



Request for Proposal (RFP) for a programme supporting researchers to apply transdisciplinary ideas and methods to mental health science

1. RFP Background & Objectives

Mental health problems are common and severely impact people's lives. Mental health problems accounted for 125 million (95% UI 93.0–163) global disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) in 2019, which is equivalent to 4.9% (3.9–6.1) of total DALYs. The largest contributors to this total were anxiety, depression and psychosis.¹ While treatments are available for these conditions, they only work for some people and may have side effects that limit their effectiveness and affect quality of life.

Fresh ideas are necessary to advance the field and further our understanding of what causes mental health problems or supports their resolution, and how we can personalise and improve pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments. To drive progress in mental health and other fields, traditional funding models favour highly specialised approaches to research. However, there is increasing awareness that innovation often comes from unexpected sources, for example, when individuals from one scientific field apply their expertise to solve problems in another.¹

Wellcome's mental health strategy aims to drive radical innovation in mental health through a global, transdisciplinary programme to **identify and explore novel applications of methods and concepts from domains outside of mental health science to accelerate progress in early intervention for depression, anxiety and psychosis**. We are looking for a Supplier to run this programme in close collaboration with Wellcome.

The successful Supplier would organise, publicise, administer and evaluate this programme, targeting a disciplinarily diverse range of researchers whose existing expertise is predominantly outside the field of mental health. The Supplier would work with Wellcome to facilitate funding that allows these individuals the time and space to develop innovative, ambitious and speculative ideas and methodologies. The Supplier would also work with Wellcome to proactively create opportunities for these researchers to network. This includes with each other, as like-minded researchers from other disciplines, as well as mental health experts including those with lived experience expertise to develop their ideas and their cross-disciplinary and inclusive practice.

The programme will run initially for 12 months, with a follow-up impact review within one year, with the possibility of extension into future years. We provide detailed deliverables below; in brief, our Supplier would need to work with Wellcome's Field Building and Lived Experience teams in setting up and publicising the scheme, managing applications, identifying the 5–10 trans-disciplinary ideas submitted most likely to advance the field, and disbursing financial support as necessary to the successful individuals or small teams. The chosen applicants would have 6 months to review the relevant literature and produce a viewpoint paper of up to

¹ <https://arxiv.org/abs/1910.09370>



3500 words, as well as a single-page summary for internal use by Wellcome. The Supplier must also convene online or hybrid meetings at the start, middle and end of the first year of the programme. At these meetings, the individuals or teams selected would present to each other and an invited audience of mental health experts, including experts by experience and representatives from Wellcome's Mental Health team. Published outputs should follow the principles set out in **Section 16** of this document.

A budget of up to £500,000 GBP is available for this programme, which will span 12 months plus an additional impact review within the subsequent year. This total includes the funding that will be disbursed by the Supplier to the appointed researchers or small groups. It also needs to include any VAT requirements – at 20% if you are based in the United Kingdom, or if you are not based in the United Kingdom, please allow 20% for reverse VAT charges that Wellcome will need to self-account for. As we are a charity, value for money in a proposal is important to us and will form part of our decision-making.

2. RFP Specification

We are looking for one primary Supplier to deliver this programme, either alone or through subcontracting parts of the programme out to secondary Suppliers. The primary Supplier must be open to working closely with Wellcome and lived experience advisors in developing and implementing the programme. A suitable Supplier should show evidence of:

1. Working across multiple scientific or medical disciplines.
2. Ensuring diversity, e.g., operating in low and middle-income settings.
3. Effectively convening trans-disciplinary groups.
4. Delivering projects in close consultation with funders and/or the mental health community, including those with lived experience expertise.

Below are the deliverables that we expect from the Supplier over the initial 12-month funding period, as well as the final impact review. **The Supplier must produce these deliverables in line with Wellcome's Mental Health strategy and in close and regular consultation with the Field Building Team, lived experience advisors and other parts of the organisation as appropriate.**

3. Deliverables:

1. Developing the structure of the programme

1.1. Set out a comprehensive structure and policies for a programme that, together with Wellcome, will select the best ideas from 5-10 individuals or small groups from a diverse range of disciplines and settings. This should include:

- Identification of appropriate incentives to maximise the number, diversity and quality of applications.



- Definition of clear criteria for financial and other support provided as part of this programme.
- Policies regarding meetings, engagement with Wellcome's Mental Health Field Building and Lived Experience teams, declarations of interest and open-access publication.
- Impact evaluation plans and processes to gather participant feedback.

1.2. Produce written and other guidance necessary for chosen teams/individuals.

2. *Publicising and recruiting suitable individuals or small teams from diverse settings*

2.1. Devise and run a campaign that ensures dissemination of the programme across diverse specialities and geographic settings, with an emphasis on reaching people who might not normally apply for Wellcome Mental Health funding. Effectively communicate incentives for participation to potential applicants. We are not limited in the fields or disciplines that might be relevant to this programme but would welcome further discussion if a potential Supplier thinks a more targeted or themed approach is warranted.

