

Preparing a Fellowship Application

September 2019



Essential pre-application reading

- Read the 'Guidance for Fellowship Applications' document – this will give you general information about salaries, disallowed costs and eligibility criteria
- Read the standard terms and conditions document and RCPCH research privacy notice.

Write a good lay summary

The children and young people panel will review your lay summary. While they are not asked to comment on the quality of science, they bring the valuable perspective of children and young people from across the UK, some of which are living with disabilities. Their recommendations will influence the final funding decision made by the RCPCH's Scientific Advisory Group.

Researchers may not have a personal experience of disability and therefore may not consider some of the issues that affect people living with the condition. This is why the input of the children and young people panel is so important.

Lay summaries must be written in plain English and be understandable to a non-scientific audience, as the panel will use this when reviewing your application. The panel do not use the main proposal to review your application, so the lay summary should clearly describe the aims of the research. Applicants should NOT cut and paste from the main proposal.

Please refer to the guidelines below on writing a lay summary. You may find it useful to use a readability calculator such as: <https://readable.com/>.

- Easy to read, research proposal – lay summary (300 words maximum):
 - What are you aiming to find out through the research?
 - How will children and young people/carers benefit from your research, either directly or in the long term?
 - Why does this research need to be carried out now?
 - What methods have you chosen and why?
 - Who are your participants (if relevant)?
 - How have children and young people been involved in the development of this research proposal?

- How will children and young people be involved in the management of the research process?
- Who will the research findings be communicated to and how?
- Lay summary must be appropriate to reading age between 11-15 years
- Avoid use of scientific/technical terms, jargon, abbreviations – if you have to use them, provide a clear explanation
- Avoid use of complicated phrases or uncommon words
- Keep sentences short and break up long paragraphs of text for clarity

Demonstrate how your research relates to childhood disabilities

The RCPCH and Newlife are funding research that has the greatest chance of improving the lives of children with disabilities. It is therefore important that you clearly communicate how your research relates to childhood disabilities. Please consider the following tips when writing your application:

- Applications must clearly demonstrate how their research relates to childhood disabilities and how it could provide valuable insight for future research and/or translation into clinical practice.
- Applicants whose expertise primarily relate to another field should seek to collaborate with relevant experts in childhood disabilities and children with disabilities where necessary. Your application should clearly indicate how your proposal is relevant to childhood disabilities.
- It is helpful to explain how your proposal relates to and furthers existing research.

Ensure your research proposal is clear

- Explain why your research is important. Provide preliminary data if appropriate.
- Make sure your hypotheses are clear and are reflected in the methodology.
- Consider how you can involve patients throughout the research. Please refer to the Patient and Public Involvement information.
- Explain what the outcome measures will be.
- Identify and address any potential challenges or pitfalls – what will you do if your first aim does not result in the outcomes you expected? Do you

anticipate any challenges with recruitment or retention of participants?
Have you considered a contingency plan?

- Provide sufficient detail on the experiments and how they will be carried out to demonstrate understanding of what you are doing.
- Give realistic sample sizes and power calculations based on evidence, including a statistical analysis plan. Ensure that your design and analysis is optimal for your research study. This applies equally to studies in human participants as well as for animal models. Ask a statistician to review the study design, analysis and power calculations.
- Clearly describe the future clinical benefits and timescales of practical improvements that could result from the research. Be realistic in these estimates.
- Ensure that the costs associated with the research and staff time allocated to the research are realistic as these will be considered by the Scientific Advisory Group.

Applications that require statistical analysis

- **Details of the power calculations and derivation of sample size:**

Applicants should ensure that this includes all of the information needed to replicate the calculations, details of which software or equations were used and which hypothesis test is being used. Details on where the information used in the calculations were derived from is also required.

- **Data Management:**

Applicants should ensure that responsibilities relating to data collection, storage, verification and security are assigned to an individual with appropriate expertise in data management.

- **Staff on applications:**

We advise that support from a statistician is sought during the preparation of your application. Where support has been provided, the individual consulted should be named within the application. If continued support with analyses is provided during the lifetime of the fellowship, appropriate costs may be included for statistician time.

Include a detailed communications plan

Plans should be outlined for engagement, communication about the research and dissemination of its outcomes with the research community and, where appropriate, with potentially interested wider audiences.

Demonstrate how your research will have impact

Who will benefit from this research?

Summarise who is likely to be interested in or to benefit from the proposed research, both directly and indirectly. It may be useful to think of beneficiaries as ‘users’ of the research outputs, both immediately and in the longer term. Beneficiaries must consist of a wider group than that of the investigators’ immediate professional circle carrying out similar research, and should include any:

- Commercial private sector beneficiaries
- Policy-makers within international, national, local or devolved government, government agencies or regulators who would benefit from this research
- Beneficiaries within the public sector or third sector, including museums, galleries and charities
- Beneficiaries within the wider public

How will they benefit from this research?

Describe the relevance of the research to these beneficiaries, identifying the potential impact arising from the proposed work. Consider how the research has the potential to contribute to the nation’s health, wealth or culture, for example:

- Increasing the effectiveness of public health services and policy
- Enhancing quality of life, health and creative output
- Realistic timescales for the benefits to be realised
- Research and professional skills staff on the project will develop

How do I involve children, young people and families in my proposal development?

It can be difficult to know how and when you can involve children, young people and families in your research. However the RCPCH has developed the Research Charter for Infants', Children's and Young People's Health, which provides eight key principles for involving children in research, along with links to tools and resources to help you with involving children and young people in research. The Research Charter can be found here:

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/research-charter-infants-childrens-young-peoples-child-health>.

How can the RCPCH help?

If you are looking for participants, advisers or user-input for your research project, we can help with providing advice. Please contact the &Us team at &us@rcpch.ac.uk who will be able to advise you on Patient & Public Involvement (PPI) activity.

Before you click submit... final check

- Ask at least one independent person to proof read your application – reviewers dislike typographical and grammatical errors because they could lead to reduced clarity and risk the reader misunderstanding your text.
- Ensure the main research proposal is typed in the correct section of the application form.
- Ensure figures make sense and are correctly referenced in the text. Attach figures as an appendix, as the application form will not allow embedded figures.
- Ensure your research proposal is correctly referenced.

Helpful resources

- The Research Design Service (RDS) is part of a network of regional support services funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The

service provides support to those preparing research proposals for submission to peer-reviewed funding competitions for applied health or social care research. The service requires at least 6 weeks to review an application once submitted.

- RCPCH Research Charter: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/research-charter-resources>
- The academic toolkit has been developed to help paediatricians undertaking an academic pathway, but also includes some useful information and resources around funding applications and links to resources: <https://academictoolkit.org/>
- For any questions or advice please contact the RCPCH research team at research@rcpch.ac.uk