

Mental Health Award: Using physical activity and circadian-based interventions to reduce anxiety and depression in young people

This award will fund mechanistically informed trials of interventions for anxiety and depression in young people aged 10-18 years. Successful teams will build on existing mechanistic evidence to develop more precise and effective early interventions that have the potential to scale.

Scheme at a glance

Lead applicant career stage:

Established researcher

Administering organisation location:

Anywhere in the world (apart from mainland China)

Frequency:

One-off

Funding amount:

£1-4 million per grant

We expect to make 5-10 awards in this highly competitive funding call.

Funding duration:

3-4 years

Coapplicants:

Required

Upcoming application stage

Webinar: 28 April 2026, 11:00 BST

Application process timeline

Who can apply

You can apply to this call if you are a team of researchers:

- from any relevant discipline. We consider a broad range of disciplines to be relevant to mental health science, including but not limited to those listed in [our principles of mental health funding](#)
- from [eligible organisations](#)
- based anywhere in the world ([apart from mainland China](#)).

We encourage applications from teams that:

- are [diverse](#) and interdisciplinary, with collaborations covering multiple areas of expertise
- include researchers at any stage of their career
- include those who are new to the field of mental health science.

Your experience



The team

The team must:

- Include applicants (either lead or coapplicants) with expertise in mental health science, as well as in the science of circadian systems and/or physical activity which is relevant to the proposed work.
- Include a [clinical trials specialist](#), either as a coapplicant or collaborator.
- Demonstrate the necessary expertise, technical skills and organisational support to deliver the proposed research, including relevant expertise in mechanistic study design. We are particularly seeking teams with multidisciplinary expertise.
- Include either a lead applicant or coapplicant(s) based in each country where the research will take place.
- Demonstrate how they will approach ethical and equitable partnerships between team members. This should include the team's approach to partnerships and the equitable allocation of funds and resources between [low- or middle-income country](#) and high-income country researchers if the team includes both.
- Have a pre-existing relationship with the target population they want to study.

- Be of an appropriate size for the proposed research. Teams must consist of at least three applicants (the lead applicant and two coapplicants) and must not exceed eight applicants (the lead applicant and seven coapplicants). Collaborators are not applicants and there is no limit on the number of collaborators.
 - Actively promote and foster a **diverse, inclusive and supportive environment**.
 - Include lived experience expertise of anxiety and depression. This can be as lead applicants, coapplicants, collaborators or advisory group members, and you must provide a clear rationale for their inclusion or exclusion at each stage. The overall team should include the skills needed to effectively involve and collaborate with lived experience experts.
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Lead applicant

The lead applicant must:

- Have the experience needed to drive and lead a collaborative, large scale research project and the necessary support structures in place to enable this.
- Have experience of, or demonstrate commitment to, effectively leading a team that embeds lived experience expertise, as relevant to the research project.
- Have a permanent, open-ended or long-term rolling contract, or the guarantee of one, for the duration of the award. The contract should not be conditional on receiving this award. Lead applicants with less than three years remaining on their contract at the point of application must have secured their next position at an eligible organisation and provide a letter of support from them.
- Be based at an eligible organisation that can sign up to our **grant conditions**.

There can only be one lead applicant on applications to this call. Wellcome cannot make awards to teams with co-lead applicants.

Read more about when lead applicants can request salary costs, and what other costs can be covered, in the 'Research costs we'll cover' section of this page.

Coapplicants

Coapplicants can be based at the same or different organisations as other applicants, including in different countries. They can be at any career stage and come from any relevant discipline.

Coapplicants:

- Must be essential for the delivery of the project and make a significant contribution, for example in designing the proposed research and lead a specific component of the project.
- Must demonstrate the team's commitment to effectively embed lived experience expertise, as relevant to the research project.

- Must be based at an eligible organisation that can sign up to our [grant conditions](#). This can include a sole trader or self-employed person's business.
- Do not need to have a permanent, open-ended or long-term rolling contract

Read more about when coapplicants can request salary, and what other costs can be covered, in the 'Research costs we'll cover' section of this page.

Collaborators

You can involve collaborators in your application and award.

Collaborators are distinct from coapplicants. Collaborators support the delivery of the project but don't lead on a specific component of the research. For example, collaborators could support by:

- sharing facilities
- providing access to tools or resources such as datasets or clinical records
- providing access to youth organisations led by or working in collaboration with lived experience experts
- providing expertise on working in different countries
- sharing subject-specific knowledge and guidance, for example expertise on statistical analysis or measurement of specific variables

Collaborators do not have to meet eligibility requirements.

Collaborators cannot receive a salary or compensation for the time spent on the proposed project. You can request costs to cover their expenses, for example for their grant-related travel and the costs associated with providing the agreed input into the research, including the materials and consumables involved. These should be costs directly related to the research.

Read about the different [applicant roles at Wellcome](#).

If you've spent time away from research

You can apply for this award if you have spent time away from research (for example, for a career break, parental leave or long-term sick leave). We will take this into consideration during the review of your application.

Retirement

If you have retired, you must [contact us before applying](#). You must have a guarantee of space from your administering organisation for the duration of the award.

Working part-time

Lead and coapplicants can be part-time. Part-time work should be compatible with delivering the project successfully.

Who can't apply

You should not apply for this call if:

- You intend to carry out activities which involve the transfer of funds into mainland China
- You cannot demonstrate that you can dedicate enough time and resources to the project, if funded
- You are already an applicant on two applications for this funding call:
 - You can only be a lead applicant on one application and a coapplicant on another one
 - You can be a coapplicant on two applications

You must demonstrate that you have sufficient capacity for both projects if funded. The applications should be for different projects with no overlap of activities.

- You already have applied for, or hold, the maximum number of Wellcome awards as a lead applicant.

Find out how many Wellcome awards you can apply for, or hold, at one time.

Check what kinds of research projects aren't right for this scheme.

Is your organisation right for this call?

The administering organisation is where the lead applicant is based. It is responsible for submitting your final application to Wellcome and managing the finances of the grant if it is awarded.

The administering organisation must be able to sign up to Wellcome's grant conditions.

Where your administering organisation is based

The administering organisation can be based anywhere in the world apart from mainland China.

The administering organisation must be a not-for-profit and can be a:

- higher education institution

- research institute
- healthcare organisation
- non-governmental organisation
- charity
- social enterprise

Commercial organisations are not eligible to apply as administering organisations for this call. However, coapplicants and collaborators can be based at commercial organisations.

Multilateral organisations may be eligible to apply to this funding call. Please **contact us** to discuss further. When contacting us, please confirm whether your organisation can accept our **grant conditions**. If your organisation is confirmed as eligible, proposals must meet all funding call requirements, including submission of an application form.

Collaboration agreements

If the application involves a collaboration or partnership between multiple organisations, the partners must enter into a suitable collaboration agreement, including provisions that cover:

- confidentiality
- publication rights
- access to background intellectual property
- ownership of foreground intellectual property
- arrangements for the protection, management and exploitation of foreground intellectual property.

The lead applicant's administering organisation is required under our **grant conditions** to own all the foreground intellectual property arising from the project and to take the lead in any commercialisation activity. For guidance, read **Wellcome's intellectual property policy**.

