



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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

Thank you for submitting questions regarding this RFP. Submitted questions have been shared as they were asked verbatim, however, to facilitate clear responses, in some cases they have been combined together with a single answer.

#	Supplier Question	Wellcome response
<b>Questions relating to submitting a proposal</b>		
<b>1</b>	Can we confirm collaborations or partnerships after the EOJ stage? We are currently in conversation with two potential partners, with no decision on lead bidder for each of them at this stage. Are we able to be a delivery partner in more than one bid should that situation arise?	<p>Yes, you can confirm collaborations or partnerships after the expression of interest stage. Where relationships are newly established, we encourage attributing time in the proposal to build ways of working.</p> <p>It is possible to be a delivery partner in more than one bid.</p>
<b>2</b>	In the first question of the RFP response, what is meant by "how do you understand research exploring people's subjective experiences of mental health problems?" For example, are you asking for an overview of the landscape of research at the moment? Or more of a description of what kinds of research would be in and out of scope?	We are looking to understand how suppliers have interpreted the focus of the RFP. We would expect responses to articulate an understanding of what kinds of research, knowledge, or methods are relevant to the scope and why. A brief overview of the landscape of research at the moment may also be relevant.
<b>Questions relating to RFP scope and deliverables</b>		
<b>3</b>	Do you anticipate an accessible-read style report being a helpful sub-	Deliverable #2 of this initiative is a full landscaping report and Deliverable #3 is a brief commentary or viewpoint style paper. For Deliverable #2, we would be interested in considering either a summary or portion of the full report being an



	<p>deliverable as part of the intention to reach diverse audiences?</p> <p>Will the report be made public, as well as the viewpoint paper?</p>	<p>accessible-read style report that is publicly available. The recommendations for Wellcome will remain internal.</p> <p>For Deliverable #3, we would ask that the supplier include a lay summary alongside the manuscript to support dissemination. However, we would consider alternative formats or structures that a supplier feels would better serve an engagement/dissemination intention. Please clearly justify any suggestions made within your proposal.</p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p>Can I ask exactly what is meant by 'subjective experience'?</p> <p>a. Is it examples of where research tries to incorporate mental health experiences as viscerally as possible such as using VR to try and show what people with mental health problems may experience?</p> <p>b. Or is it about factoring people's experiences into research such as by designing patient-reported outcome measures?</p> <p>c. Subjective experience can potentially mean a lot of different things so we just want to ensure we understand if you are after something specific, or not. Any clarity you can offer on this would be much appreciated.</p>	<p>Thank you for this question. We appreciate the term can mean many things or be interpreted in different ways and finding the right language and framing for the 'Request for Proposals' was challenging.</p> <p>We are interested in examples where both the research premise, as well as the impact it intends to make, are clearly and specifically grounded in existing work that explores people's experiences of mental health problems. The working understanding is that there is already much rich insight about how mental health problems are subjectively experienced, contributed by many different disciplines and types of knowledge.</p> <p>Both the examples shared here are potentially relevant: Example (a), in drawing on resources to understand what mental health experiences feel like to develop an intervention, and Example (b), if it was working bottom-up to design a new measure to capture an experience, feeling, or sentiment that is important to people's experiences of mental health problems that is previously poorly articulated or considered in research. Part of this landscaping exercise is to help us consider the breadth in the ways subjective experiences are understood, how this knowledge is developed within and by research, and in what ways it could further progress the field of mental health. Sources of information on subjective experiences might include, but are not limited to, primary qualitative research, or research from disciplines such as the medical humanities.</p>



		If this does not answer your question, we welcome further discussion with suppliers about this if they are successful at the interview stage. Clarifying the exact scope is the reason we have included an inception report as the first deliverable. The scope needs to be understandable, feasible, and useful to both our work and the field. We hope to work closely with the selected supplier on this.
5	Is the project's focus on subjective experience as described, mainly about the experience of symptoms and psycho-social factors, or can this include a broader focus on care experience system responses, help-seeking and treatment?	Wellcome's mental health mission – and the bounds in the scope of this exercise – is to enable a step-change in early intervention for anxiety, depression and psychosis. Research, methods, or knowledge that explore subjective experiences of mental health problems, and which could have implications for this mission and the work Wellcome supports, could come from any of the categories outlined.
6	Regarding the case studies, do you have any geographic range you are hoping for (e.g. UK representation or LMIC as well, etc.)?;  What geographies are of focus?;  What (if any) preferences does Wellcome have in terms of geographic locations to focus on more deeply as part of the landscape?  Would suppliers need to include de-identified case studies in the international context i.e. across different country contexts?	This landscaping exercise should be as relevant to the global field of mental health research as possible. Case studies should not be limited to the UK and should include at least one example from a lower or middle-income setting, as well as examples across a range of disciplines, methods, or sources or knowledge. We are keen to work with suppliers to define a pragmatic scope – which might focus on particular geographies – for searching and to help identify relevant case studies.  Case studies should preserve the anonymity of research participants but need not be de-identified in terms of the team or programme. Part of the intention of this landscaping is to showcase the different ways research on the subjective experience of mental health problems has been conducted, shared, and integrated into further work, such as intervention design, development of new tools or measures, or identification of novel avenues of exploration.
7	Does the focus need to be evenly on anxiety, depression and psychosis or can it go into one area more deeply?	We are interested in this landscaping being relevant across the scope of our mental health strategy which focuses on early intervention in anxiety, depression or psychosis – broadly defined. As such, we would be keen to ensure there is a balance across different areas in the scope of the report, including the case