2.2. Run an equitable recruitment programme, working with Wellcome and people with lived experience expertise to identify 5-10 suitable ideas from individuals or small groups for further development. Wellcome will retain the right to final decisions on which teams and projects receive funding.

3. *Convening baseline, work-in-progress and final presentation meetings*

3.1. Convene at least three hybrid or virtual meetings at the start, middle and endpoints of the programme for participants to share, develop and present their work.

3.2. Identify and recruit an appropriate panel of experts, including mental health experts in early-stage anxiety, depression, and psychosis as well as people with lived experience expertise to participate in these meetings and give constructive advice.

3.3. Gather feedback from appointed researchers, panel members, and wider attendees to produce written reports from these meetings for internal use by Wellcome.

4. *Ensuring delivery of written outputs and evaluating their impact*

4.1. Ensure each idea selected for development is summarised in a concise article of publishable standard (for example, as a review, personal view, position paper, or comment). The precise word count will vary according to the idea and the selected publisher, but we anticipate pieces of between 800–3500 words. We will consider longer review papers on a case-by-case basis.

4.2. Ensure that each idea is also developed into a 0.5 to 1-page summary for inclusion in a report for internal use by Wellcome.



- 4.3. Track the progress of each idea through publications and engagement metrics (e.g., Altmetrics and citations) within 12 months of the programme ending, providing a written summary to Wellcome.

4. RFP Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issue to Suppliers	WT	28 October 2022
2	Submission of expression of interest to RFP	Supplier	02 December 2022
3	Submission of Supplier Q&A to Wellcome contact	Supplier	02 December 2022
4	Suppliers invited to submit full proposals and return of Supplier Q&As to invited Suppliers	WT	20 December 2022
5	Submission of RFP response	Supplier	27 January 2023
6	RFP Evaluation period	WT	27 January 2023 to 17 February 2023
7	Supplier presentations	WT & Supplier	20 February 2023 to 24 February 2023
8	Notification of contract award	WT	End of February 2023
9	Contract negotiation	WT & Supplier	March-April 2023
10	Contract start date	WT & Supplier	June 2023

5. Response Format

5.1 Expression of Interest

Suppliers are asked to submit a short expression of interest using the [linked form](#) in accordance with the RFP timetable. Expressions of interest will be reviewed and shortlisted.

5.2 Supplier Q&A

Prior to the submission of your RFP response, Suppliers are provided with the opportunity to submit any questions they have about the exercise. All questions are to be submitted to the Wellcome Contact along with the expression of interest in accordance with the RFP timetable. Only Suppliers who are invited to submit a full proposal will receive the answers to the Q&A.



5.3 RFP Proposal

Invited Suppliers are required to submit full proposals which respond to the following sections:

RFP Questions

This section requests responses from Suppliers for specific questions in relation to this RFP exercise. The exact form required for the full proposal will be shared with the selected Suppliers. Below is what we anticipate may be included but we reserve the right to amend or adapt as relevant having reviewed expressions of interest.

#	Question	Max (Words)
Team		
1	Provide a brief overview of your organisation, including the relevant expertise and experience that will be involved in this programme.	250
2	Evidence of your track record, including specific case studies where you have successfully provided similar or relevant services to those described in this RFP.	400
Approach		
3	Describe the proposed approach to address the requirements of this RFP, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme governance – including your plans for the declaration and management of conflicts of interest, as well as engagement with Wellcome • Promotion – how you plan to advertise this programme effectively across a diverse range of disciplines and geographies. If focusing on specific target audiences, please provide justification • Structure – plan for structuring incentives to support the participation of a broad range of participants • Involving experts – the plan to convene and involve experts, including experts by experience in making sure projects are appropriate and supported • Outputs management and sharing of project learning. 	2,000
4	Outline how you will involve people with lived experience expertise across multiple project stages.	200
5	Highlight any risks or challenges you foresee in meeting the requirements of this RFP, along with any proposed mitigations. Please present this as a table.	400
6	Provide an overview of the stages and timeframes in which you propose to meet the RFP requirements (for example, as a Gantt chart).	N/A



Costs		
7	Please provide a proposed breakdown and justification of programme costs and resources.	400

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
How well the proposal meets the RFP specification.	45%
Track record and expertise of the potential Supplier.	25%
Strength of the proposed plans for including people with lived experience expertise.	20%
Value for money.	10%

Contract Feedback

This section allows Suppliers to provide specific feedback to the contractual agreement which will be used should their proposal be successful. Contract feedback is to be incorporated into your proposal as an annex and in the following format;

Clause #	Issue	Proposed Solution/Comment

Suppliers submitting proposals as a registered company should review this [document](#). Individuals submitting proposals as a sole trader (not registered) should review this [document](#).

