

**Request for Proposal (RFP) for
Developing a platform for practical interactive resources to guide lived experience
collaboration in mental health research**

(a joint initiative between Wellcome and UKRI)

1. RFP Background & Objectives

Wellcome supports science to solve urgent health challenges facing everyone. Wellcome's Mental Health team is pursuing an ambitious agenda to drive a step change in early intervention in anxiety, depression, and psychosis. Lived experience of mental health challenges is a core part of all the work we fund. You can find more information about Wellcome's Mental Health programme [here](#), and a summary of our approach to lived experience is described [here](#))

The **UKRI** 'Adolescence, Mental Health and the Developing Mind' [programme](#) aims to support and fund research that examines how mental health problems emerge in young people, what makes some more susceptible or resilient than others, and how we can intervene early to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. Working with young people affected by these issues is an important part of the initiative. This programme is jointly delivered by the Medical Research Council (MRC), Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

As major research funders, Wellcome and UKRI believe that lived experience expertise is vital for the success of mental health research. Through this commission, we want a supplier to develop a platform of resources to improve lived experience collaboration in mental health research. Where possible, we want the supplier to develop these resources based on existing examples from practical contexts. People have told us that they learn best from examples of others in similar situations doing something similar, i.e., learning from what others have done or are doing. We are **not** seeking to develop new 'high-level' guidance and principles as part of this commission.

This commission complements previous collaborations between Wellcome and UKRI, building on recommendations from a scoping report published by Science Practice (2023) and summarised in [this](#) blog post (the full report will be available to the selected supplier). The report suggested that there is a lack of practical and accessible information about how researchers and lived experience experts can collaborate, both within the stages of an individual research project (i.e., from inception to publication and dissemination), and at different stages of the research pipeline (i.e., basic/aetiological research to intervention and implementation studies).

2. RFP Specification

We want to commission a supplier to create a comprehensive online resource platform that helps to facilitate collaboration and engagement between mental health researchers and lived experience experts. We see this platform as being a dynamic, interactive space that is capable

of hosting practical resources, tailored to integrating lived experience in different kinds of research projects. The platform must be scalable, flexible, and updateable, with the capacity to accommodate and manage additional resources and 'modules' that may be commissioned in future. We do **not** want a hub that collates and replicates existing guidance.

We want these resources to be creative and interactive, and based on real, practical examples. These examples should be taken from different global and scientific contexts (relating to mental health). They should be curated and enhanced so they can be used by other researchers and lived experience experts. The process of developing and refining resources may require engagement with the individuals or organisations responsible for the original practices.

We have chosen **two core areas** (conceived as 'modules') for suppliers to focus on for this commission. The first is **youth mental health** (ages 10-24) because it is a shared area of interest for both Wellcome and UKRI. The second area is **safeguarding in lived experience collaboration**, particularly when working with people with learning and communication differences (including, but not limited to, young people). Wellcome may add other modules in future, but this is beyond the scope of this commission¹.

The aim of this commission as follows:

1. Collate, summarise and optimise resources to inform good practice for lived experience involvement in **two** areas relevant to our mental health strategies (i.e., **children and youth mental health** and **safeguarding in lived experience collaboration**). We expect suppliers to build on previous relevant work from Wellcome and UKRI, extrapolating from existing work, adding value, avoiding duplication, and adding new resources to address gaps. The supplier should build from existing practice from various sources in a global context (including from both high-income countries and Low- and Middle-Income country contexts). The resources and platform should be presented in accessible, engaging, and implementable multimedia formats. They should also be targeted for a range of possible stakeholders, including young people who are unfamiliar with research or who are routinely excluded from it.
2. Design and develop an appropriate platform to host the resources. The platform should be free, accessible and available for all stakeholders who may wish to use it. It should also be future proofed for expansion with additional future modules. We envisage the platform as something online, perhaps a website, that can host interactive resources. Availability requirements should consider the UK Government's [Understanding accessibility](#)

¹ Future modules might include lived experience collaboration in animal research, in neuroscience, AI, data science, in the implementation of interventions, or involvement in clinical trials. Future modules would be beyond scope for the present commission, but we encourage suppliers to consider how their proposed approach to developing, collating and disseminating lived experience resources would be replicable in such contexts.