Your research environment

Wellcome believes that a diversity of people and expertise leads to richer understanding and more impactful discoveries. Excellent research happens in environments where people from all backgrounds are treated with respect, are supported and enabled to thrive.

Our definition of a research environment is not limited to the quality of the infrastructure but also considers the culture and behaviours that create excellent research practice. This includes research that is inclusive in design and practice, ethical and engaged with relevant community stakeholders, as well as open and transparent.

Read guidance on how to talk about research environment in your application.

Is your research right for this call?

What your research proposal must include

Mental health challenges hold back millions of young people. One-third of individuals experience the onset of a mental health disorder before age 14 and almost half before 18. With this Mental Health Award, we will fund interventions for young people in the UK and Africa that have the potential to scale, while deepening our mechanistic understanding of how and why they work. Specifically, we want to fund projects that integrate circadian rhythms and/or physical activity, two key active ingredients in the development and treatment of mental health problems.

Your research proposal must:

1. Include a circadian-based and/or physical activity intervention for anxiety and/or depression in young people in the UK and/or Africa

Your proposal must:

- propose a **circadian-based and/or physical activity intervention**
- focus on early intervention for **anxiety and/or depression**
- target young people aged **10-18 years at risk of or experiencing anxiety and/or depression**
- focus on a **population in the UK and/or Africa**
- provide **existing evidence** for the proposed intervention

Circadian-based and physical activity interventions

Interventions must target circadian rhythms (such as, but not limited to, sleep timing, sleep quality and daily light exposure) and/or physical activity (such as, but not limited to, aerobic exercise, dance classes, walking programmes and app-based exercise programmes).

Interventions may primarily address either areas or combine both, but **must measure both circadian rhythms and physical activity across the full 24-hour cycle.**

In scope are any approaches that aim to enhance mental health by strengthening healthy sleeping patterns, improving biological rhythms, increasing movement or exercise or supporting daily routines that regulate energy, alertness and physiological health.

Examples of in-scope approaches include (but are not limited to):

- supporting healthy sleep timing, duration, regularity or hygiene
- modifying light exposure, daily routines or environmental cues that influence circadian regulation

- increasing physical activity, movement or exercise in developmentally appropriate and accessible ways
- combined approaches that integrate sleep and activity

Interventions may be delivered:

- **through any mode**, including face-to-face, telehealth, mobile apps, wearables and online platforms
- **using any method**, such as individual coaching, group programmes, school-based activities, community initiatives, peer-led approaches or policy level changes that influence daily routines or access to movement
- **in any setting**, for example, schools, community organisations, homes, healthcare services, digital environments or outdoor spaces
- **in combination with elements of other types of interventions**, such as psychological, social, pharmacological or digital interventions.

Applicants must provide a clear rationale and **evidence for their approach**, describe the mechanisms through which the intervention is expected to improve mental health outcomes and justify suitability for the target population and age range.

Mental health conditions in scope

Proposals must focus on a population at risk of or experiencing anxiety and/or depression in the UK or Africa.

This includes:

- any anxiety disorder (including obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder)
- any mood disorders (including depressive disorders and bipolar disorders)

Proposals may focus on specific symptoms, including transdiagnostic symptoms that cut across traditional diagnostic boundaries and are shared by multiple disorders, (e.g. internalising symptoms). This approach allows for innovative pathways to understanding and treating mental health conditions.

While we do not prescribe any specific diagnostic or classification system, applicants are expected to employ a framework and measurement approach aligned with their research aims. A clear rationale for the chosen approach must be provided.

Age range in scope

We will consider interventions focused on young people aged between 10 and 18 years (inclusive).

Applicants must clearly justify the selected age range and explain why their proposed intervention is developmentally appropriate and well-suited to the needs, abilities and context of that age group.

Geographic focus

Interventions must take place in the UK and/or Africa, and applicants must justify their proposed geographic focus. Other aspects of the project, such as the design and data analysis, can take place elsewhere.

You will not be at an advantage by including multiple countries; you may do so, but you must provide a clear rationale for each site included.

Where interventions are being tested for the first time in specific populations or cultural contexts, appropriate cultural adaptation is required. Applicants should specify the settings or countries in which adaptation will occur and describe how these adaptations will be undertaken while preserving the proposed mechanisms of the intervention.

Supporting evidence

Proposals must be hypothesis-driven and demonstrate existing evidence for the proposed intervention.

Applicants may reference existing literature or provide preliminary data demonstrating that the proposed intervention has the potential to either meaningfully reduce clinical symptoms or prevent the emergence of clinical symptoms in the target population. There must be at least some evidence in clinical or at-risk populations. This may include evidence of preliminary efficacy, acceptability and feasibility supported by a theoretical rationale for how the intervention could impact on symptoms. Evidence can come from different geographical settings, cultural contexts or age groups outside of 10-18 years.

Applicants must provide a clear rationale explaining why this evidence is expected to translate effectively to their chosen population. The strength, relevance and coherence of the existing evidence base will form part of the evaluation criteria.

2. Outline plans for the mechanistic study

Proposals must outline a design capable of demonstrating intervention efficacy while also testing the mechanisms that drive the therapeutic effects.

Proposals must:

- outline a **well-powered randomised controlled trial or an equivalently rigorous causal design** (for example: experimental medicine studies, structural causal models, longitudinal causal mediation models)
- investigate hypothesised mechanisms of efficacy (can be biological, psychological, environmental and/or social) and explain how the main components of the intervention are expected to produce therapeutic effects

- specify how these mechanisms will be measured and analysed (for example: robust control conditions, mediators, moderators, temporal sequencing)

Where feasible, proposals should include:

- the use of wearables or any other passive sensing technology for 24-hour sleep and activity monitoring
 - other objective measures such as salivary cortisol or melatonin, or temporal biomarkers
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3. Demonstrate pathways to implementation

Proposals must demonstrate early thinking about how the intervention could be implemented, scaled and adapted for real-world use, recognising that long-term impact depends on feasibility beyond controlled research settings.

By the end of the award, where appropriate, interventions should be ready for a definitive effectiveness trial. Applicants must outline their initial plans for implementation, including potential delivery routes, settings and partnerships. A dedicated implementation work package is required, with the final year focused on refining and consolidating these plans. Pathways to implementation should be outlined in the 'Define the impact you expect to deliver from this project' section of the application form.

4. Include plans for lived experience involvement

Proposals must involve lived experience expertise of anxiety and/or depression, relevant to your research topic. Involvement may include, but is not limited to:

- lead applicants
- expert advisors
- coapplicants
- collaborators
- advisory group members
- collaboration with established youth organisations

Lived experience experts should be engaged as colleagues who use their knowledge and expertise to inform the strategic direction, governance, design and delivery of the research. They must be involved in appropriate and ethical ways to inform multiple aspects and stages of the research project including the conception, planning, design, delivery and dissemination of the project unless there is a clear justification for their exclusion. Their contribution should not be limited to recruitment and retention strategies.

As projects funded under this call will focus on children and young people, applicants are expected to include clear plans for the meaningful involvement of 10–18-year-olds. Plans should demonstrate steps taken to ensure involvement activities are suitably accessible for children and young people.

