



Request for Proposal (RFP): how do people's subjective experiences of mental health problems inform the mental health research agenda?

1. RFP Background & Objectives

Wellcome is commissioning a landscaping report that aims to:

- understand the ways in which research exploring people's subjective experiences of mental health problems is conducted, documented, valued, and used in the broader mental health field;
- investigate existing barriers to, and opportunities for, its greater integration across mental health research, particularly in developing new research questions; and
- consider how to address any barriers or leverage any opportunities identified.

Wellcome

Wellcome is a politically and financially independent charitable foundation. We improve health for everyone by funding research, leading policy and advocacy campaigns, and building global partnerships. In 2020, Wellcome announced our new strategy to tackle three global health challenges: mental health, infectious disease, and the impact of climate change on health.

Wellcome Mental Health: vision and mission

Our vision for mental health is a world in which no one is held back by mental health problems. Our mission over the next 20 years is to drive a step-change in the ability to intervene as early as possible in the course of anxiety, depression, and psychosis.

To do this, we need to:

- Improve understanding of how the brain, body and environment interact in the trajectory of anxiety, depression, and psychosis
- Find new and/or improved ways to predict, identify, and intervene as early as possible in the course of anxiety, depression, and psychosis

To support breakthroughs in understanding and intervention, we need a vibrant field of mental health research that is collaborative, coherent, and focused. A collaborative field of mental health will foster research that brings in diverse perspectives and spans disciplines and institutions. Embedding lived experience expertise will ensure research reflects the needs and priorities of those most affected.



The importance of integrating the knowledge from people's subjective experiences across mental health research

"How can research be truly relevant if it does not use the expertise that comes from the deeply personal experience of mental health challenges?"¹

Understanding a mental health problem, and developing a new treatment, requires detailed knowledge of the relevant issues. Anxiety, depression and psychosis currently have no objective clinical tests or diagnostic markers: they reflect disputed categories and describe a range of experiences and life impacts. Identifying how, when, and in which contexts to intervene requires understanding and engaging with people's subjective experiences of mental health problems.

Exploring subjective and 'lived' experiences of mental health problems requires engagement with a variety of disciplines (including the humanities and social sciences) which contribute to creating new knowledge, resources, and methods. Rich learning may also be elicited within the contexts of research on specific interventions, embedded within larger research programmes, or shared through personal stories or artistic forms. The wide range of existing research exploring subjective experiences may not be easily shared, accessed, or integrated across the mental health field due to a range of barriers, including those that are social, structural, ethical, logistical, technical, ideological, political, or contextual. As a result, research exploring subjective experiences may be underused to inform the development of future mental health science projects.

Wellcome is commissioning a landscaping report to better understand the extent to which research exploring deeper knowledge and understanding of people's subjective experiences of mental health is integrated across all areas of mental health research, considering how and where this works, and why. The report will explore how relevant research or resources could be better integrated into the further development of the mental health research agenda, making recommendations to facilitate its use in ways that are inclusive, sensitive, and appropriate.

2. RFP Specification

This section sets out the specification of services for this RFP exercise. Suppliers should use this section to fully understand Wellcome's requirements and to inform their response.

Wellcome are seeking a supplier for a 12-month contract (maximum 15-months) to produce a thorough landscaping report on the development, use, and integration of research exploring people's subjective experiences of mental health problems across the mental health research ecosystem. This report should focus on research broadly relevant to experiences of anxiety, depression, or psychosis in the first instance. The delivery of the report will require desk-based

¹ Jamie Morgan, Lived Experience Adviser, Wellcome Trust, 20th September 2023



research and scoping activities, which may include a range of qualitative and/or quantitative data collection methods and varied methodologies.

Primary outputs:

1. **Deliverable 1:** An inception report (up to 6,000 words) providing a comprehensive proposal and timeline (including Gantt chart) for completing the landscaping work. This should outline and rationalise the approach, methods and timeline for: conducting exploratory work; finding and developing case studies; completing the final report and commentary; and working collectively with the Wellcome team.
2. **Deliverable 2:** As per the inception report, conduct a comprehensive set of scoping activities and integrate the findings into a full landscaping report (up to 30,000 words plus appendices). The report should outline and report against the approach and methods from the inception report, as well as summarise the key findings, making a series of relevant recommendations of where and how Wellcome might be placed to facilitate further work.
 - a. Scoping activities should:
 - i. Engage both those who develop research or resources, as well as the range of stakeholders who might benefit from engagement with its findings.
 - ii. Identify key barriers to wide engagement with research and its outputs which might include knowledge, resources, or methods. These may be social, structural, ethical, logistical, technical, ideological, political, or contextual.
 - iii. Include an internal workshop with Wellcome staff to inform the development of recommendations.
 - a. This report should:
 - i. Highlight a minimum of five case studies showcasing the ways in which research exploring subjective experiences of mental health problems has influenced research conception and helped to advance the mental health field. These should come from a range of geographical and disciplinary contexts. The development of these case studies should consider how and why integration has worked optimally.
 - ii. For identified barriers, outline potential solutions, including those already in development, as part of a horizon scan.
 - iii. Consider and outline the risks and biases relevant to this work.
 - iv. Make a series of specific recommendations for Wellcome to help advance the accessibility, use, and integration of different kinds of knowledge, resources, or methods across mental health research. Recommendations should include tangible activities, as appropriate, that could take place over a 1–5-year timescale.



