March 2021

Application Development- Guidance for Researchers

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Application Development offers you the chance to receive input from the MS Society’s Research Network **before** you submit your Project Award or Career Development Award application to our Grant Round. (Currently Catalyst Awards applications are ineligible for Application Development).

Who are the Research Network?

A diverse group of over 350 people living with MS who have been affected by MS. They may have a diagnosis of MS, or have a close family or friend with a diagnosis. They are trained to use their personal experiences of MS to help improve the quality and relevance of research.

Why consult people affected by MS before submitting an application?

Involving people affected by MS in the planning of your research:

Ensures your proposed questions are relevant to their experiences

Improves the clarity of your lay summary

Ensures your study design is acceptable to participants with MS

Research Network members are also involved in our review process and help to inform our final funding decisions.

How do I submit a request for Application Development for Project Awards and Career Development Awards?

Please read the guidance below.

Email [researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk) with your request form and a copy of your lay summary and public involvement plan.

The deadline for requests is **12 noon** on **Monday 12th April 2021**.

When will I receive feedback on my application?

You will receive feedback by Thursday 13th May 2021. If you submit your request in advance of the deadline, we may be able to return your feedback more quickly.

NB: the deadline for submitting full Project Award and Career Development Award applications to the 2021 Grant Round is Tuesday 15th June, therefore you will have around one month to incorporate comments into your application.

For all enquiries about involving people affected by MS in your research:

Please contact Annee Amjad, Public Involvement Manager, at

[researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk)

About the Application Development process

What happens once I have submitted my request?

Your lay summary and public involvement plan will be reviewed by a small number of Research Network members. We will aim for 5 responses per application, but cannot guarantee this.

We will allocate Research Network members at random, unless you specify that you would like us to try to involve only people who meet certain criteria (e.g. those experiencing a specific symptom). We will do our best to meet such requests, but cannot guarantee it.

All responses represent the views of the individual Research Network members, and not necessarily the official position of the MS Society.

How will this affect my chances of being awarded funding in the 2021 Grant Round?

Application Development does not form part of our funding review process. It is a resource which allows you to improve the quality and relevance of your application before you submit it to our Grant Round.

Once you have your Application Development feedback and are writing the public involvement section of your final application form (section C), you may find it useful to explain how you have incorporated this feedback. How has it influenced your thinking?

Research Network members who provide you with feedback as part of Application Development are then exempted from reviewing your application once it is submitted.

Assessing impact

Assessing the impact of our public involvement activities is very important to us. We may contact you after the Grant Round deadline has passed to find out how useful Application Development was for you.

What you tell us will not affect your chances of receiving funding. Research Network members are always pleased to hear if their input was helpful.

It will also help us to explore how we might improve Application Development for the next Grant Round.

How to complete the request form

Please complete the below request form and return it, alongside any other documentation that you would like reviewed by the Research Network, to researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk. Please remember that currently only Project Award and Career Development Award (PhD Fellowships and Early Career Fellowships) are eligible for Application Development.

Section 1:

In this section, please explain why you would like to involve people affected by MS in the development of your application. What impact do you feel their contribution can make to you or the study?

If Research Network members feel they have a real opportunity to have an impact then they are much more likely to contribute.

Sections 2 and 3:

Please answer the questions to outline your lay summary and public involvement plan

Your lay summary needs to clearly describe your research project in [plain English](http://www.invo.org.uk/makeitclear/). It should explain what you plan to do, and how this could benefit people affected by MS. Diagrams can really help! Section C of the grant application form asks about the public involvement you have planned for your project, so you may find it useful to receive feedback on this too.

Please read our guidance on writing an effective lay summary, which is available in Appendix 1 of our Applicant Guidance.

If it is difficult to understand or does not contain enough information, then the quality of the feedback you receive will be much lower. If it is not sufficiently clear then we may not be able to send it out to the Research Network.

Section 4

Please list the questions you would like Research Network members to respond to based on their personal experiences of living with MS.

Some examples of very general questions might be:

Are the proposed research questions important to people affected by MS?

Is the lay summary clear and understandable?

Are the requirements placed upon study participants – e.g. number and duration of visits – realistic and achievable? Are the procedures too invasive or burdensome?

Do the outcome measures capture what is important to people affected by MS?

Have we planned to involve people affected by MS in a meaningful and appropriate way in the design, oversight and dissemination of the project?

You can ask much more specific questions than these, and you can ask as many or as few questions as you like.

**All documents must be submitted to** [**researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk**](mailto:researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk) **by 12 noon on Monday 12th April.**

Application Development request form – 2021 Grant Round

Please complete the below request form, and return it with any other documentation that you would like the Research Network to review to researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk.

All documents must be submitted to [researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk) by 12 noon on **Monday 12th** **April**.

1. Application details

Lead applicant’s name:

Institution:

Lay project title:

Would you like to involve Research Network members with particular experiences? (e.g. of particular symptoms or treatments, or with a particular type of MS)

1. Lay Summary

What is the aim of the project? How will it benefit people affected by MS?

What is the reason for this study?

How will this project be carried out?

Where could your research findings lead next?

How will you share your results?

1. Involvement of people affected by MS

How have people affected by MS been involved so far in the planning and development of this project and how has this affected the development of the project so far?

How do you intend to involve people affected by MS in the ongoing development of the project?

1. Questions for the Research Network

1.

2.

3.

**We’re the MS Society.**   
Our community is here for you   
through the highs, lows and   
everything in between.   
We understand what life’s like with MS.

Together, we are strong enough to stop MS.



**Contact us**

MS National Centre 020 8438 0700

[info@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:info@mssociety.org.uk)

MS Helpline Freephone 0808 800 8000 (weekdays 9am-9pm)

[helpline@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:helpline@mssociety.org.uk)

**Online**

[mssociety.org.uk](http://mssociety.org.uk/)  [facebook.com/MSSociety](http://facebook.com/MSSociety)

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