Additionally, applicants may wish to consider whether the knowledge, insights and expertise of parents/carers can add value **in addition to** children and young people alone. The involvement of parents and carers should complement, not replace, the perspectives of young people themselves.

[Read more about our approach to involving Lived Experience expertise.](#)

5. Include one or more of our recommended common measures

Proposals must use, as a minimum, **one or more of our recommended common measures** in the collection of new data. Researchers may also use as many additional measures as they wish, and we do not require that these common measures be the primary outcome measures.

In addition to including one or more recommended common measures, proposals should consider including measures of functioning if appropriate. This includes, but is not limited to:

- engagement in education or work
 - peer and family relationships
 - independence in daily life
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What your research proposal must not include

Your research proposal must not:

- Primarily target neurodevelopmental conditions, neurodegenerative diseases, or mental health disorders and symptoms outside of the broad categories of anxiety and depression.
- Include an intervention delivered outside of the UK or Africa.
- Focus solely on general wellbeing and non-clinical anxiety and depression rather than validated mental health outcomes or symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- Focus on exploratory or curiosity-driven mechanistic research that is not directly relevant to the scope of the call.

- Include an intervention that:
 - Does not involve physical activity or circadian rhythms as the primary intervention component.
 - Lacks existing evidence.
 - Is intended for universal/primary prevention.
 - Solely focuses on diagnosis, prognosis or monitoring of symptoms. These may be an additional focus where the primary focus of the intervention is symptom reduction.

[Read about what research we fund in mental health.](#)

How applications are assessed

All applications will be evaluated using the same weighted assessment criteria.

Essential criteria and weightings

There are four weighted assessment criteria:

1. **Intervention and proposed methodology (40%)**
2. **Suitability and expertise of the team (20%)**
3. **Suitability of the research location and approach to research environment (20%)**
4. **Lived experience involvement (20%)**

1. Intervention and proposed methodology (40%)

Potential and impact

- The proposed research will advance early intervention for depression and/or anxiety in young people.
- The intervention has strong potential to be implemented, scaled and adapted for real world use.

Rationale and strength of evidence

- There is a strong rationale for the proposed intervention and the focus on the proposed population, age range and mental health condition(s) or symptom(s).
- The supporting evidence demonstrates that the intervention has the potential to produce meaningful clinical or preventative effects in the intended population and credible proposed mechanism(s) of action.

Strength of methodology

- The proposed study design is rigorous, well-controlled, appropriately powered and well-matched to the research aims. The chosen approach is clearly justified and capable of demonstrating intervention efficacy.
- The proposal outlines a clear plan to investigate hypothesised mechanisms of efficacy, including how intervention components are expected to produce therapeutic effects across biological, psychological, environmental and/or social pathways.
- The measurement strategy for mechanisms is robust and capable of demonstrating causality. Objective measures are incorporated where feasible and justified.
- The project is well-designed and feasible using the resources and timelines proposed.
- The key risks to delivering the proposal and plans to adopt risk-reducing steps to overcome them have been identified.
- If the project includes research on underrepresented populations, the study design or analysis plan includes approaches to mitigate biases that might disproportionately impact these populations.

2. Suitability and expertise of the team (20%)

The project features an integrated, collaborative plan of work, developed by a team that includes those with the appropriate research expertise.

The team:

- Has the necessary expertise and technical skills, as well as the appropriate variety of disciplines and perspectives, to deliver the proposed project. At a minimum we expect the team to include **relevant expertise in clinical trials**, mental health science as well as the science of circadian systems and/or physical activity which is relevant to the proposed work.
- Includes lived experience experts and/or possesses the skills to effectively involve and collaborate with people with lived experience of anxiety and/or depression.
- Has appropriate management plans in place, describing the equitable organisation and day-to-day management of the collaboration.
- Has a pre-existing relationship with the target population they are studying.
- Has contributed towards and is committed to fostering a positive and inclusive research environment, which demonstrates a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

The lead applicant has (appropriate to their career stage):

- Research experience relevant to the project, as shown through research outputs and/or preliminary data.

- The experience needed to drive and lead a collaborative, large-scale research project and/or the necessary support structures in place to enable this.
- Experience of people and research management.

The coapplicants:

- Have the expertise, time and resources needed to deliver the project, with their contribution to the project being significant and justified.

3. Suitability of the research location and approach to research environment (20%)

Research location

- There is a clear rationale for each geographic site included; multiple sites should only be included where relevant and justified.
- The applicants have access to the necessary research infrastructure.

Research environment

- The application provides a detailed description of how the team will foster a positive and inclusive research culture. This could include, but is not limited to, information about:
 - career development
 - research practices
 - leadership
 - team composition and partnership
 - appropriate safeguarding measures for team members and collaborators, including people with lived experience
- There is a clear plan on how to manage an integrated collaborative project.

Ethical, open, equitable and engaged research conduct

- There is an implementation plan with details about appropriate oversight, governance, monitoring, standard operating procedures and methods for course correction (as needed).
- The team has outlined a detailed description of a suitable outputs management plan.
- There is sufficient information about how the research outputs will be made available to those who need them (for example, policymakers, communities and industry) and in which formats.
- The proposal has details about the relevant ethical, social and cultural implications of the proposed work, and how the study team plans to manage these issues, both in the conduct and oversight of the study and in the communication of its findings.

4. Lived experience involvement (20%)

- People with lived experience are meaningfully involved at multiple stages, including the conception, planning, design, delivery and dissemination of the project unless there is a clear justification for their exclusion. You can access guidance on [embedding lived experience expertise in your research](#).
- Lived experience perspectives are represented across the project, including in leadership and governance roles.
- Lived experience experts have relevant experience and expertise applicable to the research, including being representative of the research location.
- Plans demonstrate clear steps taken to ensure involvement activities are suitably accessible and inclusive for children and young people with lived experience.
- The intervention is acceptable to and aligned with the priorities of the young people it will affect.
- People with lived experience are compensated appropriately for their time.

Research costs we'll cover

staff

Lead applicant

You must contribute at least 10% of your research time to the award in order to claim a contribution to your salary.

Lead applicants based outside of the UK or Republic of Ireland

You can ask for a contribution to your salary if you work for a:

- higher education institute
- research institute
- healthcare organisation
- charity
- non-governmental organisation
- social enterprise

If you work for a higher education institute, research institute, or healthcare organisation, we will only pay your salary if you hold a permanent, open-ended or long-term rolling contract that states that you must get your salary from external grant funding. Your administering organisation must confirm:

- that you must get salary recovery from external grant funding
- they will guarantee to provide salary support, including any salary not covered by Wellcome, if you cannot get it from other sources for the period of time that you will be working on the grant

In all cases, the amount we pay will be proportionate to the time you contribute to the award. For example, if you contribute 30% of your time to the award we will fund 30% of your salary.

Coapplicants

Coapplicants must contribute at least 10% of their research time to the award in order to claim a contribution to their salary.

Coapplicants employed by higher education institutes, research institutes or healthcare organisations

1. Coapplicants with permanent, open-ended or long-term rolling contracts

Coapplicants with these contract types can ask for a contribution to their salary if their employment contract states that they must get their salary from external grant funding.

The amount we pay will be proportionate to the time they contribute to the award, for example if they contribute 30% of their time to the award we will fund 30% of their salary.

