Research Project Grants (RG) Guidelines for Applicants

Applicants are strongly advised to read these guidelines before they commence writing their application and to note the conditions of acceptance. Failure to follow the format suggested by the guidelines may reduce an applicant's chance of success or result in the application being rejected.

About Wellbeing of Women

Wellbeing of Women is the charity dedicated to improving the health of women and babies across the UK. Every year we invest in medical research projects and allocate funds towards the training of specialist doctors, nurses and midwives. We fund basic science, clinical and translational research on all aspects of obstetrics, gynaecology, midwifery or with a focus on women's reproductive health. Studies in gynaecology, urology and oncology are all appropriate to our funding.

The Research Project Grant Scheme

Applicability

Applications are invited for a Research Project Grant, to be undertaken in the UK or Ireland, relevant to our remit of women's reproductive health and childbirth. Wellbeing of Women will fund basic science, clinical and translational research, including explanatory or feasibility studies and systematic reviews in one of the following three areas:

- Pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period;
- Gynaecological cancers;
- General wellbeing surrounding women's health issues

Level of Award

Applications may be made for the financial support, for **up to £200,000**, of a project for up to three years to cover direct research costs. The award is intended to support a researcher leading their own work at an established research institution.

The award of a Research Project Grant is subject to the acceptance of the Wellbeing of Women's Standard Terms and Conditions.

Eligibility

The Principal Applicant for a Research Project Grant:

- Will usually be a postdoctoral researcher at any stage of their career.
- Must be based at an established research institution in the UK or Ireland.
- Must be carrying out a research project related to women's reproductive health or childbirth.

The project must be capable of being concluded within the duration of the award.

Restrictions

The following restrictions apply to Research Project Grants:

- We do not pay indirect costs or NHS Treatment and Support Costs.
- We do not pay the Apprenticeship Levy.
- We do not pay charges for administration by University or NHS Authorities.
- Funds will not be released without evidence of the relevant Research Ethics approval.
- We do not pay PhD fees, although will consider applications where doctoral researchers are included in the project team. For PhD Studentships, you should apply to our Research Training Fellowship scheme.

Successful Applicants

Please be aware that successful applicants will be expected to reasonably aid Wellbeing of Women with publicity and fundraising. This may involve activities such as providing quotes and/or lay write-ups, speaking at our events or hosting visits at your lab. While we would ensure that any requests were not excessive or disruptive, by applying you are agreeing to reasonable assistance in principle.

All grant awardees also consent to:

- Promptly completing a successful applicant questionnaire once notified of the grant award.
- Keeping Wellbeing of Women informed of any publications and/or publicity arising from the research, where possible in advance.

We endeavor to give brief feedback to all applicants, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Triage Process

Please note that as funding is strictly limited, all applications undergo our triage process which follows Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) guidance. Each application is sent to two members of our Research Advisory Committee and scored in areas of 'Significance of Research Question', 'Research Design', 'People and Workplace including User Involvement' and 'Value for Money'. Scores are collated and looked at by the Chair of the Research Advisory Committee. Systems are in place to ensure the

process is as fair as possible. Details of the number of applications received and success rates can be found on our website **here**.

Completing the Application Form

Please use the application form for a Wellbeing of Women Research Project Grant 2019, in **font size 10-12 pt.** throughout.

Please save two copies of the application – one as a **Word document** and one as a **fully signed PDF**. E-mail **both** versions to Jeremy Barratt, Senior Research Manager, (jbarratt@wellbeingofwomen.org.uk) **by the closing date**. Electronic signatures are acceptable.

Late applications will not be accepted under **any** circumstances so please obtain all necessary signatures as early as possible.

You will receive e-mail confirmation within 24 hours that your submission has been received. If you do not receive confirmation, please phone the Wellbeing of Women office on 020 3697 6350**.**

The points below relate to specific numbered sections of the application form and are to guide you through completing the form for the Research Project Grant funding scheme. Please note that where references are made to UK institutions, applicants from Ireland should complete with reference to relevant equivalents.

Word limits

Please note that certain answers must be completed within a maximum word limit. If text exceeds these limits, the passage will be shortened accordingly.

