![MS Society logo]

MS Society Grant Round 2019

Applicant guidance

This guidance document should be used in conjunction with the "help" section on our online application system CC Grant Tracker.

January 2019

Let's stop MS **together**

Contents

1.   Introduction

As the largest charitable funder of MS research in the UK, we welcome applications for projects that will increase the understanding of, and find new effective treatments for MS, as well as improve care and services for people affected by MS.

This guidance document should be used in conjunction with the "help" section on our online application system CC Grant Tracker: https://research.mssociety.org.uk/.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that information in this guidance is accurate, changes are possible and the most up-to-date version of the guidance will be available on our website.

The MS Society will consider any application that is relevant to MS in our Grant Round. Applications will be judged on scientific merit and relevance to MS. They should also be in line with our Research Strategy. All decisions on scientific quality and relevance are made by independent peer and lay reviewers and not the charity's administrative staff.

All applications are assigned to one of two funding streams:

1.1 Biomedical Research

Biomedical research applications are reviewed by Grant Review Panel 1 (GRP1).

Research proposals that are focussed on identifying the causes of MS and/or identifying and developing disease modifying therapies are classified as biomedical research applications.

1.2 Care and Services Research

Care and Services research applications are reviewed by Grant Review Panel 2 (GRP2).

Research proposals that are focussed on managing the symptoms of MS, developing and evaluating services for people affected by MS or exploring the clinical, social and economic impact of MS are classified as care and services research applications.

Details of both GRP1 and GRP2 membership can be found on the MS Society website: https://www.mssociety.org.uk/research/for-researchers/funding/grant-review-panels.

1.3 MS Society Research Strategy

All applications should fit with the MS Society's Research Strategy. Please note that we have a new Research Strategy 2018-2022. Applicants are required to explain how their project fulfils the aims of our Research Strategy. As such, we recommend that all applicants read and strongly consider this document when writing their application.

Our Research Strategy can be found here: www.mssociety.org.uk/mss-research-strategy.

1.4 MS Society Organisational Strategy

The MS Society has an organisational strategy to guide our work from 2015-2019. We recommend that all applicants also read and strongly consider this document when writing their application.

Our organisational Strategy can be found here: https://www.mssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/how-we-work.

1.5 James Lind Alliance Partnership (JLA) research priorities

In 2013 the MS Society completed a James Lind Alliance Partnership (JLA) to identify the research priorities for MS that are important to people affected by MS and healthcare professionals. You can read more about this process on our website: https://www.mssociety.org.uk/research/explore-our-research/our-research-priorities.

We do not intend to exclusively restrict our funding to these priorities, and will continue to support research into the causes of MS, and all aspects of treatment and care for people affected by MS. However, applications that specifically address these priorities will be considered more favourably. You will be required to outline which, if any, of the JLA priorities your application addresses.

2.   Patient and public involvement (PPI)

Patient and public involvement (PPI) in research is when people with personal experience of health conditions work in active partnership with researchers or research funders such as the MS Society. We believe that involving people affected by MS strengthens the quality and relevance of MS research.

This is distinct from being a participant in a trial or study, and from public engagement. Involvement is about influencing the design and oversight of a project.

Before applying, we encourage applicants to consider involving people affected by MS in the development of proposals. This helps to:

- Ensure your research questions are relevant to their experiences
- Improve the clarity of your lay summary
- Ensure your study design is patient-friendly way and acceptable to participants with MS

Please see the Application Development section on the next page for details on how we can support researchers with this.

We ask applicants to outline in their research proposal how they will involve people affected by MS, should their application be awarded funding. For example, people affected by MS could:

- Join an advisory group to provide their perspective throughout the course of a project - advising on challenges such as low recruitment.
- Review participant information materials to be used in your research (leaflets, posters, webpages, questionnaires)
- Advise on the best ways to communicate and disseminate your findings

You may find the following resources useful to plan effective patient and public involvement:

- INVOLVE Briefing notes for researchers: http://www.invo.org.uk/posttypepublication/involve-briefing-notes-for-researchers/
- The NIHR Research Design Service patient and public involvement in Health and Social Care Research handbook: http://www.rds-london.nihr.ac.uk/RDSLondon/media/RDSContent/files/PDFs/RDS_PPI-Handbook_web_1.pdf
- INVOLVE guidance on 'Budgeting for involvement': http://www.invo.org.uk/posttypepublication/budgeting-for-involvement/.
- Access to Understanding 'Writing about biomedical and health research in plain English': http://www.access2understanding.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Access-to-Understanding-writing-guidance_v1.pdf

Expenses for involvement should be included in the budget.

