



Request for Proposal (RFP) for Innovative approaches to lived experience in mental health science

1. RFP Background & Objectives

Wellcome supports science to solve urgent health challenges facing everyone. Within this broad mission, Wellcome's Mental Health team is pursuing an ambitious agenda to drive a step change in early intervention in anxiety, depression, and psychosis. You can find more information about Wellcome's Mental Health programme [here](#).

Wellcome wants to commission several supplier teams to develop innovative lived experience collaborations in mental health research. We want these collaborations to create innovative, substantial, and sustainable projects to advance lived experience involvement in mental health science, influence the field, and help us achieve our mission.

The expertise of people with lived experience of mental health challenges is vital for the success of Wellcome's Mental Health mission. A global team of Lived Experience Advisors shape our strategy, its governance, delivery, and decision-making. We want to develop and enhance the contribution of lived experience in mental health science. We are aware of the long history of lived experience involvement and leadership within mental health research, but also acknowledge systematic and practical barriers to greater inclusion. We are interested in understanding these barriers and finding solutions.

Our team is committed to involving people with lived experience expertise. We define this as the knowledge, insight and expertise that comes from having first-hand experience of mental health challenges, either now or in the past. There are three levels to our lived experience work at Wellcome:

1. **Internally.** We involve and work alongside lived experience experts to shape the day-to-day work, thinking, direction and decision-making of the Mental Health team.
2. **Funded projects.** We expect the projects we develop or fund to meaningfully involve people with lived experience expertise.
3. **In the field of mental health science.** We work to integrate lived experience expertise in the field of mental health science.

2. RFP Specification

We believe that, across the world, there are many innovative ways in which lived experience experts use their expertise to inform mental health research. However, we know that there are challenges to embedding this. These challenges include establishing lived experience expertise in fields of science where it is less common and less well established, establishing lived experience expertise in geographies with less infrastructure for its implementation, and developing capacity or developing leadership in lived experience involvement.



Wellcome wants to commission several supplier teams to develop innovative lived experience collaborations in mental health research, based on solving these challenges. This commission aims to fund innovative practice for lived experience expertise in different research contexts around the world. We know that what may be considered 'innovative' in one context may not be considered innovative in another, which is why we encourage applications from suppliers across the world, working in different research contexts. We also encourage suppliers to describe and reflect on why their approach is innovative and valuable in the context they are working in, rather than seeking to be innovative for the sake of innovation.

We encourage suppliers to demonstrate how their approach benefits Wellcome's priorities for mental health research, and how it could benefit mental health research more broadly. We want to share what we have learnt from the projects we commission, and for this information to be available to future generations of mental health researchers (including researchers who use their lived experience expertise) and to future generations of lived experience experts.

We expect to fund projects for a period between 18 and 30 months, with an approximate budget between £75,000 and £200,000 per year. Our aim is to fund projects that are substantial and collaborative enough to leave a lasting impact. We would also like to work with funded projects as part of a cohort, learning from them and facilitating cross-project networking throughout project duration.

We are interested in supporting projects that address **one or more** of the following aims (examples are given in brackets, but these are provided for indication, and we are interested in hearing suppliers' ideas):

1. Developing new and sustainable methods and models of embedding lived experience in areas where such practice is less well established (for example, lab-based, aetiological, 'basic' science).
2. Expanding, strengthening and developing culturally and contextually appropriate methods and models for innovative lived experience partnerships across [Low- and Middle-Income Countries](#) (for example, equitable partnerships between High Income and Low- and Middle-Income Countries).
3. Developing new approaches to advance lived experience leadership in mental health research (for example, global lived experience networks for mental health research, career development infrastructure specific to lived experience).

The projects we commission **must** fulfil the following criteria:

- Address one or more of the aims listed above.
- Have wider implications for the field of mental health research, e.g., benefitting people beyond those involved in the project, and beyond the organisation(s) involved.
- Be led by, or co-led with, lived experience experts.



Projects must not:

- Consist only of 'business as usual' activities (for example, the project must encompass better, more innovative approaches than setting up lived experience involvement panels in existing research projects or developing organisational lived experience infrastructure).
- Benefit only the organisations involved in the project.

Project outputs should:

- Be of value to the future of lived experience expertise in mental health research.
- Capture knowledge and insights from the project (including the collaborative processes, successes and failures behind the project).
- Adhere to Wellcome's accessibility standards.
- Inspire and benefit others in future.

3. RFP Timetable

This is a two-stage application process.

