PPI Partnership Scheme

Guidance and application form for researchers

# PPI Partnership Scheme

Our Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Partnership Scheme offers you the chance to receive feedback from people affected by MS **before** you submit your funding application. **It’s only available to early career researchers applying to our Early Career Fellowships.** We’ve designed this scheme to support researchers, who may have less experience of PPI, to develop their skills. And to help them secure funding.

You don’t have to complete the PPI Partnership Scheme and it isn’t part of our review process. But we do encourage you to use this opportunity.

Please note, the PPI Partnership Scheme runs in parallel to our Lay Summary Development scheme. **You can only apply to one of these schemes.**

The table below outlines the difference between the two schemes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| PPI Partnership Scheme | Lay Summary Development Scheme |
| For early career researchers  | For all researchers |
| Early Career Fellowship awards only | All award rounds |
| Receive verbal feedback on your draft lay summary and involvement plans, from your 1-3 Research Network partner(s).  | Receive written feedback on your draft lay summary and involvement plans, from 3-5 Research Network members. |
| 2-3 facilitated one-hour meetings with your Research Network partner(s).  | No direct contact with Research Network members. |

**What is PPI?**

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) is where you work with people affected by MS to design and deliver the project. This is a move away from research being done ‘to’ and ‘for’ people affected by MS. Towards a partnership model where research is done ‘with’ and ‘by’ people affected by MS.

People affected by MS have ‘lived experience’ expertise. This is vital to make sure your research is focused on what matters to people affected by MS. And that it’s designed in a way that fully considers their needs.

There are many ways you can involve people affected by MS in all stages of your research.

# What is the Research Network?

Our Research Network is a group of over 300 people affected by MS. This includes people living with MS. Or with a close personal connection to someone living with MS, such as loved ones and carers. They’re trained to use their personal experiences of MS to help improve the quality and relevance of research through PPI activities.

# Why consult people affected by MS before submitting your funding application?

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

Meaningful involvement of people affected by MS during your project’s design and implementation is one of our key review criteria.

Our PPI Partnership Scheme can help you to write a clear lay summary and well thought out involvement plan, before submitting your application.

# How does the PPI Partnership Scheme work?

This scheme is intended to give you experience of working with people affected by MS, whilst also receiving feedback on your funding application.

We partner you with 1-3 people from our Research Network. Your PPI partner(s) will give verbal feedback on your draft lay summary and involvement plans during a minimum of two online meetings.

## Overview of the whole process

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activity  | Deadline | Guidance  |
| Submit request form | 14 April | You should fill in the request form at the end of this document. This contains the draft lay summary and involvement plan sections of your funding application. You can also write questions for your PPI partner(s).You should email this to researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk  |
| Pairing  | 21 April  | We'll pair you with the most appropriate PPI partner(s) from our Research Network (dependant on availability). And book your first meeting with your PPI partner(s). |
| First meeting | 28 April – 2 May | Your first meeting with your PPI partner(s) will be facilitated by us and will have a semi-structured format:Three minutes for you to introduce your research proposal. This should be understandable and accessible to anyone without previous knowledge of your research subject.Your PPI partner(s) will give their thoughts on your overall research proposal and the PPI questions you asked in your form.We can advise on options for involving people affected by MS in research.You can ask follow-up questions, and request explanation or more detail throughout.You’re responsible for taking notes during the conversation. Note taking apps, such as otter.ai may be used if everyone agrees beforehand. |
| Submit second draft  | 12 - 16 May | You’ll submit a second draft of your lay summary and involvement plans, considering feedback from your PPI partner(s). The new draft and any additional questions should be emailed to researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk at least two weeks before the second meeting. We’ll send this to your PPI partner(s) to review.  |
| Second meeting | 26 - 30 May  | You'll discuss the changes made to your lay summary and involvement plans, and address any further questions. You may wish to discuss the accessibility of your writing.  |
| Third meeting (optional) | 9 - 13 June | You can organise an optional third meeting if you’d like. This can be decided during the second meeting. |
| Submit funding application | 17 June | [See our funding page for more information.](https://www.mssociety.org.uk/research/for-researchers/funding)  |

We hope this process will help you develop a working relationship with your PPI partner(s). And we’d encourage you to continue to work together if your funding application is successful. Your PPI partner(s) could provide valuable contribution to your ongoing project as PPI contributors.