[requirements for public sector bodies](#), and include Welsh translations in accordance with the Welsh Language Measure, 2011.

3. Develop a communication and implementation plan for launching, communicating to audiences, and sustaining resources beyond the project lifetime.
4. Develop a structured, transparent, and reproduceable methodology/approach outlining how the resources were sourced and developed, including the steps taken, so that Wellcome/UKRI could follow a similar approach when creating other modules in future.

We encourage suppliers to demonstrate how their approach benefits mental health research internationally, including in Low- and Middle- Income (LMIC) contexts.

We expect all suppliers to present plans for lived experience collaboration in all aspects of the design, delivery, and governance of this work, at multiple levels of influence in the project team. We also expect that the supplier would engage with the relevant Wellcome and UKRI research portfolios, to capitalise on learning and innovations being developed.

Working with Wellcome and UKRI

This is a contract, not a research grant. This means it will involve the production of the agreed deliverables within a specified timeframe. The project will be managed by a contract manager in Wellcome's Mental Health team, supported by a steering group including Wellcome and UKRI representatives, including lived experience advisors from both organisations.

Suppliers should demonstrate how their approach benefits Wellcome and UKRI's priorities for mental health research and build regular feedback with the steering group into their proposal and timeline.

Expertise Required

All proposed projects should include a mix of academic research experience, lived experience expertise, design experience, user-testing, and experience communicating to a wide range of stakeholders using creative and flexible approaches.

We are looking for supplier teams who:

- Understand complex scientific concepts and can communicate them to various audiences.
- Have experience of working across different scientific areas in mental health, as relevant to the portfolio of Wellcome and UKRI.
- Have experience of developing practical resources for varied audiences.



- Have experience of working with young people and can demonstrate understanding of the complex and sensitive nature of lived experience collaboration in research.
- Have some experience of web development and/or creating accessible digital products (e.g., to WCAG conformance).
- Ideally, have experience of working in different research contexts (e.g., including low-income and middle-income countries).

This commission requires suppliers with a range of expertise. It would suit a supplier consortium led by a primary contact. The success of this project is likely to depend on how well the supplier can work with others in their consortium, ensuring that varied expertise is available at the right times. Please outline your approach to this in your proposal, describing what expertise you think is needed and how you will build the connections and relationships needed.

Deliverables

We expect the supplier to deliver the following mandatory outputs (with payment linked to deliverables):

1. The resources and platform described above, which should include the following:
 - The first two modules, developed from examples of existing practice wherever possible. Please note, the deliverables for the module on youth mental health should be prioritised in the timeline, where possible.
 - The platform, including the capability to host additional resources/modules in the future.
 - A replicable framework for developing the resources, including a summary of the process, e.g., how did you determine what to include and exclude in the resources (prepared in a transparent way that can be replicated in future modules and commissions).
 - A stakeholder communication plan detailing the different audiences considered and engaged, including for marginalised groups.
 - An implementation plan, showing how the platform could become a 'go-to' resource, and how it might be maintained after the lifetime of the project, including recommendations for Wellcome and UKRI to monitor the usage of the platform. This will need to include an options appraisal, prior to all the work being completed, including time for the commissioner to decide.

- An evaluation plan showing the lessons learnt throughout the process, describing how you would improve the process next time (when the process is replicated for future modules, beyond the scope of this commission).
2. Internal progress reports throughout the project (including slide deck for sharing with other internal stakeholders). These should outline the process followed, with examples, guidelines and provide recommendations for the next stage.
 3. A 45-minute presentation to the Wellcome/UKRI team at the end of the project, including recommendations for how to implement the deliverables from the project, and including a slide deck for wider use and communication about the project.

Project oversight

Please note submitted proposals will be shared with UKRI as well as Wellcome.