The first stage is an 'Expression of Interest'. Suppliers must respond to this stage to be considered by Wellcome, see table below for deadline. After this, shortlisted suppliers will be invited to submit a full proposal, see table below for deadline. We are providing longer timelines than usual for responding to this RFP because we understand that suppliers need time to establish teams and develop meaningful partnerships and collaborations. We expect suppliers to use this additional time to build their partnerships and develop collaborative practices. Guidance for establishing partnerships will be provided in the pre-recorded informational webinar that follows the launch of this RFP. The timeline is listed below:

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issued on the Contract Opportunities webpage	Wellcome	20 March 2024
2	Pre-recorded webinar launched which will be added to the Contract Opportunities webpage	Wellcome	Early April 2024
3	Deadline for suppliers to ask questions about the RFP	Supplier	16 April 2024
4	Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers	Wellcome	3 May 2024
5	Submission of Expression of Interest online form	Supplier	9 July 2024
6	Wellcome to review Expression of Interest	Wellcome	10 July – 2 Aug 2024
7	Wellcome to invite Supplier to submit full proposal	Wellcome	w/c 6 Aug 2024



8	Invited Suppliers only Submission of RFP full Response (in line with requirements set out in section 5)	Supplier	26 Nov 2024
9	Supplier presentations	Supplier	Week beginning 27 Jan 2025
10	Notification of Contract Award	Wellcome	End Feb 2025
11	Contract Negotiation	Wellcome & Supplier	Early March 2025
12	Contract Start Date	Wellcome & Supplier	End of March 2025

4. Response Format

Supplier Questions

Prior to the submission of your Expression of Interest, Suppliers are provided the opportunity to submit any questions they have about the exercise and the activity, please submit these to RFP@wellcome.org. All questions will be collated, anonymised, answered and returned to all Suppliers. 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.

Expression of Interest (Eoi)

For the first stage, we ask suppliers to submit an Expression of Interest via [this online form](#). Please include the following in your response:

- The full name and contact details of the organisation/individual that will be the contracting supplier. If it is an organisation, please provide full company name, address, and company registration number.
- Your proposed approach to this work and why it is innovative (max. 500 words)
- How has lived experience expertise shaped and developed your idea? (max. 250 words)
- How would this work be useful for Wellcome's Mental Health mission and for wider society in future? (max. 250 words)
- Which other organisation(s)/individual(s) will be involved in the project?
- A non-binding cost estimate as a single figure in GBP (all costs are likely to be subject to VAT or equivalent).

Submitting an Expression of Interest is not a binding commitment to submit a full proposal. Should your organisational priorities change, you will not be penalised for future opportunities.

Expressions of Interest submitted to Wellcome will be scored internally and via this selective stage to ensure that proposals fit within the scope of the RFP. Where Wellcome are satisfied of this, Wellcome will invite chosen suppliers to submit a full proposal to the RFP in



accordance with the RFP timetable. Suppliers who have been invited to full proposal stage will have an opportunity to ask additional questions at full proposal stage. **Please note that you should only submit a full proposal to the RFP if you have been invited to do so.**

5. RFP Response (Full proposal stage)

Suppliers who are invited to submit a full proposal should do so in a readily accessible format (e.g., Word, PDF, PowerPoint, etc.). The proposal should cover the following areas in their response (maximum 10 pages, excluding references, images, or the budget template):

1. **Approach:** Describe your approach to the work, and what has informed your approach, and the context in which you will run this project.
2. **Innovation:** Explain why you consider your approach to be innovative (relative to the context you plan to work in) and why this innovation is appropriate and valuable for the issue you are trying to address, rather than seeking to be innovative for the sake of innovation.
3. **Evaluation and learning:** Outline your approach to evaluation and learning during the project, including how you plan to involve the Wellcome team (note, we are not expecting suppliers to evaluate the impact of their project, but to evaluate the process of running the project and to describe what they have learnt).
4. **Stakeholders:** Outline the relevant stakeholders for this work and how you plan to involve/engage them.
5. **Lived Experience:** Use this section to summarise how lived experience has informed your project (note, we also expect lived experience to be embedded throughout the whole proposal).
6. **Relevance:** Explain how you think the outcomes from this work might be useful in future (both for Wellcome's Mental Health mission and for the field more broadly).
7. **Project team:** Outline the proposed project team with a brief description of their roles in this work and relevant previous experience.
8. **EDI:** Describe how the team will embed equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within your approach.
9. **Timeline:** Provide a timeline for the work, including key milestones and deliverables.
10. **Budget:** Provide a detailed budget using the template which will be shared to invited suppliers, including breakdown justifying the proposed costs to meet Wellcome's requirements.
11. **Risks:** Outline any major risks and challenges you foresee with meeting the project requirements. Please include your mitigation strategies for these risks.



6. Evaluation Criteria

During the RFP evaluation period the evaluation panel will independently evaluate your full 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	%
How well the proposal meets the RFP specification and demonstrates potential for impact.	40%
Track record and expertise of the potential Supplier(s).	25%
Strength of the proposed plans for including people with lived experience expertise in the design, delivery and leadership of the project.	25%
Value for Money	5%
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	5%
Total:	100%

7. 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.

Wellcome will not consider negotiations that are raised in your response to this proposal, i.e., 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 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 are asked to complete the [TPSRA2](#) assessment before the RFP submission deadline for Wellcome to assess how you handle data.

Supplier Presentations

Following a submission of the full proposal, successful proposals will be invited to a virtual meeting which will last 60 minutes in total and will be a PowerPoint presentation followed by questions and answers session.

8. 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](#).

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. Funding

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



15. 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.

16. 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.

17. Wellcome Contact Details

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

Name: Rebecca Giles
Pronouns: She/her
Role: Procurement Officer
Email: RFP@wellcome.org