



RFP: Understanding mental health science research: collaborations and early careers

1. Background

The mental health science field has many advanced specialities, producing high-quality work; however, too often these exist within siloes across different disciplines, with conceptual and ideological conflicts. There is also limited involvement of lived experience expertise, which means research may not address issues which are most important to those affected. In short, we are all looking at the same problems from different angles, without pooling our skills or joining up our perspectives.

In addition to its support of mental health research projects, Wellcome is keen to learn more about how the field of mental health science works. We aim to foster an international, collaborative field of mental health science that brings in diverse perspectives and spans disciplines and institutions. We want to see the embedding of lived experience expertise in a meaningful and effective manner.

Wellcome is also interested in understanding the career trajectories of early career researchers in the mental health sciences and the particular challenges they might be facing. We aim to foster, train and retain scientists that are capable of working in interdisciplinary teams and will deliver the step change that is needed to advance mental health research.

2. RFP specification

This RFP is aimed at a supplier who can use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods to scope:

- **Work package 1: Collaborations.** This work package is focused on the ways in which mental health scientists (including lived experience experts) in the fields of neuroscience and clinical mental health science approach collaborations with each other. Questions include: What are the potential benefits of collaboration that might unlock progress towards new understanding of, and treatments for, early intervention in anxiety, depression, and psychosis? How are such collaborations formed and maintained? What are the barriers to collaboration? And what tools or platforms would help mental health scientists to establish and sustain productive multidisciplinary collaborations? **We anticipate that this work package will take the form of a number of focus groups.**
- **Work package 2: Early careers.** This work package is focused on the career trajectories of early career scientists in mental health science fields. Questions include: How do mental health scientists view their career prospects? What mental health specific challenges exist for an early career researcher? What are the barriers to recruiting or retaining early career researchers in mental health science? What form of career support is lacking and would be most beneficial to early career researchers? What change would make a positive impact? **We anticipate that this work package will take the form of a survey as well as a number of focus groups.**



3. RFP objectives

3.1 Work package 1: Collaborations

- Approximately 6 focus groups that engage a global range of mental health scientists in the fields of neuroscience and clinical mental health science, as well as individuals with lived experience of mental health problems.

Work package 2: Early careers

- A survey designed and delivered to capture the views of a diverse range of mental health scientists at various career stages, to provide a quantitative overview of the state of the early career space in mental health research. We are particularly interested in understanding the perceived barriers to recruiting and retaining talented scientists.
- Approximately 8 focus groups that engage a broad range of mental health scientists at a variety of career stages, though with early career scientists at their core. These should take place to capture experiences in a variety of geographic settings, including in but not limited to the UK, Europe and Africa.

4. Other requirements

We expect the supplier's team to be diverse in membership and inclusive in practice. We also expect the supplier to meaningfully and ethically involve and collaborate with people with lived experience experts in the design and delivery of the project, as relevant to the deliverables.

We understand lived experience as a unique form of knowledge, insight, and expertise, that comes from having experience of mental health challenges. When we refer to 'lived experience experts' or 'people with lived experience' we are referring to people who identify as having experienced anxiety, depression or psychosis broadly defined, either in the past or currently. For the purposes of this project, we are open to any methods of collaboration and roles the supplier chooses for lived experience experts to be embedded in this project, so long as the approaches and roles are appropriate for the project aims and stages of the project.

Deliverables

4.1 Work package 1: Collaborations

- Two weeks: A full protocol of no more than five pages, outlining location of focus groups, and plans for recruiting, running, recording, analysing and reporting.
- Two months: An interim report of no more than five pages, delivered in Word format, detailing progress made, any issues that have arisen, and strategy for tackling these.
- Four months:



- A written report of no more than 6000w summarising the main findings of these focus groups delivered in Word format. This should include a synthesis of participants' views with direct quotes where relevant that address the questions in the specification above. This should also contain a set of recommendations for ways in which Wellcome could facilitate collaborations in this area.
- Anonymised transcripts from the focus groups.
- A presentation of no more than 30 minutes summarising the findings of this work package, to be delivered to the Mental Health Strategic Programme team at Wellcome.