The coapplicant's employing organisation must confirm:

- that they must get salary recovery from external grant funding
- they will guarantee to provide salary support, including any salary costs not covered by Wellcome, for the period of time that the person will be working on the grant

2. Coapplicants who don't have permanent, open ended or long-term rolling contracts

Coapplicants without a permanent, open ended or long-term rolling contract can request salary depending on the amount of their time they will spend on the grant:

- Less than 80% of coapplicant's time on the grant: they can request salary proportionate to the time they will spend on the grant (minimum 10% research time). Their organisation must guarantee space and salary support if they cannot get it from other sources for the period of time they are working on the grant. Their post cannot be dependent on the application being successful.
- 80% or more of coapplicant's time on the grant: they can ask for their full salary. Their organisation does not have to guarantee salary support if salary cannot be obtained from other sources for the period of time they are working on the grant. The post can be dependent on the application being successful.
- If the coapplicants are employed on the award as research assistants and they are to spend 100% of their time on the award, their post does not need to be underwritten by the administering organisation and can be dependent on the application being successful.

Alternatively, coapplicants may get their salary through employment on another grant.

Coapplicants employed by charities, social enterprises, non-governmental organisations or commercial organisations

Coapplicants can ask for salary if they are employed by these organisations. Coapplicants must contribute at least 10% of their research time to the award. The amount we pay will be proportionate to the time they will contribute to the award. Their employment contract does not need to state that they must get their salary from external grant funding.

Staff working on your programme

We will cover the salary costs of all staff, full or part-time, who will work on your grant.

Staff members may include:

- research assistants or technicians employed on your grant
- experts with lived experience
- specialist service staff and technical experts, for example in environmental sustainability, data analysis, fieldwork and clinical studies
- project manager, if you have multiple applicants on your programme
- support if you or a member of staff employed on your grant is disabled or has a long-term health condition

Teaching buyout

Humanities and social science researchers can ask for funds for research or teaching replacement to cover the cost of a temporary replacement lecturer. They must retain at least a 10% commitment to teaching.

Costs:

- can cover up to 33% FTE of your contracted time
- are usually for a person at a more junior level than the postholder
- can be spread across the full period of the grant

Researchers who already get buyout costs from another grant (funded by Wellcome or elsewhere) can ask us for this cost, but only for the period of time on the award when they won't receive buyout costs from another grant.

Researchers must provide a letter from their employing organisation, confirming that their contract includes a teaching commitment. They should include this in the grant application.

PhD/Research Masters fees

We do not provide studentships on this award. But if applicants employ research staff, including technicians, on the grant they can ask for the costs to cover their PhD/Research Masters fees. Each applicant can ask for fees for up to two research staff in total on the grant, to a maximum of eight per team. Research staff should be hired to undertake specific research activities on the grant and we will cover the fees for their PhD/Research Masters studies.

Early-career applicants (up to and including holders of early-career fellowships) may not supervise a PhD student alone but can be a co-supervisor with a mid-career or established colleague. If fees are not requested at the application stage, grant funds cannot be repurposed for them during the award.

Research staff should be defined as staff members and incur a lower fee than the student rate. Where organisations do not have a staff rate, they may request fees at the home student rate. If no other rate is available, they may request the international student rate.

How to cost salaries for research staff

Staff salaries should be appropriate to skills, responsibilities and expertise. Organisations should use their salary scales to calculate these costs, which should include:

- basic salary
- employer's contributions, including any statutory obligations (for example, National Insurance contributions if you're based in the UK) and pension scheme costs
- Apprentice Levy charges for UK-based salaries

- any incremental progression up the salary scale
- locally recognised allowances such as London allowance

You should allow for salary pay awards during Year 1. If the pay award is not yet known, applicants should use the International Monetary Fund inflation rate, selecting the 'inflation, average consumer price' option as indicator.

From Year 2 onwards, you should use your organisation's current pay rates. We'll provide a separate inflation allowance for salary inflation costs.

Read about the [responsibilities of grantholders and organisations we fund](#).

Visa and work permit costs

If you have named people on your grant whose salaries will be funded by Wellcome, you can ask for visa or work permit costs to help them take up their posts at the host organisation. You can also ask for:

- visa costs for the person's partner and dependent children
 - essential associated costs, such as travel to attend appointments at a visa application centre or embassy, and essential English language tests
 - Immigration Health Surcharge costs for the person, their partner and dependent children if they will be in the UK for six months or more.
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Disability-related adjustment support

If you or a member of staff working on your grant is disabled or has a long-term health condition, you can ask for adjustment support to help you carry out your project.

Costs can include, but are not limited to:

- additional costs for staff to help with day-to-day activities related to your project
- assistive technology to help use computers, research equipment or materials – for example, text to audio software
- care costs for assistance animals if you need to travel.

We will not pay for capital or building costs, such as access ramps.

You can ask for these costs if your government and/or employer:

- does not cover any of the costs
- only covers some of the costs (if they do, we will only meet the shortfall).

The costs we provide must not replace the support you may get from the government or your organisation, who are responsible for providing these costs.

If you don't know what these costs are now, you can ask for them after we've awarded your grant.

materials and consumables

We will pay for the materials and consumables you need to carry out your project, including:

- laboratory chemicals and materials (for example reagents, isotopes, peptides, enzymes, antibodies, gases, proteins, cell/tissue/bacterial culture, plasticware and glassware)
- project-specific personal protective equipment (PPE) that is above the standard expected for the setting
- printing associated with fieldwork and empirical research
- associated charges for shipping, delivery and freight.

We will provide funds if you need to outsource specialised elements of the project to organisations that are not already involved as applicants or collaborators, on a fee-for-service basis. This work can include:

- synthesising compounds or reagents
- building medical devices
- preclinical studies, such as toxicology or pharmacology studies
- undertaking large scale data analysis

Where multiple Contract Research Organisations are involved in a project, use a separate line item to request costs relating to each one.

Contract research organisations must be able to sign up to our grant conditions.

access charges

You can ask for the cost of access to shared equipment, facilities or services if they're essential to your project.

These may include materials and consumables, plus a proportion of:

- maintenance and service contracts
- staff time costs for dedicated technical staff employed to operate the equipment or facility

We don't cover the costs of:

- estates and utilities
- depreciation or insurance
- other staff, for example, contributions towards departmental technical, administrative and management staff time

We do cover these costs if related to animal housing facilities.

If the facilities or equipment were paid for by a Wellcome grant, you can only ask for access charges if:

- the grant has ended
 - any support for running costs and maintenance contracts has ended
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equipment

Equipment purchase

You can ask for the equipment you need to carry out your project where:

- it is not available at your administering organisation or through collaborations, and
- you will be the main user, with priority access to it. At least 50% of the use must be for Wellcome-funded activities. This can include small multi-use pieces of equipment such as desktop microscopes or shakers.

Costs may include purchase, delivery, installation, maintenance and training, where necessary.

You can purchase second-hand equipment if it is more environmentally sustainable to do so.

