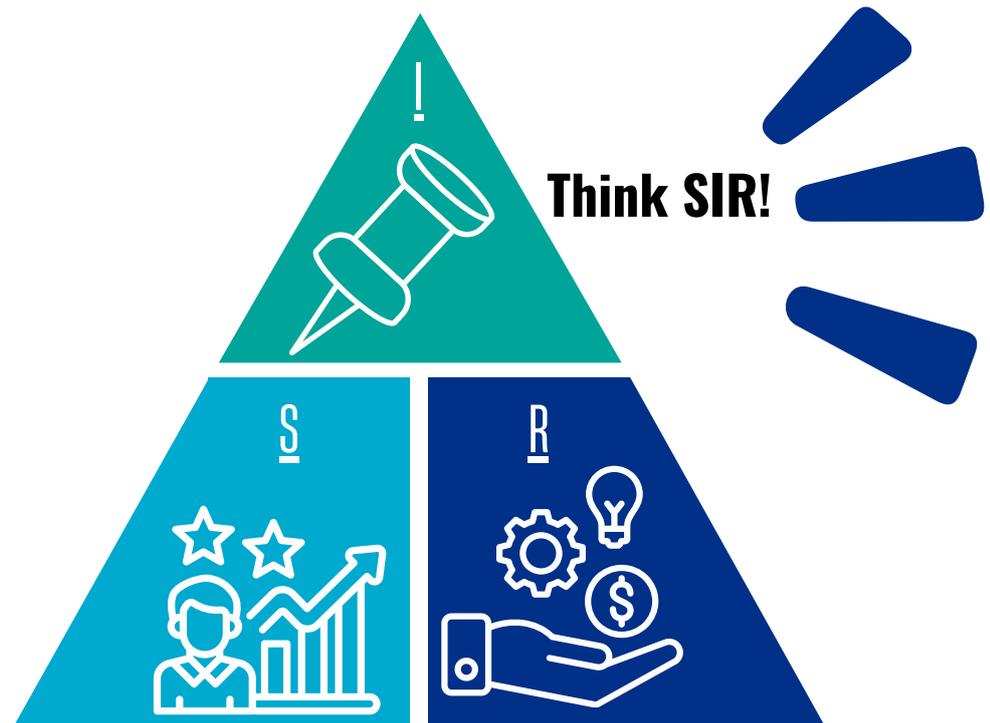
2.2 Completing your Application

Please email - yhs-tr.elsiemaysykesaward@nhs.net to request an application form.

Please note - Only one application per person per year is permitted.

Please bear in mind that reviewers will review the applications on three criteria:

- **Scientific potential:** what are the prospects for good scientific progress?
- **Importance:** how important are the questions, or gaps in knowledge, that are being addressed?
- **Resources requested:** are the funds requested justified, and will they be sufficient (with additional funding from elsewhere if that has been / is being obtained) to carry out the work properly?



Please ensure you complete all sections of the application; incomplete forms will not be reviewed.

Generative Content Disclaimer

The selection processes include a check for hallucinated references and generative content within your application. We remain vigilant against candidates who misuse these tools to generate an application that doesn't accurately reflect their skills, review of literature, and good practice for AI use. You will be required to acknowledge that you are aware of this before submitting your application.

The R&I group retain the right to reject without clarification an application that suspected to be produced wholly or as a majority with AI. In some cases disciplinary action may be taken against those who submit AI generated application.

3. How to submit the application

The lead applicant should send in the completed application form by personal email to **yhs-tr.elsiemaysykesaward@nhs.net** to arrive before the deadline of 5.00 pm 24th April 2026.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

The R&I Group will check the application, and if it contains all necessary elements, will confirm receipt of a valid application within 7 days of the application deadline.

4. Post-submission

The R&I Group will triage applications before sending them out for review. **Please note** that applicants may be required to respond to questions that arise in the triaging process. Failing to do so may affect the outcome of the application.

Applicants are expected to respond to queries and questions from the triage process between 1st May 2026 and 8th May 2026.

Applications which are deemed eligible, complete and fall within the remit of the scheme will be considered by the Research and Innovation Group. Applicants are invited to attend the R&I Group to present their study and answer any questions that the Group may have.

The R&I Group and independent reviewers will subsequently decide whether to make one or more awards from the available funding and reserves the right to make no awards at all. Its decision is final.

All applicants will be sent brief notification of the outcome. This may be followed by a feedback report summarising any review or report comments made by the R&I Group and reviewers. The decision on whether to give such feedback at all, and the form it should take, is entirely within the discretion of the R&I Group and reviewers. The identity of independent reviewers will not be revealed to applicants.

This R&I Group meeting will be held on **16th June 2026 10:00-12:30**. Timings will be forwarded nearer the time, and it is anticipated that no more than 15 minutes will be needed. Applicants should note this date and time and try to ensure they can be available to attend.

The R&I Group will seek managerial authority for anybody who is taken forward to the interview for the award from their relevant care group management to ensure project delivery and managerial approval is given. However, it is recommended that sign off and signatures are obtained by your line manager prior to your application being submitted.



5. Post-award guidance

The applicants are expected to ensure their projects make timely progress.

Where an application for Sponsorship is required then this must be received by 18th August 2026 for the R&I group taking place on 8th September 2026. Projects not requiring Trust sponsorship must commence within 6 months of the award being made.

It will be a condition of the award that quarterly progress reports must be submitted from the date that the award is made. The R&I team will request these report for the duration of the proposed project. Where projects do not make satisfactory progress then the R&I Group reserves the right to withdraw funding for reallocation.

The award must be spent within 12 months of the award being made. Requests for non-cost extensions must be made in writing to the Head of R&I, Lydia Harris (Lydia.Harris1@nhs.net).

Awardees may be requested to provide quarterly progress reports throughout the duration of their project for review by the Trust R&I Group, yearly updates to the R&I Group (on request) and submit a short outcome report 6 months after completion of their project (300 word limit)

If you are unsure about whether your project is research or innovation, please review the Trust R&I Strategy. For further project advice please contact l.ballantine@nhs.net.