4.2 Work package 2: Early careers

- Two weeks: A full protocol of no more than five pages, outlining location of focus groups, and plans for recruiting, running, recording, analysing and reporting. Separately, a full protocol of no more than five pages, outlining plans for the survey, including questions and plans for advertising, incentivising, analysing and reporting.
- Two months: An interim report of no more than five pages, delivered in Word format, detailing progress made, any issues that have arisen, and strategy for tackling these.
- Four months:
 - A written report of no more than 6000 words, summarising the main findings of the survey and focus groups, delivered in Word format. This should include a quantitative analysis of the survey results as well as a synthesis of participants' views with direct quotes where relevant that address the questions in the specification above. This should also contain a set of recommendations for ways in which Wellcome could provide early career support in this area.
 - Cleaned dataset of survey responses in Excel format, for potential further analysis.
 - Anonymised transcripts from the focus groups.
 - A presentation of no more than 30 minutes summarising the findings of this work package, to be delivered to the Mental Health Strategic Programme team at Wellcome.

The supplier may provide suggestions for extra deliverables or amendments to the proposed methodology. The final deliverables will be agreed at the contract negotiation stage but please note that we expect the final deliverable by end of May 2024 at the very latest.



5. RFP Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issue to Suppliers on Contract Opportunities website	WT	w/c 18 Sept 2023
2	Submission of expression of interest to and Questions to RFP@Wellcome.org	Supplier	6 Oct 2023
4	Return of Suppliers Q&As to Suppliers	WT	13 Oct 2023
5	Submission of RFP response	Supplier	3 Nov 2023
6	RFP Evaluation period	WT	w/c 6 Nov – 17 Nov 2023
7	Supplier presentations	WT & Supplier	w/c 20 Nov - 1 Dec 2023
8	Notification of contract award	WT	w/c 11 Dec 2023
9	Contract negotiation	WT & Supplier	Early December 2023
10	Contract start date	WT & Supplier	January 2024

6. Response Format

6.1 EOI and Q&A

Suppliers are asked to submit a short expression of interest by e-mail to the RFP@Wellcome.org in accordance with the RFP timetable, which should contain the following information.

- Confirming whether you are an organisation or individual
- If an organisation please provide registered name, address, and registration number.
- A non-binding cost estimate as a single figure in GBP
- Any questions you have about the exercise and activity

Prior to the submission of your full proposal to the RFP, Suppliers are provided the opportunity to submit any questions they have about the exercise and the activity. All questions will be collated, anonymised, answered and returned to all Suppliers who have submitted an expression of interest in the RFP process. Please make sure you ask all



questions at this stage. If you have any additional questions after this deadline, these will not be answered; this is to ensure a fair and equitable process.

Submitting an EOI/Q&A is not a binding commitment to submit a full proposal. Should your organisational priorities change, you will not then be penalised for future opportunities

6.2 RFP Proposal

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.

#	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 lived experience experts 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

Evaluation Criteria

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%
Total	100%

Contract Feedback

This section allows Suppliers to provide specific feedback to the contractual agreement which will be used should their proposal be successful. This is the suppliers' opportunity to provide negotiation points on Wellcome's terms and conditions, we will not consider negotiations that are only raised after the contract has been awarded so as not to delay the contracting process. Please ensure you engage with a relevant legal contact if applicable. 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 Wellcome's Standard terms and Conditions [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 6 below).



Information Governance

Wellcome is committed to upholding data protection principles and protecting your information. The [Wellcome-Privacy-Statement-2023.pdf](#) explains how, and on what legal basis, we collect, store, and use personal information about you. This includes any information you provide in relation to this proposal.

Under [GDPR/Data Protection law](#), Wellcome must keep a record of all personal information it is processing (i.e., collecting, using, and sharing). This record will be made available to the Information Commissioner's Office upon request.

This is Wellcome's record of data processing activities which meets GDPR article 30 requirements.

Suppliers will be asked to complete the [TPSRA2](#) assessment before presentation stage to assess how you handle data.

Supplier Presentations

Following a submission of the proposal successful proposals will be invited to a virtual meeting which will last 50 minutes in total and will be a PowerPoint presentation followed by questions and answers session.

7. About Wellcome

Wellcome improves health for everyone by funding research, leading policy and advocacy campaigns, and building global partnerships. Collaborative research that involves a diverse range of people from different fields of interest is key to progress in health science – and to achieving our aim of fostering a healthier, happier, world. We're taking on the biggest health challenges facing humanity – climate and health, infectious disease, and mental health – to find urgent solutions and accelerate preventions. Find out more about Wellcome and our work at: [wellcome.org](https://www.wellcome.org).

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. Equity, Diversity and 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. We want to cultivate an inclusive and diverse culture, and 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.

10. 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/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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. Funding

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

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. Wellcome Contact Details

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

Name	Lindsey Atkins-Tamblin
Pronouns	She/Her
Role	Procurement Manager
Email	RFP@Wellcome.org