We will cover VAT and import duties if:

- the usual UK exemptions on equipment used for medical research don't apply
- you're applying from a non-UK organisation, and you can show these costs can't be recovered

Equipment maintenance

We will cover maintenance costs for equipment that is:

- funded by us or another source
- essential to the proposed project
- five years old, or will become five years old during the lifetime of the grant
- cost effective and environmentally sustainable to keep maintaining it

Equipment maintenance can be requested for small pieces of equipment with multiple users if at least 50% of the use is for Wellcome-funded activities, and there is no mechanism in place to recoup these costs through access charges.

We will not provide maintenance support where there is a mechanism in place to recoup costs through access charges for all other equipment.

Computer equipment

We will cover the cost of:

- one personal computer or laptop per person working on the grant. The cost should be reasonable, in line with market rates, and justified in the context of the research.
- software, software licences and other recurring computing costs linked to the project
- Electronic Research Notebooks (ERN) / Electronic Lab Notebook (ELN) software on a per user, per year basis for the duration of a Wellcome project and for Electronic Research Notebook or Electronic Lab Notebook software approved for use by your organisation. You cannot claim costs for Electronic Research Notebook or Electronic Lab Notebook hardware or organisation-wide Electronic Research Notebook or Electronic Lab Notebook software beyond a per user, per year basis on your project.

We won't pay for:

- significantly expensive items, unless you can justify them
- installation or training costs

animals

If your organisation uses full economic costing methodology:

You can ask for funds to buy animals if they are essential to your project. We will also fund the charge-out rates for animal house facilities. These costs include:

- running costs (including animal maintenance, any experimental procedures, licences and relevant staff training)
- appropriate estates costs
- cage and equipment depreciation costs, but not building depreciation costs

If the research will be carried out in the UK and use macaques, they must be sourced from the **MRC Centre for Macaques**.

We may not pay the full charge-out rate for an animal house facility if we've provided significant funding towards the infrastructure and/or core support of the facility.

If your organisation does not use full economic costing methodology:

You can ask for funds to cover:

- the cost of buying and transporting animals
- running costs (including animal maintenance, any experimental procedures, licences and relevant staff training)
- staff costs, for example, contributions towards the salaries of animal house technicians
- equipment maintenance
- housing equipment specific to the project
- microbiological monitoring
- waste disposal
- personal and project licences
- specific and relevant training and environmental enrichment costs

In these cases we will not provide:

- estates costs
 - cage or building depreciation costs
-

clinical research costs

If you need to carry out clinical research in the UK using NHS patients or facilities, we will cover some of the research costs.

Annex A of the **guidelines for attributing the costs of health and social care research and development (AcoRD)** sets out the costs we cover in the UK, and which costs should be funded through the Department of Health and Social Care in England, or its equivalent in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. If you're based in the Republic of Ireland, we expect you to adhere to the spirit of these principles.

If your proposal involves clinical research using NHS resources, **check if you need to upload a SoECAT form** with your application.

fieldwork expenses

Fieldwork expenses can include:

- survey and data collection, including communication and data collection services and any associated costs such as essential field materials, travel costs and language translation services

- the purchase, hire and running costs of vehicles dedicated to your project
- expenses for subjects and volunteers, including the recruitment of participants, their participatory fees and travel costs
- statistical analysis

You can ask for other fieldwork costs that aren't listed here. You'll need to justify them.

travel and subsistence

You can ask for these costs if you are applying from a:

- higher education institution
- research institute
- healthcare organisation
- charity, social enterprise or non-governmental research organisation
- small company

Environmentally conscious travel

Travel on grants should be done in an environmentally conscious way, in line with our **environmental sustainability funding policy**. You should consider if you could meet your trip's objectives using video conferencing, hybrid meetings or virtual attendance.

Where travel is necessary, you can ask for:

- the cost of low carbon travel where practical, even if it's more expensive (for example travelling by train instead of flying)
- economy flights when train journeys are over 10 hours, or not possible due to availability, safety, or visa permit reasons, or in exceptional circumstances such as a disability, long-term health condition or caring requirements necessitating faster travel. We will not pay for business class flights.
- project-related resources or activities that provide an alternative to travel, such as video conferencing, communication and file-sharing software
- costs to mitigate the carbon emissions of the essential travel by purchasing accredited carbon credits. If carbon mitigation for travel is not part of your organisational sustainability strategy, you can ask us for a similar level of support for other sustainability initiatives. Your organisation must **contact us for approval** before submitting your application.

We won't pay for the core infrastructure that your administering organisation should provide, unless you're eligible to ask for these costs under our overheads policy. Examples of these costs include:

- organisation-wide video conferencing packages
- high-speed broadband
- HD screens

Conference attendance

You can ask for a contribution towards the costs of attending scientific and academic meetings and conferences, including travel, accommodation, and registration fees. The limits are:

- Lead applicant – £2,000 a year
- Coapplicants – £2,000 each a year
- Research and technical staff employed on your grant – £1,000 each a year

You can ask for the cost of accredited carbon credits to mitigate the emissions from conference travel in addition to these limits.

We provide costs to cover caring responsibilities for any staff employed on your grant to attend a conference. This includes childcare and any other caring responsibility they have. We will pay these if:

- Wellcome is providing the salary
- the conference is directly related to the research
- the caring costs are over and above what they would normally pay for care
- the conference organiser and their employing organisation are unable to cover the costs

You can ask for up to £1,000 per person for each conference.

Other essential travel

You can ask for travel and subsistence costs for collaborative visits for you, any coapplicants and any staff employed on your grant to visit collaborators (or for them to visit you), and for other essential visits and stays, for example to facilities, to host organisations, for sample collection and for field work. You'll need to justify each visit and its duration.

You can request the following costs.

Partners and dependents travelling with you

If you will be travelling overseas and you will be away more than 12 months, we will provide travel costs for your partner and any dependants if they are travelling with you. Refer to the overseas allowances section for more information.

We may provide these costs for shorter trips if you can justify why your partner and dependents must travel with you.

We define your partner as the person:

- you're married to
- you're not married to but with whom you've been in a relationship for at least a year

and

- you live with at the same permanent address and share some form of joint financial commitment with, such as a mortgage.

Outward and return travel

Where travel is necessary, we expect people to travel by train for journeys of end-to-end travel time of 10 hours or less. We will pay for flights if:

- a train route is not available
- there are concerns over personal safety if travelling by train
- there are visa/permit issues
- the person travelling requires faster travel, for example due to having a disability or long term health condition, or caring responsibilities
- the end-to-end journey time is more than 10 hours.

We will not pay for business class flights.

You can ask for costs to mitigate the carbon emissions of the journeys you make on the grant.

Accommodation and subsistence costs

Up to one month

If you're away for up to one month you can ask for subsistence costs. These include accommodation, meals and incidentals (for example, refreshments or newspapers).

If your employing organisation has a subsistence policy, use their rates.

If your employing organisation doesn't have a subsistence policy, use the **HMRC rates**.

1 to 12 months

If you're away for more than one month and up to 12 months, we will pay reasonable rental costs only, including aparthotels. You should discuss appropriate rates with the administering

and employing organisations, or Wellcome, as needed. We expect you to choose the most economical options, booked in advance where possible.

If you're from a **low- or middle- income country** and will be working in a high-income country for more than one month and up to 12 months, you can also ask for up to £10 a day to cover extra costs, such as transport.