3. RFP Timetable

The full timetable and relevant dates are listed below:

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issued on the Contract Opportunities webpage	Wellcome	28 February 2025
2	Deadline for suppliers to ask questions (Q&A)	Supplier	07 March 2025
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to all Suppliers and add to Contract Opportunities	Wellcome/UKRI	18 March 2025
4	Submission of RFP Response (in line with requirements set out in section 4)	Supplier	Midday 08 April 2025
5	RFP Evaluation Period	Wellcome/UKRI	08 April 2025 - 28 April 2025
6	Supplier Presentations	Supplier	07 to 14 May 2025
7	Notification of Contract Award	Wellcome	Early June 2025
8	Contract Negotiation	Wellcome & Supplier	Mid-Late June 2025
9	Contract Start Date	Wellcome & Supplier	July/August 2025

Prior to the submission of your proposal, 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. Please ensure 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.

4. RFP Response

Suppliers who are invited to submit a full proposal should cover the following areas in their response (max. 12 pages excluding any references or images, Font & size: e.g., Arial, Trebuchet MS, Verdana size 11):

1. **Approach:** What is your approach and plan to produce the deliverables in the specification. Provide a timeline for the work, including key milestones and deliverables. Outline the relevant stakeholders for this work and how you plan to involve/engage them.
2. **Project team:** Outline the proposed project team with a brief description of their roles in this work and relevant previous experience.
3. **Track record:** Outline your track record of work and expertise of your team in this area, including a demonstratable understanding of the mental health research environment and lived experience involvement.
4. **Lived Experience:** Outline how you will involve people with the relevant lived experience expertise in your project, including in the development of your proposal.
5. **Evaluation and learning:** Outline your approach to evaluation and learning during the project, including how you plan to involve the Wellcome/UKRI commissioning 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).
6. **EDI:** Describe how the team will embed equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within your approach.
7. **Budget:** Provide a detailed budget using the budget template provided, including breakdown justifying the proposed costs to meet Wellcome's requirements. Suppliers should include appropriate costs for dissemination and resource/output production into their applications. Please include details such as expenses, management time, UK VAT and local tax considerations.
8. **Risks:** Outline any major risks and challenges you foresee with meeting the project requirements. Please include your mitigation strategies for these risks.

5. 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](#).

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).

Intellectual Property

The Background Intellectual Property belonging to each Party shall remain vested in the Party owning it.

Supplier hereby grants to Wellcome a free, worldwide, non-exclusive, perpetual and irrevocable licence (together with the right to sublicense) to use Supplier's Background Intellectual Property solely as needed to make use of the Deliverables.

All Foreground Intellectual Property shall become the property of Wellcome on its creation and the Supplier irrevocably assigns, and shall procure the assignment of, any existing and future Foreground Intellectual Property Rights to Wellcome with full title guarantee. The Supplier waives any and all of its moral rights in relation to the Foreground Intellectual Property.

Wellcome hereby grants to Supplier a free, worldwide, non-exclusive licence to use Wellcome's Background Intellectual Property and Foreground Intellectual Property, solely as needed for the Supplier to perform its obligations under the Agreement. This licence will automatically terminate on the termination or expiry of the Agreement. Save as permitted by Clause 9.2 in our Standard Terms and Conditions (linked above), neither Party shall use the name, logo, trademarks or other brand collateral of the other Party without the owning Party's prior written consent.

The Supplier warrants and undertakes to Wellcome that: i) ii) iii) the manufacture, creation, supply and use of the Deliverables will not in any way constitute an infringement or other violation of any IP Rights of any third party; it owns or has obtained valid licences of all IP Rights which are necessary to the performance of any of its obligations under the Agreement; the Foreground Intellectual Property created by the Supplier (including any subcontractors) will be original and has not and will not be licensed or assigned to any third party, save as requested or approved by Wellcome in writing; and iv) it shall assign or grant a licence to use, as the case may be, to Wellcome upon request, all such rights as it may

have under any third party agreement (where applicable) as may be necessary for Wellcome's use of the Deliverables.

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.

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	%
How well the proposal meets the RFP specification.	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. 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: Rebecca Giles
Pronouns: She/her
Role: Procurement Officer
Email: RFP@wellcome.org