3. **Deliverable 3:** A brief commentary or viewpoint-style paper (length to be agreed) which critically considers the status quo and potential future directions for the way research exploring people’s subjective experiences of mental health problems can be integrated across the field of mental health science, particularly in the formation of research questions. This should be aimed at an external mental health research audience.

The deliverables we require to fulfil this contract are as follows:

#	Month	Deliverable
1	6 weeks	Deliverable 1.
2	Month 6	Progress report across all outputs.
3	Month 9	Drafts of Deliverables 2 and 3 for comment.
4	Month 12	Delivery of Deliverables 2 and 3.

We welcome ambitious and innovative projects that represent good value for money. A budget between £75,000 and £100,000 GBP is available for this programme although we encourage suppliers to advise us, with a clear rationale, if their proposal varies in either the timeline or budget as set out. Proposals will need to account for 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.

3. RFP Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issue to Suppliers via Contract Opportunities website	Wellcome	11 December 2023
2	Submission of Supplier Q&A	Supplier	8 January 2024
3	Return of Q&A to Suppliers	Wellcome	16 January 2024
4	Submission of RFP response (in line with requirements set out in section 5)	Supplier	5 February 2024
5	RFP Evaluation period	Wellcome	6 February – 23 February 2024
6	Supplier presentations	Wellcome & Supplier	26 February 2024 until 1 March 2024
7	Notification of contract award	Wellcome	w/c 4 March 2024
8	Contract negotiation	Wellcome & Supplier	March 2024
9	Contract start date	Wellcome & Supplier	April 2024



4. Response Format

The following headers support the timetable by providing further detail of the key steps.

Expression of Interest (non-Selective stage) and Supplier Q&A

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

- Confirming whether you are submitting a proposal as a registered company or an 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

Submitting an EOI is not a binding commitment to submit a full proposal should your organisational priorities change, you will not then be penalised for future opportunities. Prior to the submission of your full proposal to the RFP, Suppliers have the opportunity to submit questions about the exercise and the activity. All questions will be collated, anonymised, answered and returned to all Suppliers who have submitted an application in the RFP process. Please make sure you ask all questions at this stage. Once Wellcome have responded to all questions if you have any additional questions after this deadline these will not be answered to ensure that this is a fair and equitable process.

5. RFP Response

Suppliers submitting a full proposal should cover the following areas in their response:

RFP Questions

Suppliers are asked to respond to the following questions as part of their RFP Response:

#	Question	Max words
1	For the purposes of this landscaping report, how do you understand research exploring people's subjective experiences of mental health problems? Provide an outline demonstrating your proposed methodology to achieve the scope of the work. Please include any reference to key stakeholders and specific plans for engagement.	1000
2	Outline the proposed project team with a brief description of their relevant experience, including how you will involve lived experience experts in shaping and delivering the work.	500



4	What do you consider the key risks or complexities of this project to be? Explain how you will account for or address these as part of your proposed plan.	300
5	Outline your approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion in relation to your proposal.	250
6	Propose a delivery plan outlining project deliverables, timelines, and approach to working with Wellcome.	Not applicable
7	Please also complete the attached budget template published alongside this RFP	Not applicable See Budget Template

Contract Feedback

This section allows Suppliers to provide specific feedback to the contractual agreement which will be used should their proposal be successful. Wellcome will not consider any requests that are raised after this point. Please ensure you engage with a relevant professional to support your feedback if required. Include your contract feedback in your proposal as an annex 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 8 below).

Information Governance

Wellcome is committed to upholding data protection principles and protecting your information. The [Wellcome privacy webpage](#) 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 for Wellcome to assess how you handle data.



6. Evaluation Criteria

During the RFP evaluation period the evaluation panel will independently evaluate your proposal against the criteria outlined below. All scores will be collated, discussed and a decision will be agreed on who progresses to the next stage of the procurement exercise.

Criteria	Detail	%
Methodology	<p><i>Coverage:</i> How well are the desired focus areas (as outlined in the specification) covered in the proposed methodology address?</p> <p><i>Quality:</i> Is the proposed methodology aligned with our needs?</p> <p><i>Utility:</i> Will the proposed methodology deliver the desired, credible, and useful results?</p>	40%
Experience	<p><i>Skills and Experience:</i> Does the supplier have the relevant skills, experience, and contextual understanding to deliver this work, including an appropriate plan for collaborating with people with lived experience?</p>	30%
EDI	<p><i>Equity, Diversity & Inclusion:</i> Do they have EDI policies and are these being put into practice in the proposal?</p>	10%
Delivery & Outputs	<p><i>Communication:</i> Is there a good plan for communicating with the Wellcome team?</p> <p><i>Delivery plan:</i> Is the proposed delivery plan appropriate and achievable?</p> <p><i>Feasibility:</i> How feasible is the delivery plan? Are there significant risks associated with the proposed timelines, and how well are they mitigated?</p>	10%
Budget	<p><i>Value for Money:</i> Is the proposed work within your budget and good value for money?</p>	10%
Total:		100%

7. About Wellcome

Wellcome is a global charitable foundation established in 1936. Through our work we support science to solve the urgent health issues facing everyone. We fund [curiosity-driven research](#), and we're taking on three of the biggest health challenges facing humanity – [climate change](#), [infectious disease](#) and [mental health](#). We also work with policy makers, run advocacy campaigns, and form partnerships with other organisations to ensure everyone, everywhere benefits from advances in health science. Find out more about Wellcome and our work at: 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 equity, [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 equity, 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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#). 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 long term 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. Wellcome Contact Details

The point of contact for this RFP exercise is indicated below:

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