More than 12 months

If you're away for more than 12 months, we will pay the costs of your housing. Review our overseas allowances for more details on what we may cover.

Baggage and freight shipping allowance

Up to 12 months

If you are away for up to 12 months, you can ask for up to 80 kg of additional baggage or unaccompanied airline freight for your outward and return journeys.

More than 12 months

If you are away for more than 12 months, you can ask for the costs of shipping your personal items at the beginning and end of your overseas work.

We will pay the full cost of transporting:

- half a standard shipping container if you're travelling alone
 - a whole standard shipping container (20 ft) if you're travelling with a partner and/or dependants
-

Medical and travel insurance

If you are travelling outside of your home country we will pay the cost of your medical insurance and travel insurance. Medical insurance should only be requested for the duration of your trip where you will be unable to access state healthcare, if appropriate.

We don't pay medical insurance for trips to the UK or Republic of Ireland. For UK trips of up to six months you should take out travel insurance that covers medical expenses. If you are staying in the UK for more than six months we will cover the cost of the Immigration Health Surcharge instead of medical insurance. Check 'visas and vaccinations' for more information.

If you will be working in a **low- or middle-income country** we will also cover the cost of emergency evacuation cover.

Visas and vaccinations

We will pay the costs of visas, vaccinations and anti-malaria treatment. This includes the cost to access the healthcare system in your destination country where these are a mandatory

requirement of your immigration application (such as the Immigration Health Surcharge in the UK).

If you are already in the country you will be working in, visa costs may be taxable. Wellcome will cover any tax related to these costs.

Housing security

If you will be based in a **low- or middle-income country** for more than one month, and it is necessary, you can ask for this.

Costs can include guards, panic buttons and alarms. You should ask your employing organisation for advice on the level of security you need.

Overseas research

If you or any research staff employed on your grant will be doing research away from your home organisation, we'll help with the additional costs of working on the project overseas. Read the 'Overseas allowances' section for details.

overseas allowances

You can ask for these costs if you are applying from a:

- higher education institution
- research institute
- healthcare organisation
- charity, social enterprise or non-governmental research organisation
- small company

If you or any staff employed on your grant will be spending more than 12 months in another country, we'll help you with the additional costs of working on the project overseas.

These costs are in addition to the standard travel and subsistence costs.

Our overseas allowances are:

- a contribution towards the personal cost of carrying out research overseas, to ensure that you are not disadvantaged
- provided on the assumption that you'll be paying income tax, either in your home country, or the country you will be working in (your personal tax is your responsibility)
- provided on the understanding that you or your partner will not receive equivalent allowances from elsewhere

Partners and dependants travelling with you

If you will be away more than 12 months, we will provide these allowances for your partner and any dependants if they are travelling with you.

We define your partner as the person:

- you're married to
- you're not married to but with whom you've been in a relationship for at least a year

and

- you live with at the same permanent address and share some form of joint financial commitment with, such as a mortgage.

Accommodation and subsistence

We will pay the costs of your housing. You should discuss your needs with your administering and host organisations.

The allowance we provide will be based on family and business need. We will set the maximum allowance we pay for each location. This will be based on current market data or, where data is unavailable, in consultation with your administering organisation, using equivalent market rates. If you need help calculating the costs please **contact us**.

We will cover the direct expenses you have to pay to find and rent a home. We will not cover the cost of utilities or any refurbishment.

If you will be living in a home you own in your destination country, we will not pay accommodation costs.

Education

Local nursery or school fees

You can ask for these costs if you are in a location where there isn't free local education of the same standard as in your home country.

Costs include:

- local nursery school fees up to a maximum of 30 hours a week for 3- to 4-year-olds
- local junior or secondary school fees, up to the end of secondary school education

Local international school fees

You can ask for these costs if local schools do not provide the same standard of education as in your home country. We will only pay the published termly school fees.

We will not cover the costs of:

- extracurricular activities, including field trips
- other extras including, but not limited to, uniforms, sports kit and equipment, transport, meals, books and electronic equipment

Boarding school fees

We will consider paying the cost of boarding-only fees in your home country if:

- a local international school is not available
- both parents, guardians or the sole care giver live outside the home country

The allowance covers:

- up to a maximum of £30,000 a year for each child for the published termly fees only
- the cost of return travel, and emissions mitigation, at the start and end of each school term, in line with our [environmental sustainability funding policy](#)

We will not cover the costs of:

- tuition fees
- additional annual leave airfares
- extracurricular activities, including field trips
- other extras including, but not limited to, uniforms, sports kit and equipment, transport, meals, books and electronic equipment

We will cover the cost of providing special needs education as far as possible. Please [contact us](#) to discuss your needs.

We would not usually expect to provide an education allowance if you will be working in a high-income country.

Annual leave travel costs

We'll pay for you to travel back to your home country for annual leave. This is in addition to your outward and return travel costs and depends on how long you will be away:

- 12 to 24 months – 1 annual leave trip
- 25 to 36 months – 2 annual leave trips

- 37 to 48 months – 3 annual leave trips
- 49 to 60 months – 4 annual leave trips
- 61 to 72 months – 5 annual leave trips
- 73 to 84 months – 6 annual leave trips
- 85 to 96 months – 7 annual leave trips

All fares should be:

- in line with our environmental sustainability funding policy
- booked in advance where possible

We will not pay for business class flights.

Language lessons

You can ask for up to 100 hours of lessons in the local language for you and/or your partner during the first 12 months of your visit.

We will cover 100% of the costs for local language school classes or up to 50% of the costs of individual tuition.

We will not cover the cost of examinations or personal learning materials such as apps, DVDs and books.

public engagement and patient involvement costs

You should ask for the necessary costs to integrate key stakeholders' perspectives across the life cycle of your project, from agenda setting, funding, and research design to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. You cannot ask for costs for any activities that take place before the grant start date.

Costs can include, but are not limited to:

- compensation for stakeholders' time and expertise
- recruitment of participants, participatory fees, travel and other reasonable expenses
- incentives and recognition for involvement for example, gift cards, one-off awards. These must be aligned with our Research involving human participants policy and avoid undue inducement to take part.
- engagement professionals, for example community outreach coordinators, patient advocates, engaged research advisory board, lived experience experts

- room hire, catering and other associated costs of running interviews, workshops, focus groups, partnership building and other activities to integrate stakeholder voices into your research
- translation services, accessibility costs, survey tools to facilitate inclusive knowledge sharing
- monitoring and evaluation activities

For more information, read our [guidance on using an engaged research approach](#).

You can ask for costs associated with disseminating research results and findings from Wellcome-funded research, including podcasts, media outreach, websites and talks.

For costs associated with written publications, consult our [open access policy](#).

lived experience involvement

If you are involving people with lived experience at the application design stage, you cannot include a consultation charge for this work. You cannot ask for costs for any activities that take place before the grant start date.

We expect people with lived experience involved in projects to be appropriately compensated or paid for their time. The budget that must be requested during the application process should include appropriate remuneration for lived experience experts and costs for involvement.