		<p>studies. This should be intended from the outset and designed into the approach and methods of the proposal. That said, we understand that we are looking for balance across a wide range of dimensions (mental health conditions, geographies, disciplines and methods) and that research may not be equitably distributed across all of these. We accept that the outputs of the report may not be able to offer a perfect balance and may delve into one area more than others, depending on available evidence and examples. In this scenario, we would expect there to be a clear articulation of where there are gaps.</p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p>“The RFP mentions that the report should 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.”</p> <p>Does the commission expect case studies conducted in a prospective exploratory research approach (such as in-depth interview and group discussions) or online expert consultation session shall be sufficient or a combination of these both is expected?;</p> <p>What are some key questions that the case studies need to answer?</p>	<p>The role of this landscaping is to showcase the different ways research on the subjective experience of mental health problems has been conducted, shared, and integrated into further work, such as intervention design, development of new tools or measures, or identification of novel avenues of exploration.</p> <p>We expect case studies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be accessible to a wide range of research audiences,</li> <li>• be credible to the research community – in how they were identified and in how they are explored,</li> <li>• meet the primary aim of showcasing the identified research in a way that helps people understand its value and contribution to the mental health field, considering how and where this has worked best.</li> </ul> <p>The exact methodology is to be proposed by the supplier and we would consider a range of approaches that are justified in these aims and feasible.</p>
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p>Can you provide any further clarity on the scope of this research? For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any geographic focus?</li> </ul>	<p>This landscaping exercise should be as relevant to the global field of mental health research as possible The geographic scope of this commission needs to consider research beyond the UK or only high-income contexts, but we are</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this project concerned with all types of research, or just certain types of research (e.g. academic research).</li> <li>• Is this project concerned with mental health research across all demographics?</li> <li>• Any other factors that influence scope?</li> </ul>	<p>happy to work with a supplier to identify particular geographies of focus to ensure the project is feasible.</p> <p>With regard to types of research, demographics, and other factors, the scope needs to be refined together with the supplier. Please refer to other answers regarding the interest in a balance across mental health conditions, disciplines, and methods.</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p>What do you mean by the mental health research ecosystem? Do you have any stakeholders that you would like to prioritize? - Government/ researchers / mental institutions?;</p> <p>What types of organizations and individuals does Wellcome consider part of the “mental health research ecosystem” for this piece of work?</p>	<p>We consider anyone that works in the field of mental health research, defined in broad terms, as part of an overarching ecosystem. In order to finesse the scope and recommendations of the report, we would draw out two key broad stakeholder groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health researchers – across the greatest range of expertise – who are contributing to efforts to develop our knowledge and understanding of mental health problems, or to new and improved interventions.</li> <li>• Mental health research funders, in particular, the role of institutions such as Wellcome in facilitating solutions to any challenges or barriers identified.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p>Is the engagement a way to build the case studies, or are they more standalone?</p>	<p>The engagement may help snowball contacts or examples that may make good case studies; however, the core purpose of the engagement is to support the supplier to develop a comprehensive overview of the research ‘landscape’. This includes surfacing, articulating, and interrogating key barriers to wide engagement with relevant research and its outputs - which might include knowledge, resources, or methods.</p>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p>How would this piece of work be used for future work done by Wellcome?;</p> <p>How will insights and recommendations from this work inform Wellcome’s</p>	<p>Landscaping exercises, such as this, help us better understand a research area, the scale and nature of barriers to research, and consider where Wellcome is placed – or not – to facilitate any solutions. It is difficult to identify how this landscaping will inform future work without knowing what the report might surface and there are no specific programmes this will feed into or commitments to its</p>



