2022/23

Lay summary development - guidance for researchers

1. Lay summary development - guidance for researchers

Lay summary development offers you the chance to receive input from the MS Society’s Research Network **before** you submit your funding application to our grant round.

What is the Research Network?

A group of over 350 people affected by MS, either living with MS themselves or with a partner, family member 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 your lay summary?

Your lay summary and involvement plans are an essential part of your application. These will be assessed by our lay reviewers at submission, and at the funding panel meeting. If your lay summary is too brief or too complex, it will be difficult for them to comment and score your application. This will have an impact on whether your research proposal will be funded.

Our lay summary development scheme can help you to write a clear lay summary and public involvement plan, before submitting your application. People affected by MS will provide written feedback on how well you have communicated your research proposal, and the importance of the topic to people affected by MS.

Completing the lay summary development scheme isn’t a compulsory part of our review process but is strongly encouraged.

How do I submit a request for lay summary development?

Email [researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk) with your completed request form (see pages 5-7).

You must submit your completed form by the scheme closing date for the award type you are applying for. You will receive the feedback on your summary approximately four weeks before the deadline for submitting your funding application (see table below).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Award type** | **Lay summary development scheme closes** | **When you will receive feedback on your lay summary** |
| Catalyst Awards round 1 | 20 November 2023 | 20 December 2023 |
| Project Awards | 20 November 2023 | 20 December 2023 |
| Career Development Awards | 8 April 2024 | 12 May 2023 |
| Catalyst Awards round 2 | 8 April 2024 | 12 May 2024 |
| Data Discovery Awards | 8 April 2024 | 12 May 2024 |

What happens once I have submitted my request?

Your lay summary and public involvement plan will be reviewed by 3-5 Research Network members (dependant on availability).

We’ll allocate Research Network members at random, unless you specify that you’d like to involve only people who meet certain criteria (e.g. those experiencing a specific symptom). We’ll do our best to meet such requests but can’t guarantee this.

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

How will this affect my chances of being awarded funding in the 2024 award round?

The lay summary development scheme doesn’t form part of our funding review process. It’s a resource which allows you to improve the quality of your application before you submit.

Research Network members who provide feedback as part of the lay summary development are then exempt from reviewing your application once it’s submitted.

Assessing impact

Assessing the impact of our public involvement activities is very important to us. We may contact you after the award round deadline to find out how useful you found this scheme.

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

Your feedback will help us to improve this process for the next award round.

How to complete the request form

You should complete the below request form and return it, alongside any documentation that you’d like reviewed by the Research Network, to researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk.

Section 1

Add your details, specify if this is animal research and which award you are applying for.

Sections 2 and 3:

Please answer the questions to outline your **lay summary** and **public involvement plan**. You need 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 and analogies can really help.

Section C of the award 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.

Section 4

We set a few standard questions for our Research Network members to answer when reviewing your lay summary and public involvement plan. The feedback from these questions can help you to improve your application before submission.

Section 5

Here you have the opportunity to ask the Research Network members any specific questions about your research or public involvement plans. The network members can respond to these questions based on their personal experiences of MS.

Some examples of general questions might be:

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

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?

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

**Please note, this scheme is not for recruiting participants or advisory members for your research.**

If you would like further support from the MS Society with your public involvement plans or to recruit new public representatives, please email researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk or download our public involvement request form from [our webpage](https://www.mssociety.org.uk/research/researchers/resources-researchers/public-involvement-in-research).

Lay summary development request form – 2023/24

Please complete the below request form, and return it with any other documentation that you’d like the Research Network to review to [researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk)

Make sure you submit these documents by the closing date of the lay summary development scheme for the award round you are applying to (see table on page 2).

1. Application details

Lead applicant’s name:

Institution:

Lay project title:

Does this project involve animals? Yes / No

Which funding award are you applying for?

1. Lay Summary

What is the aim of the project? How will it benefit people affected by MS? (300 words max.)

What is the reason for this study? (300 words max.)

How will this project be carried out? (300 words max.)

Where could your research findings lead next? (300 words max.)

How will you share your results? (300 words max.)

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? (300 words max.)

How do you intend to involve people affected by MS in the ongoing development of the project? (300 words max.)

1. Standard questions for the Research Network

How would you rate the lay summary?

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Acceptable

☐ Poor

Does the lay summary cover everything you want to know about the research project?

Was the language used clear and understandable, including any scientific terms and jargon being well explained? If not, which terms need explanation (please feel free to highlight)?

Is it clear what impact the research could have on people living with MS?

Have the plans for sharing the research findings considered appropriate ways to communicate with people affected by MS?

Do you feel the public involvement plans will lead to meaningful involvement throughout the research project? Do you have any ideas or suggestions on this?

Are there any other ways in which the lay summary could be improved?

1. Additional questions from the applicant

**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)

[twitter.com/mssocietyuk](http://twitter.com/mssocietyuk)

**MS Society Scotland**

0131 335 4050

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

**MS Society Northern Ireland**

028 9080 2802

nireception@mssociety.org.uk

**MS Society Cymru**

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

Multiple Sclerosis Society.

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