Section 1: Application Details

In this section, you should provide your contact details and those of your Co-Applicants. At least one applicant must be able to demonstrate continuous employment at the Host Institution for the duration of the grant. It is preferable, but not essential, that this is the Principal Applicant.

Host Institution: This will be the institution that will act as the contracting institution, should the application be successful.

Proposed start date: At this stage this may be an estimate. However, it should be as accurate as possible and reflecting the likely award date of July.

Proposed duration: This should be provided in months.

Total funds requested: This should be the total requested from section 4 (Financial Information) and not exceed the upper funding limit of £200,000.

Title of the research: This should be as brief as possible and be relevant to the work to be undertaken.

Section 2: The Research

We are looking for a research proposal of high scientific merit. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Significance of Research Question
- Research Design
- People and Workplace including User Involvement
- Value for Money

Please provide as much detail as possible, within the defined word limits, to help us to assess your proposal.

2.1 Structured Abstract of Research: In this section, your proposed research including the aims, objectives, methodology, scientific and medical opportunities of the study should be clearly laid out. Sharing information and knowledge about Wellbeing of Women's research portfolio is central to our mission and if funded, this abstract will be made publicly available along with the applicant's name and institution. Please bear this in mind when preparing this section and do not include commercially sensitive or confidential information in your abstract. If you believe your abstract should not be published as it is highly confidential, you will be able to provide a revised abstract if awarded funding.

2.2 Background and Rationale: In this section, you should explain the need for the proposed research and the rationale for the particular lines of research planned. Please describe any limitations identified in the evidence base and provide details of the prospective outcomes and expected benefits in terms of improvement to women's or their babies' health.

The scientific statement should be self-contained so that a referee should not need to refer to journals. References to current literature are important but should be limited to 20. If unpublished papers have been referred to, copies should be attached in the appendices.

2.3 Plan of Investigation: In this section, you should clearly describe the details of the proposed research plan, including the aims and objectives of the research together with descriptions of the overall research design and methodology (paying particular attention to any technique that is new or not well known). You should include the number of experiments proposed (including the validation of this figure) and the availability of patients (if relevant). It is important to include as much detail as possible on design and methodology, including justification of sample size, power calculations, sample selection and exclusions criteria where appropriate. Please also provide detail of any problems/barriers to be anticipated and how they will be mitigated. Details of any previous or proposed patient and public involvement must be included, or if none, reasons provided why you feel that no involvement is necessary.

Applicants must include a timetable of activities in the form of a Gantt Chart (Word or PDF, one-page limit) and any tables or figures to support this section in the Appendices.

Applicants submitting their first research project are strongly advised to seek the guidance of someone with experience in making a grant application. Clinical projects with a scientific component should include a scientist as an applicant and vice versa. If no clinician is mentioned on the application form, applicants should make it clear how they intend to obtain clinical samples. All projects requiring any statistical input, including sample size calculations, should seek the guidance of a statistician in the design stage of the project. All projects requiring substantial statistical input should include a statistician as an applicant. Patient and public involvement at this stage is always encouraged.

2.4 Expected Outputs, Outcomes and Impact: In this section, you should describe what outputs you are expecting from your research and discuss how the outcomes could be translated and adopted in to the healthcare service, including the potential impact on the health and wellbeing of women/babies. You should also include your plans for disseminating your research findings.

If your proposed research is likely to generate any commercially exploitable results, please provide detail including any Intellectual Property (IP) that will be generated and how it will be managed. IP may include copyright (software, checklists, protocols, questionnaires, guidelines etc.), trademarks, designs, research tools (assays, cell lines, biomarkers, data analysis techniques etc.) and patents.

2.5 Relevant Expertise and Experience: In this section, you should outline the key individuals who will be involved in the research, including their relevant expertise, skills, experience and the role that they will carry out in the team. You should explain how the team will collaborate and why the individuals involved are best placed to carry out this research. Details of any other relevant research support available to the team should also be included.

2.6 References: Please include a full list of scientific references from throughout section 2 (the Research) of the application.

Section 3: Approvals for Research

In the event of an award being made, funding will be subject to any required approvals being in place and evidence thereof being provided to Wellbeing of Women.

3.1 Involving Human Participants or Human Tissue: Proposals involving human subjects and/or samples must have the appropriate ethical agreement from the **Health Research Authority** (HRA) before the study is commenced.