Individuals submitting proposals through their own personal services company please highlight this to the Wellcome contact immediately (see point 8 below).

Information Governance

Suppliers are asked to complete the [TPSRA2](#) assessment before the RFP submission deadline for Wellcome to assess how you handle data.

6. About Wellcome

Wellcome supports science to solve the urgent health challenges facing everyone. We support discovery research into life, health, and wellbeing, and we're taking on three worldwide health challenges: mental health, global heating and infectious diseases. Find out more about Wellcome and our work at: wellcome.org.



7. Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality

Prospective Suppliers should be aware that inappropriate publicity could have a serious effect upon Wellcome's business. The information contained within this document or subsequently made available to prospective suppliers is deemed confidential and must not be disclosed without the prior written consent of Wellcome unless required by law.

8. Prospective Suppliers Personnel - IR35 and Off Payroll Working Rules

Before the RFP response deadline, Prospective Suppliers must make the Wellcome Contact aware if they are intending to submit a proposal where the services will be provided by any individuals who are engaged by the Prospective Supplier via an intermediary i.e.

- Where the Prospective Supplier is an individual contracting through their own personal services company; or
- The Prospective Supplier is providing individuals engaged through intermediaries, for the purposes of the IR35 off-payroll working rules.

9. Independent Proposal

By submission of a proposal, prospective Suppliers warrant that the prices in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, agreement or understanding for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices, with any other potential Supplier or with any competitor.

10. Funding

For the avoidance of doubt, the output of this RFP exercise will be funded as a **Contract** and not as a Grant.

11. Costs Incurred by Prospective Suppliers

It should be noted that this document relates to a Request for Proposal only and not a firm commitment from Wellcome to enter into a contractual agreement. In addition, Wellcome will not be held responsible for any costs associated with the production of a response to this Request for Proposal.

12. Sustainability

Wellcome is committed to procuring sustainable, ethical and responsibly sourced materials, goods and services. This means Wellcome seeks to purchase goods and services that minimise negative and enhance positive impacts on the environment and society locally, regionally and globally. To ensure Wellcome's business is conducted ethically and sustainably, we expect our Suppliers, and their supply chains, to adhere to these principles in a responsible manner.



13. Disability Confident

The Wellcome Trust is proud to be a Disability Confident Employer (DC Level 2) and we encourage all our partners and Suppliers to do the same. More information about this can be found on the government website [Disability Confident employer scheme and guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/disability-confident-employer-scheme). Disability Confident is creating a movement of change, encouraging employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people.

14. Accessibility

Wellcome is committed to ensuring that our RFP exercises are accessible to everyone. If you have a disability or a chronic health condition, we can offer adjustments to the response format e.g. submitting your response in an alternate format. For support during the RFP exercise, contact the Wellcome Contact.

If, within the proposed outputs of this RFP exercise, specific adjustments are required by you or your team which incur additional cost then outline them clearly within your commercial response. Wellcome is committed to evaluating all proposals fairly and will ensure any proposed adjustment costs sit outside the commercial evaluation.

15. Diversity & Inclusion

Embracing [diversity and inclusion](#) is fundamental to delivering our mission to improve health, and we are committed to cultivating a fair and healthy environment for the people who work here and those we work with. As we learn more about barriers that disadvantage certain groups from progressing in our workplace, we will remove them.

Wellcome takes diversity and inclusion seriously, and we want to partner with Suppliers who share our commitment. We may ask you questions related to D&I as part of our RFP processes.

16. Governance

Successful Suppliers will report to the contract management team on a day-to-day basis which will consist of Olivia Donovan, Procurement Officer, and Sophie Chung, Senior Research Manager in the Mental Health Field Building team at Wellcome.

Successful Suppliers will be required to meet virtually (via conference calls) on an ongoing basis, to share progress and learning as part of our initiative to develop an international mental health science community. All meetings will be conducted in English.



Wellcome will need to own the intellectual property created in this commission and may wish to make the final outputs public itself (in whole or in part), either on its website or other media, and in doing so may apply a Creative Commons (CC-BY) licence to the outputs.

Subject to Wellcome using the deliverables for its internal purposes first, we are keen that the final outputs reach as wide an audience as possible. For more details on intellectual property, Suppliers submitting proposals as a registered company should see the [contract terms](#) under section 9; Individuals submitting proposals as a sole trader should see [contract terms](#) under section 8).

Provided the final outputs are of publishable standard, Wellcome will encourage and work with Suppliers to publish the final outputs in suitable peer-reviewed academic journals, although we are very interested in innovative forms of dissemination and publishing that do not use the currently established journal format. Any such publication should be in line with Wellcome's [statement](#) on Open Access.

17. Wellcome Contact Details

The single point of contact within this RFP exercise for all communications is as indicated below:

Name: Olivia Donovan
Role: Procurement Officer
Email: RFP@wellcome.org