We cannot advise on ways to appropriately compensate or pay people with lived experience, as approaches differ between organisations and contexts. When thinking about appropriate compensation or payment, we would encourage you to think about the experience, knowledge, and skills that someone will be bringing to the project, as well as their responsibility within the process. Make sure that you have appropriately budgeted for the costs needed to support meaningful involvement, as set out in your proposal. For example, this could include but is not limited to:

- consultant fees for lived experience experts on the project
- travel costs
- salary costs for lived experience researchers embedded in a team
- expenses to support meetings or workshops

We cannot advise on income tax or state benefits, in terms of people with lived experience being paid for their involvement, as the arrangements will be different in different countries. It is the responsibility of the research team to ensure that they are abiding by any relevant regulations in their context, and the team should seek advice from relevant local organisations if needed.

overheads

You can ask for overheads if your administering organisation is a:

- higher education institution, healthcare organisation or research institute outside the UK
- UK research organisation that does not receive core funding for overheads
- charity, non-profit or non-governmental research organisation
- social enterprise or small or medium-sized commercial organisation

UK universities and large commercial organisations cannot ask for overheads.

Overheads can include:

- estates, for example building and premises
- non-project dedicated administrative and support staff
- administration, for example finance, library, and room hire

The total cost for overheads should not be more than 20% of the costs requested in your application.

These costs must directly support the activity funded by the grant.

Sub-awarding

Applicants can also ask for overheads on any part of the grant that is sub-awarded to any of the organisations listed above. However, applicants based at a UK university cannot ask for overheads for the sub-awarded activity if their university will include the sub-awarded funding in its annual report to the UK Charity Research Support Fund.

How to apply for these costs

In your grant application, you must include a letter from your Finance Director stating how the overhead costs have been calculated.

If your organisation has an externally audited or otherwise verified methodology for calculating overhead rates, then the letter must include:

- confirmation of the validated rate
- how the rate was arrived at/who provided the rate
- when the rate was last reviewed
- where details of the rate can be found

If your organisation does not have an externally audited or otherwise verified methodology for calculating overhead rates, then the letter must include:

- a breakdown of the costs requested
 - confirmation that the request is a true representation of the costs incurred
-

continuing professional development

You can ask for these costs if you are applying from a:

- higher education institution
- research institute
- healthcare organisation
- charity, social enterprise or non-governmental research organisation
- small company

Continuing professional development and professional skills training

You can ask for a contribution towards these costs.

Types of training can include:

- research leadership, professional and people management skills
- career development support
- responsible conduct of research
- diversity and inclusion
- promotion of a healthy research culture
- understanding and reducing the environmental impact of research

We expect the employing organisation to provide and fund this training. However, if these types of training are not available, or the quality is inadequate, you can ask for up to £500 a year for lead applicants, coapplicants and each member of staff employed on your grant who will be:

- in a post of 12 months duration or more only and
- working on Wellcome funded awards for at least 50% full time equivalent

You will need to justify these costs in your application.

Research skills training

You can ask for costs to cover training for the technical and research skills you need to deliver your proposed research.

You can ask for whatever research skills training you need for lead applicants, coapplicants and each member of staff employed on your grant, who will be:

- in a post of 12 months duration or more only and
- working on Wellcome funded awards for at least 50% full time equivalent

You will need to justify these costs in your application.

open access charges

If your organisation receives open access block grant funding, you can ask them to cover your open access article processing charges.

If you're at an organisation that does not receive block grant funding, we'll supplement your grant when your paper has been accepted for publication.

You cannot ask for these charges in your grant application.

inflation allowance

How we calculate your inflation allowance

We will add an inflation allowance to your award. Your inflation allowance is based on your total eligible costs and the duration of the award.

We will use an inflation allowance that reflects the inflation rate of the country where the host organisation is based using data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). You'll receive the following allowance if the costs in your application are in pounds sterling.

AWARD DURATION (IN MONTHS)	INFLATION ALLOWANCE
0-12	0.00%
13-24	1.00%
25-36	2.01%
37-48	3.04%
49-60	4.08%

The costs in your application must be based on current known costs, excluding inflation.

You should allow for salary pay awards during Year 1. These should be based on pay awards already agreed. If you don't know what the pay award is yet, then use the IMF rate for the currency your award will be made in.

other costs

Allowed costs

You may ask for the following costs (you will have to justify them in your application):

- specialist publications that are relevant to the research and not available in institutional libraries
- consultancy fees, including for lived experience experts and where such fees are required to receive advice on a specific aspect of your proposed work which cannot be provided by anyone involved in the application
- ethics approval costs where these are charged by the approval body and they are a direct cost of the research. We will only pay the actual cost of the review. We will not pay a percentage cost of the grant.
- expenses for subjects and volunteers – includes recruitment of participants, their participatory fees and travel, as well as interviewee expenses
- reasonable research-associated costs related to the feedback of health-related findings but not any healthcare-associated costs
- costs associated with developing an outputs management plan
- questionnaires, recruitment material, and newsletters for clinical, epidemiological and qualitative research studies
- public engagement materials where dissemination (including printing and publishing) is a key activity of the project
- recruitment, advertising and interviewee travel costs for staff to be employed on the grant
- purchase, hire and running costs of project-dedicated vehicles
- project-specific personal protective equipment (PPE) that is above the standard expected for the setting

- costs to host/a contribution towards hosting:
 - a conference
 - a session within a conference
 - a symposium
 - a seminar series
 - advisory board meetings, if appropriate

The meeting should either be:

- for research purposes, for example data gathering
- to disseminate your research findings, for example to policy makers.

Costs can include:

- travel and accommodation for keynote speakers
- external room hire and catering
- event publicity and conference materials
- childcare and other caring responsibility costs for delegates
- any costs related to accessibility and inclusion

Disallowed costs

We will not pay for:

- phone, postage, photocopying and stationery, unless you can justify these within a clinical or epidemiological study
- page charges and the cost of colour prints
- PhD stipends
- office furniture, such as chairs, desks and filing cabinets
- clothing such as lab coats and shoes
- non-research related activities such as catering, room and venue hire for staff parties, team-building events and social activities
- indemnity insurance (insurance cover against claims made by subjects or patients associated with a research programme) unless it is for a clinical trial and the insurance is a direct cost of the research
- radiation protection costs
- contingency funds
- organisation insurance
- clinical examination or course fees

- working capital costs of commercial organisations
- engagement activities that do not support an engaged approach to research or for one-off events/exhibitions

We will only fund these costs in the case of animal-related research and/or where we are providing overheads:

- estates costs – such as building and premises costs, basic services and utilities (if your organisation uses full economic costing methodology)
- research, technical and administrative staff whose time is shared across several projects and isn't supported by an audit record
- cleaning, waste and other disposal costs

How to apply

Where to apply

Apply for this scheme on the Wellcome Funding platform. You will need to log in or create an account. You can save your application and return to it at any time.

View the [sample application form](#).

Get some [tips to help you write your grant application](#).

[Start your application](#)

Timing considerations for your application

You must leave enough time for:

- reading all the information on this page before applying
- you - and your coapplicants - to complete the application
- your administering organisation to review and offer feedback on your application, and for you to complete any suggested changes
- the organisational approver at your administering organisation to have time to approve and submit your application to Wellcome by 15:00 BST on 14 July 2026.