Clinical studies taking place in the NHS also require approval from the host NHS organisation. Applicants should contact the **NIHR Clinical Research Network** (NIHR CRN) for further information.

3.2 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA): Proposals involving the use of gametes or embryos must have an HFEA licence. Details on applying for the appropriate licence can be found on the **HFEA** website. Approvals for research are managed via **IRAS**.

3.3 Research on Gene Therapy: For proposals involving research on gene therapy, please state the steps that have been taken to obtain the approval of your Local Research Ethics Committee, the University's Genetic Manipulation Committee, the Gene Therapy Advisory Committee (GTAC) and the **Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency** (MHRA).

Details on applying for gene therapy regulatory approval can be found on the **HRA** website.

3.4 Use of Animals or Animal Tissue: Wellbeing of Women is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) and we support the principle of using animals in research when it is necessary to advance understanding of health and disease and to develop new treatments. Research using animals must only take place where there is no alternative available.

We will only fund research that complies with the law and support the principle of the 3Rs: to refine, reduce and replace the use of animals in research. Further details on the use of animals in research can be found on the **NC3Rs** website.

Guidance for applying for a licence to carry out animal testing can be found **here**.

If you propose research that involves the use of non-human primates, cats, dogs or equines, you must complete the additional 'Research Questions for Non-standard Animals' form and submit this with your application.

3.5 Licences and Approvals: If you have already secured the necessary licences and approvals or your research does not require any then you should answer 'YES'. If you have not secured all the necessary licences and approvals and are yet to submit the relevant documentation, then you should answer 'NO'. If you have not secured all the necessary licences and approvals but all the necessary documentation has been submitted to the relevant authority, then you should answer 'Applications in Progress'.

Section 4: Financial Information

This section should be as accurate as possible and must be completed by the relevant Research Grants or Finance Officer of the proposed host institution. Full details of how the money requested is to be spent must be provided.

The Research Project Grant scheme can only provide a **maximum grant of £200,000** over three years.

Wellbeing of Women will only fund direct costs of research and will not cover indirect costs such as the cost of heating, lighting and office equipment which will normally be met by the host department. Charges for administration levied by the University or NHS Trust concerned will also not be met.

PLEASE NOTE: For research that will be carried out in the NHS, applicants must ensure that all costs are attributed according to the **AcoRD guidance for attributing the costs of health and social care research**, or equivalent.

Please discuss with the relevant NHS Trusts and/or your **Local CRN** (LCRN) early to help with study design, cost attribution and availability of resources.

As of 1 October 2018, applicants will need to complete a 'Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Template' (SoECAT) if research in the NHS is proposed. A completed SoECAT form must be submitted with your application to aid peer review. Please be aware that studies that have very high Excess Treatment Costs (ETCs) or Support Costs are unlikely to be adopted by NHS trusts or commissioners, and so may not represent good value for money.

A guide to help researchers, study teams and sponsors to complete the SoECAT during grant application and study planning will be made available and dedicated support can be accessed through **AcoRD Specialists** via the CRN.

4.1 Salaries: Please clearly list out the number of staff salaries requested and their grade, including names if already known. Allowances should be made for employer's contributions for superannuation and National Insurance and these figures should be listed separately for each individual. Please note that Wellbeing of Women will not pay the 0.5% Apprenticeship Levy and it must not be included in grant applications.

When giving costs, applicants should allow for annual increments on the current salary scale and should include any estimated future national pay awards. Stipends for PhD students will be at MRC rates. It is important to double check that the amount of salary requested is in relation to the %FTE that the individual will be working on the research.

4.2 Research Expenses: You should only request funds to cover directly incurred research costs. The amount requested in addition to the salaries must not exceed £200,000 overall and all costs must be fully justified.

Materials and Consumables: Please include non-reusable items specific to the research. Please list items and give a brief description. All items must be research specific, not just general office costs which should be covered by indirect costs.

Equipment: Applications for major items of equipment, when supported by an adequate research protocol, will be considered. Charges for servicing to equipment should be included if these are relevant. If similar equipment is available in the department in question, this must be reported, and an explanation given as to why it cannot be used for the project.