It is important to write a clear lay summary because people affected by MS are involved in the MS Society's review process. If your lay summary is too brief or too complex, it will be difficult for lay reviewers to comment and score your application.

Please see Appendix 1: Writing an excellent lay summary for guidance on writing a lay summary.

Application development
This is an opportunity for applicants to receive informal comments from people affected by MS before submitting their application. This does not form part of our review process, but is intended to help applicants to improve their applications by taking into account the views of people affected by MS.

Involving people affected by MS before submitting your application:
- 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

Should you wish to take advantage of this opportunity, you will need to submit a completed Application Development request form to researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk by **12 noon Monday 18 February 2019.**

Guidance notes and a request form are available on our website: http://www.mssociety.org.uk/research-application-development-2019.

You will receive feedback by Thursday 21 March 2019.

Please see Appendix 1: Writing an excellent lay summary for guidance on writing a lay summary.

For all enquiries about involving people affected by MS in any stage of your research, please contact the Public Involvement Officer: researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk or 020 8438 0844.

3. Key Documents

Please ensure that you consult the following documents before submitting any application to the MS Society:

3.1 Award terms and conditions	The MS Society's grant award conditions can be found here: www.mssociety.org.uk/research-grant-awards-conditions-and-policies-2019. This document contains our: - **Open Access Policy**: We are committed to open and unrestricted access to the results of MS Society funded research. The policy requires authors of research papers based on MS Society funded research to publish in an open access environment. - **Grant Award Conditions**: These Award Conditions, together with the Award Letter and the Policies, set out the terms and conditions on which the Award is made by the Society to the Recipient. - **Intellectual Property Policy**: This Intellectual Property (IP) Policy document sets out principles that the Society will be guided by when considering questions that arise in relation to intellectual property and research matters.
3.2 Research Grant Review Panel: Conflicts of Interest	This document outlines the Conflicts of Interest guidance for our Grant Review panels: www.mssociety.org.uk/GRP-Conflicts-of-Interest
3.3 Research Grant Review: Terms of Reference	This document outlines the Terms of Reference our grant review panels: www.mssociety.org.uk/grant-review-panels-terms-of-reference
3.4 Our 2018 – 2022 Research Strategy	This document outlines our Research Strategy 2018 – 2022: www.mssociety.org.uk/mss-research-strategy

4. Key Terms and Definitions

This is a list of key terms and definitions used in this applicant guidance document

Term	Definition
3Rs	The principles of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) were developed over 50 years ago as a framework for humane animal research. Find out more information here: http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/
AMRC	Association of Medical Research Charities. We are a member of the AMRC and our funding process complies with their regulations and guidance.
Advisor	- Advisors can be added by the lead applicant. This allows the advisor to view the application, edit the application and provide comments. - Advisors do not need to be actively involved in the project. - Advisors differ from lead and co-applicants as they are not listed on the application. The names of advisors will not be visible to grant reviewers. - Advisors do not need to sign off the application before it is submitted.
Co-applicant	- A co-applicant is a researcher who will be actively involved in the project should the funding application be successful. - Co-applicants can view and edit applications. - Co-applicants are required to approve applications on our online system CC Grant Tracker before it can be submitted by the lead applicant.
Finance Officer	A member of the host institution who is responsible for confirming and approving financial details of the applications. The finance officer will be responsible for administering the grant if it is awarded.
Grant Review Panel 1 (GRP1)	Biomedical research applications are reviewed by Grant Review Panel 1 (GRP1).
Grant Review Panel 2 (GRP2)	Care and Services research applications are reviewed by Grant Review Panel 2 (GRP2).