Getting support with your application

We offer disability-related support for applicants. Read the [disability-related support guidance](#) if you:

- are disabled or have a long-term health condition and you need help applying for funding
- need help completing your project, for example costs for assistive technology.

If you need further support with completing your application or need to request an extension to the deadline, please [contact us](#).

We can provide certain translation costs to support your application process. This includes:

- costs to translate officially stamped documentation required by Wellcome to process your application, for example, documents required to undertake financial and other compliance checks
- costs to translate into your language any official Wellcome-issued documentation if required by your organisation or country to be accepted legally, such as the Award Letter if successful

If you require translation costs to complete your application, please [contact us](#).

If this is your organisation's first time applying for Wellcome funding

If this is your organisation's first time applying for Wellcome funding, you will need to request an organisation account.

Email fundingsupport@wellcome.org with your organisation's:

- name
- address
- country
- team email address for the people who will approve and submit your application (this is usually a research management team).

We will create the organisation account and provide access to the approvers. [Review our guidance for research offices](#).

Application process

Before you apply

- Make sure you read everything on this page, as well as [our guidance on involving lived experience experts](#).
- You do not need to contact us before you write and submit your application.

- If you are unsure if your proposal is within the scope of this call, you can request a scope check before submitting your full application.
- Register to attend our Information Webinar on 28 April 2026 at 11:00 BST

Submit your application to your administering organisation for approval

- Complete your application form on Wellcome Funding platform.
- Submit your completed application form to the organisational approver at your administering organisation for approval.
- Make sure you leave enough time for the approver to review and submit your application before the deadline. The approver may ask you to make changes to your application.

Administering organisation approves and submits it to Wellcome

- **Your application must be submitted by 15:00 BST on the deadline day, 14 July 2026. We do not accept late applications.**

Shortlisting

- We will check your eligibility for the call and that your proposed research is within the call's scope. If your application is ineligible or your proposed research is not within the call's scope, we will withdraw your application and notify you of this.
- A committee will assess eligible and in-scope applications against the assessment criteria, to make shortlisting recommendations to Wellcome.
- Committee membership will be comprised of a diverse range of international members and will take into account Wellcome's diversity and inclusion priorities.
- If your application is shortlisted, we will invite the lead applicant – accompanied by up to three coapplicants - for a virtual interview.
- We are unable to provide feedback on applications that are not shortlisted.

Interview

- The committee will interview shortlisted applicants online and make funding recommendations to Wellcome. Interviews are scheduled to take place 3-5 November 2026.
- We'll contact the lead applicant to ask if interview attendees have any accessibility requirements.
- You will be asked to give a presentation at the start of your interview. Details of the requirements for this presentation, and the date when slides need to be submitted to Wellcome, will be shared in advance.
- We will provide further information on the structure of the interview, room layout and committee membership before the interview.

- The focus of the interview will be on questions and answers. The committee will assess the application against the full set of assessment criteria, rather than one specific aspect of the proposal.
- The committee will consider your application and interview responses when making funding recommendations to Wellcome.

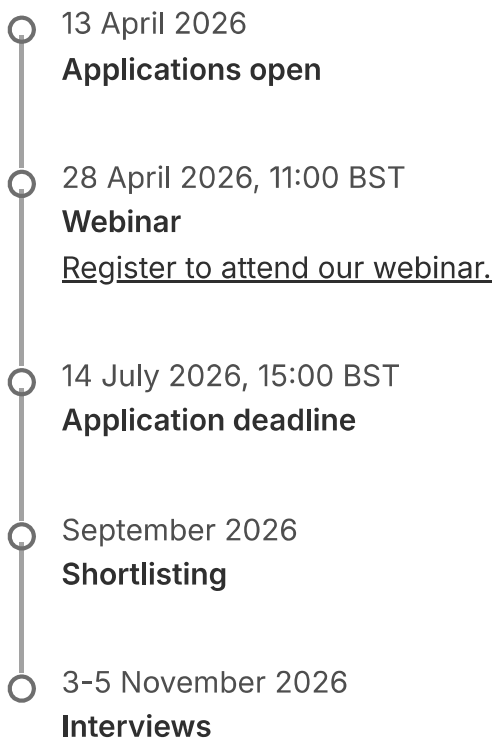
Funding decision

- Final funding decisions will be made by Wellcome.
- You will receive an email notification of the funding decision soon after the decision has been made in November 2026.
- We will write to you after this with the reasons for the decision.

Key dates

You must submit your application by 15:00 BST on the deadline day. We don't accept late applications.

Open to new applications



More information about this funding call

Why Wellcome is launching this call

Our mental health strategy

Wellcome's mental health strategic aim is to drive a transformative change in early intervention for anxiety, depression and psychosis. Embedding lived experience expertise is central to this so we can reflect the priorities and needs of people who experience these problems to our mission.

With this Mental Health Award we want to transform interventions for young people experiencing depression and anxiety through funding mechanistic trials of interventions that are scalable, safe and effective.

Our rationale for this call

Anxiety and depression are two of the biggest health challenges among young people globally. Existing interventions are often not tailored for young people, and many do not experience lasting improvement.

To better understand how to address these gaps, we commissioned a **landscaping report** to examine opportunities in youth mental health interventions. The report highlighted that, while many approaches can reduce symptoms, how they work is often poorly understood. There is a clear need for research that directly tests mechanisms to refine interventions so that more young people can benefit. The report noted that there are some advances in promising but underexplored intervention areas, including lifestyle, social and creative approaches.

Among these, physical activity and sleep-based interventions stand out for having the strongest evidence of efficacy. They are accessible, cost-effective, and straightforward to deliver, yet their mechanistic foundations remain underdeveloped. Although these interventions are scalable in theory, few health or educational systems have scaled them. Importantly, sleep and physical activity are physiologically and behaviourally intertwined, and advances in wearable technology now enable measurement of both as part of a circadian cycle. This dual focus opens the door to more precise, data-driven measurement, which can support tailoring interventions to individual needs.

By focusing this Mental Health Award on these promising intervention categories, we aim to support research with the greatest potential to generate impactful, mechanistically informed and transformative interventions for young people.

Contact us

Eligibility, what we offer and application questions

If you have a question about eligibility, what we offer or about completing the application form using Wellcome Funding, [send our funding information advisers a message](#).

Scope questions

If you are unclear about whether your proposed idea would be in scope for this call, you can send a very brief summary of your idea to scopechecksMH@wellcome.org using the format below by 29 June 2026, 17:00 BST.

Please include the title of the call (Using physical activity and circadian-based interventions to reduce anxiety and depression in young people) in the subject line.

Use the following format when emailing us your scope question:

- Country/countries where the research will take place [e.g. UK]
- Target population (no more than a sentence) [e.g. girls living in areas of social and economic vulnerability]
- age range [e.g. 11-16]
- mental health condition(s)/symptoms(s) [e.g. depression]
- Summary, including the intervention you are testing, existing evidence and rationale for why the intervention would work in the target population (no more than 200 words)

Based on the information provided, we will aim to reply to your email within one week, with an 'in scope' or 'out of scope' response.

Please note that this is not a requirement and will not impact your likelihood of being funded. The confirmation that a proposed idea is in scope does not constitute an active invitation to apply for the call.

We do not answer questions on the competitiveness of proposals.

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