The overriding issue when considering the disposal of substantial items of equipment, on completion of a grant, is the benefit to future research. The disposal of such items is a local matter. However, the Research Advisory Committee consider that, in most cases the equipment should remain in the possession of the original grant holder who should acknowledge Wellbeing of Women's funding on the equipment. In the event of a local dispute regarding the disposal of equipment, evidence should be submitted for consideration by the Research Advisory Committee.

Travel and Subsistence: Please include any relevant journey and subsistence costs (excluding any alcoholic beverages). This may include travel for Project

Advisory/Steering Group meetings or for grant holders to present/disseminate their work, either as an oral or poster presentation, at relevant scientific meetings within the UK or overseas. Full details must be included and will be scrutinized by our Research Advisory Committee. Travel must be by the most economic means possible.

Dissemination: Please include a list of costs related to the dissemination activities of the research, including any conference fees or publication costs. Applicants are encouraged to cost for open access publication. Wellbeing of Women support must be acknowledged in all presentations and publications and copies sent to us.

Patient and Public Involvement: Please include a list of costs relating to activities involving patients and members of the public within the research. This might include out of pocket expenses, payments for time and any relevant training and support costs for their participation in the research.

Other: Please list any other directly incurred research costs that are not identified elsewhere. This might include external consultancy costs or computer licensing.

4.3 NHS Costs: In this section you should provide detail of the NHS Support and Treatment Costs if the research is funded, including who has agreed to pay them. If your proposal does involve research in the NHS, you must also complete a **'Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Template' (SoECAT)** and submit it with your application. The form and guidelines to complete it can be found on the **NIHR Supporting and applying research in the NHS** webpage.

4.4 Justification of Support: In this section you should provide detail of the research costs that have been listed and justify why they have been requested.

Section 5: Previous Applications and Current Submissions

It is important that you indicate whether any financial support from another funding body has been sought, or is already provided, for the same or closely related research. If a decision is pending, please indicate the month when a decision is expected. Any previous applications made to Wellbeing of Women for this or closely related research must also be listed.

All resubmissions must include a covering letter stating how the previous proposal has been modified.

Section 6: Declarations and Signatures

No application can be accepted without completion of this section by the **Principal Applicant** and all listed **Co-Applicants**, as well as the **Head of Department** and the **Finance Officer** responsible for administering the grant. For research involving NHS patients, a signature is also needed from the **R&D Director or Deputy** confirming that the project will be carried out within the NHS research governance framework.

Section 7: Lay Description

7.1 Lay Title: This should be as brief as possible and easily understandable by a lay audience.

7.2 Lay Summary: In this section, you must give a simple description of the proposed research which will be clear to an educated lay audience. You should provide context for the research with reference to the issue it will address and including the aims and objectives together with the techniques to be used and potential applications and benefits.

The following points should be addressed:

- **About the research:** What is the research about? What problem(s) will it tackle? How will it impact on the health of women and/or babies? Does it build on previous research?
- **How will the research be carried out?**
- **What happens next?** What outcomes do you hope to achieve? How will you disseminate the results? Will this lead to further research? What is the long-term goal?
- **About the researchers:** What is their relevant experience/track record?

Please devote some time to this section – it is extremely important, and the quality of the lay summary is considered in awarding the grants. The final decision in awarding grants is taken by our Trustee Board which consists predominantly of lay members.

Sharing information and knowledge to our lay supporters is central to our mission and if funded, this summary will be made publicly available along with the applicant's name and institution. Please bear this in mind when preparing this section.

Section 8: Keywords

In this section, you should provide keywords which will help us to classify the proposed research, as well as where you found out about this funding call.

Section 9: Suggestions for Possible Reviewers

In this section, you should provide the contact details (including email) for at least three people who have suitable expertise to act as an independent reviewer. Potential reviewers must not be in the same institution as, or have collaborated with, any of the applicants within the last three years. The nomination of reviewers does not guarantee that they will be contacted.

In addition, applicants may indicate any individuals who should not be contacted with regards the application. The reasons for this must be clearly stated. Please note that this section may be seen by reviewers.

Section 10: Curriculum Vitae

In this section, you must provide the CV of each applicant. CVs **must not exceed one side of A4 (10-12 font)** and should include information relevant to the application only. This should include qualifications with date awarded; present employment and previous posts; current grants held (title, source, duration and sum awarded); and publications (no more than five, most relevant to the work to be undertaken).