	<p>activities? Are there any specific programmes or initiatives that this research will feed into?</p>	<p>outputs at present. We envision that some possible activities a horizon scan might identify or the report might consider, based on its findings, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network, platform-based, or other social or convening opportunities that improve collaborative opportunities or knowledge sharing between different areas of research.</li> <li>• Technical, infrastructural solutions – for example, enabling ontological classification of a greater range of research to facilitate its identification.</li> <li>• Other novel ways in which research development or strategic activities engage (or support engagement with) a greater range of evidence or existing literature on a topic of interest.</li> </ul>
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p>To what extent will Wellcome be able to provide access to their own networks as part of stakeholder engagement activities?</p>	<p>We expect suppliers to identify and establish links with the networks, organisations, or individuals needed to meet the specification of the RFP. A key intention of commissions is that they consult beyond Wellcome’s existing networks.</p>
<p><b>Questions relating to budget</b></p>		
<p><b>14</b></p>	<p>Can I just check is the £75,000 - £100,000 GBP budget range inclusive of VAT, or can we add VAT costs on top of this?</p>	<p>The range specified in the Request for Proposals is inclusive of VAT; please account for this in your total budget. As outlined, value for money is a key criterion against which proposals will be reviewed. This includes both the overall competitiveness of the proposed budget required to meet the specification, as well as a consideration of whether the proposal is feasible and resourced appropriately, for example, including adequate provision to compensate lived experience advisers, or supporting participation across contexts through convening.</p> <p>We seek ambitious and innovative proposals and encourage suppliers to propose and justify any variation to the budget or timeline where they feel this is warranted and will serve the aims of the initiative and Wellcome’s mental health mission.</p>



15	<p>My main question is that the work outlined is very ambitious in the timeline and the budget and wondered if there was any flexibility? The work would need to include many different strands of research (science studies, lived experience/PPI, phenomenology, qualitative and more) and would require a specialist skilled in 2 or more of those areas I think.</p>	<p>Proposals may include specialists with complementary areas of expertise in order to fulfil the specification of the RFP. Specialists may be involved to different extents or in different packages of work envisioned by the proposal.</p> <p>Value for money is a key criterion that proposals will be reviewed against. This includes both the overall competitiveness of the proposed budget required to meet the specification, as well as a consideration of whether the proposal is feasible and resourced appropriately, for example, including adequate provision to compensate lived experience advisers, or supporting participation across contexts through convening. We seek ambitious and innovative proposals and encourage suppliers to propose and justify any variation to the budget or timeline where they feel this is warranted and will serve the aims of the initiative and Wellcome's mental health mission.</p>
<p><b>Questions relating to Lived Experience engagement</b></p>		
16	<p>Are you expecting us to include lived experience/PPI representation from low and middle income countries as well, or would a UK-focus be sufficient?</p>	<p>This landscaping exercise should be relevant to the global field of mental health research and include expertise drawn from a range of geographies and contexts. Where suppliers feel their current networks are limited, we encourage joint applications, or that adequate time and a clear plan is built into proposals to develop collaborative relationships.</p>
17	<p>Should special consideration be given to experience of people living in rural and remote settings?</p>	<p>We anticipate that exploration of people's subjective experiences of mental health problems in research to date is skewed towards particular groups. We encourage the landscaping exercise to make special consideration of whose experiences are less represented and in what ways this might limit mental health research. Those living in rural and remote settings may be one important group to consider.</p>
18	<p>How do Wellcome see co-production and co-design as contextual knowledge approaches informing this project, given they are not mentioned?</p>	<p>We welcome suppliers to include a much wider range of knowledge approaches than we articulated specifically in the RFP – this may include co-production and co-design. In relation to our strategy, this landscaping exercise is to help us understand the breadth of approaches that explore subjective experiences and to consider the ways in which they are integrated across broader mental health research.</p>



<b>19</b>	<p>How does Wellcome distinguish between 'subjective experience' and 'lived experience'? Does this terminological difference communicate a different emphasis in this RFP vs. previous RFPs that have asked for work on how to integrate lived experience into mental health research.</p>	<p>We have chosen the term 'subjective experience' as the focus for this piece of work, partly to avoid confusion with the term 'lived experience'. The latter often has a specific connotation/meaning in research (i.e., patient and public involvement activities on a research project).</p> <p>When we refer to subjective experiences, we understand that these are likely to include peoples' 'lived' experiences of situations, conditions and challenges. These might be gained through formal research (e.g., qualitative methods that emphasise the importance of subjective experiences). They might also be recorded anecdotally, or outside of formal research channels.</p>
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