# How do I apply for the PPI Partnership Scheme?

Email researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk with your completed request form (see pages 6-8).

You must submit your completed form by **Monday 13 April 2025**.

# How will this affect my chances of being funded?

The PPI Partnership scheme allows you to improve the quality of your application **before** you submit. Reviewers won’t know if you’ve taken part in the scheme or not. And it isn’t part of our review process.

Your PPI partner(s) won’t be involved in lay review of your application. Or any other applications submitted to the same Award round.

# Assessing impact

It’s important to make sure our public involvement activities have a positive impact. We may contact you after you’ve submitted your funding application to get your feedback on this scheme.

Your feedback won’t affect your chances of receiving funding. But it’ll help us improve the scheme for future rounds. And Research Network members are always pleased to hear if their input was helpful.

# Completing the request form

Complete the below request form and return it to researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk. You should attach any documentation that you’d like your PPI partner(s) to review.

## Section 1

Add your details and your application details.

## Sections 2 and 3:

You should answer the questions to outline your **lay summary** **and public involvement plan**. You must clearly describe your research project in [plain English](https://www.invo.org.uk/makeitclear/). It should explain what you plan to do, and how this could benefit people affected by MS. You can include diagrams and analogies. These can be helpful to support understanding.

## Section 4

You’ll receive general feedback on your draft lay summary and involvement plan. But you can also ask your PPI partner(s) some specific questions if you’d like to. This can help guide the conversation. And keep feedback focused on what is most useful to you.

We’ve provided some standard PPI questions in section 4 of the form. You’re welcome to use these if you’d like to. But you can also set your own questions that are more specific to your project. We recommend asking **a maximum of four questions**.

Some examples of general questions might be:

* Are the requirements placed upon study participants realistic and achievable (for example, number and duration of visits)? Are the procedures too invasive or burdensome?
* Do the outcome measures capture what is important to people affected by MS?

Your questions can be much more specific than these examples. It’s important to ask questions that’ll be of most value to you.

**Please note, this scheme isn’t for recruiting participants for your research.**

# PPI Partnership request form – 2025

Complete this form and return it to researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk. You should attach any documentation that you’d like your PPI partner(s) to review.

**You should only apply for the PPI Partnership if you’re applying to our Early Career Fellowships in the current round (2025).** You must submit your completed form by Monday 14 April 2025.

**1. Application details**

Lead applicant’s name:

Institution:

Lay project title:

Does this project involve animals? Yes / No

Would it be useful if your PPI partner(s) has experience of a particular topic? For example, particular symptoms or treatments. Or a particular type of MS. We can’t guarantee that you’ll be matched with people with this experience. But we'll try to do this if possible.

**2. Lay Summary**

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

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

How will the 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.)

**3. Involvement of people affected by MS**

How have you involved people affected by MS in the planning and development of the project so far? And how has this affected the development of the project so far? (300 words max.)

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

**4. Questions for your PPI partner**

**Please tick up to four questions you’d like to ask.**

Remember you can also set your own, more specific questions if you’d like to.

[ ]  Does the lay summary cover everything you want to know about the research project? If not, what else should be included?

[ ]  Was the language used clear and understandable. And any scientific terms well explained? If not, which terms or concepts need explanation?

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

[ ]  How could the ask of participants be improved to better consider their needs?

[ ]  Are plans for sharing the research findings appropriate to communicate with people affected by MS?

[ ]  Will the public involvement plans lead to meaningful involvement throughout the research project?

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

[ ]  Are there any ways the involvement plans could be improved?

[ ]  Add your own specific question(s) here (if applicable):

[ ]  …

**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.
[mssociety.org.uk](http://mssociety.org.uk/)

Contact us
MS National Centre 020 8438 0700
info@mssociety.org.uk
MS Helpline Freephone 0808 800 8000
(weekdays 9am-9pm)
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

MS Society Northern Ireland
028 9080 2802
nireception@mssociety.org.uk

MS Society Cymru
mscymru@mssociety.org.uk