Section 11: Previous Wellbeing of Women Grants

In this section, you should provide details of each Wellbeing of Women grant that any of the applicants have held during the past five years. Please use a new sheet for each grant.

Appendices

Only supporting documents from the list provided will be accepted.

Please note that these guidelines must be *strictly* adhered to. Failure to do so (such as: wrong font size; excessive word count; disallowed additional materials) *will* be taken into account. Applications may and *have previously* been rejected for deviation from the guidelines.

Additional Information

Randomised Controlled Trials (RCT)

For additional guidance for grant applications regarding the supporting documentation required for randomized controlled trials see **Appendix 1.**

Open Access

Applicants are encouraged to cost for open access publication and include this expense.

Requests for Cost-Extensions

Cost extensions are not normally considered, but applicants may put in a new proposal for consideration if they wish to continue the work. This proposal would be considered in competition with other applications and should include a report on the work undertaken to date. The application should be in the form of a new application using the guidelines in this document. Please note that in the event of an award being made, additional funding will not be granted under any circumstances other than a new application.

Important

The Wellbeing of Women Terms and Conditions must be accepted if funding is awarded. They are available on our **website**.

Resources

The MRC, NIHR and HRA support toolkits to help researchers and funders:

Clinical Trials Toolkit: Provides practical help to guide researchers to design and carry out clinical trials of medicines, including links to all approvals that are required.

Data and Tissues Toolkit: Helps researchers who are carrying out research using patient data or tissue.

Experimental Medicines Toolkit: Experimental medicine is research undertaken in humans to understand how diseases develop or demonstrate proof-of-concept information. It is often done before clinical trials, although it may involve NHS patients.

NIHR **Research Design Service** (RDS): The RDS helps researchers to develop and design high quality clinical research applications.

Universities UK **Innovation Explorer:** An online map of health-related research infrastructure showing geographical connectivity, or to find organisations with a particular thematic interest. So far, users can see Academic Health Science Networks (AHSN), Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP); Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) and Local Education and Training Boards (LETBs) will be added soon.

Ethical Review: The HRA have developed 2 tools to help researchers work out if **their project is research**, and if it needs **NHS REC approval**.

INVOLVE is a national advisory group that supports greater public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research. They have many useful resources to help researchers involve members of the public in research.

Appendix 1: Additional guidance for grant applicants regarding the supporting documentation required for Randomised Controlled Trials

For proposals which include a randomised controlled trial, the following additional guidance is given.

Wellbeing of Women requires a succinct summary of your proposed research. The following headings should be considered, as appropriate:

- Target population: Define the population from which the trial sample will be recruited.
- Intervention(s) being evaluated: Give a clear definition of the intervention to be evaluated.
- Measurement of outcomes and duration of follow up: Details should include the justification of the use of the proposed outcome measures, the proposed duration of the treatment period and the frequency and duration of follow-up.
- Sample size: State the required sample size, giving details of the estimated effect size, power and/or precision employed in the calculation.
- Planned analyses: Please give details of the planned method(s) of analyses.
- Project timetables including recruitment rate: Indicate the anticipated duration of the study, paying attention to the expected recruitment rate and a justification for your estimate.

Required Expertise

Randomised controlled trials almost always require multidisciplinary expertise. They usually need to draw on the expertise and knowledge of clinicians and of those trained in health service research methodologies such as health economics, medical statistics, study design and qualitative approaches. Wellbeing of Women will usually expect teams proposing multicentre randomised controlled trials to include input from a registered clinical trials unit, or one with equivalent experience. Applicants will also be expected to engage a qualified Trial Manager for appropriate projects.

Public Involvement

Wellbeing of Women recognises the importance of active involvement of patients and members of the public in research and expects to see evidence of public involvement in the development, running or oversight of randomised controlled trial proposals.

Governance and Regulation

Applicants are asked to follow the **Clinical Trials Toolkit** which provides practical advice to researchers in designing and conducting publicly funded clinical trials in the UK. Using an interactive route map, this site provides information on best practice and outlines the current legal and practical requirements for conducting clinical trials.