CC Grant Tracker	Grant Tracker is the online grants system where you must submit your application. You can access it via the following link: https://research.mssociety.org.uk/
Indirect costs	- Indirect costs are non-specific costs charged across all projects. - These costs are necessary for underpinning research but cannot be allocated to individual projects. These costs account for things such as computing and information support, central services, general maintenance and other infrastructure costs and will be calculated separately by each Higher Education Institution (HEI), according to TRAC methodology. - Note **the MS Society will not cover any indirect costs**, in line with AMRC guidance. Examples of indirect costs are listed in the 'Finance and Costs' section of this document.
Lead Applicant	The named lead applicant will be considered to be the project leader. In addition, the lead applicant will: - Be the contact person for all correspondence relating to the application. - Must accept overall responsibility for the award, if granted, and must be actively engaged in its direction.
Public Engagement	Where information and knowledge about research is provided and disseminated. Examples of engagement are science festivals open to the public, open days at a research centre, raising awareness in the media. To find out more about engagement, see http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/
Public Involvement (PPI)	Where members of the public are actively involved in research projects and in research organisations. Examples of involvement would be where lay people are involved in identifying research priorities, are members of a project steering group, or comment on patient information materials. To find out more about involvement, see www.invo.org.uk
Public Participation	Where people take part in a research study. Examples of participation include people being recruited to a clinical trial or other study, or completing a questionnaire as part of a study. To find out more about participation in trials, see https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-trials/

Supervisor (for Junior Fellowships)	Supervisors must be actively involved in the Junior Fellowship and are responsible for the ongoing support of the fellows. Supervisors are required to approve an application before it can be submitted.
Research Network	The Research Network are a passionate group of individuals living with MS or caring for someone with MS. They are not required to have specialist scientific knowledge, but are trained to use their personal experiences of MS to review applications, ensuring that the research we fund is of the highest importance to people with MS.
Triage	Triage is a stage in the MS Society review process that takes place after applications have been peer and lay reviewed. This involves a sub-group of the grant review panel, including the Chair, Vice Chair and people affected by MS, identifying applications that have received low scores for quality of science and relevance at the peer and lay review stages. Following consultation with the Panel and the MS Society, these applications are removed from the process prior to the Panel meeting. Triage allows for quicker communication of decisions to unsuccessful applicants as well as making the process more efficient as a whole.

5.   The Review Process

5.1 Biomedical applications

All Biomedical applications will undergo the following process when submitted, which complies with AMRC guidelines:

▶ **Grant Round opens 28 January 2019**

▶ **Research Network Application Development submission deadline – 12 noon, 18 February 2019**

▶ **Feedback from Research Network returned (if applicable) - 21 March 2019**

▶ **Deadline for grant applications – 12 noon, 11 April 2019**

▶ **Peer and lay review of applications – April to June 2019**
   Applications will undergo external peer and lay review and scoring (minimum of two peer reviews). Applications requesting <£25,000 will be externally reviewed only at the discretion of the Chair. Biomedical applications which require human participants or the use of human tissue will be lay reviewed at this stage.

▶ **Applicant response to peer and lay reviews – July 2019**
   Applicants receive all public comments provided by peer and lay reviewers. Applicants have **10 days** to respond.

▶ **Triage – late July 2019**
   Peer and lay review scores are collated for consideration by a sub-group of the GRP1 panel, including the Chair, Vice Chair and people affected by MS. The sub-group propose a cut-off score for applications which is then decided upon by entire panel. Following agreement, applications under a certain score are rejected.

▶ **GRP1 Meeting – September 2019**
   Applications remaining after triage are considered at the GRP1 meeting. All applications are scored and ranked to determine funding recommendations.

▶ **Clarifications – September 2019**
   GRP1 may request further information and clarifications from applicants if required before making a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Requests for clarifications are not a confirmation of funding and final decisions are at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

▶ **Review Panel makes funding recommendations – September/October 2019**
   Following clarifications, GRP1 make their final funding recommendations to the MS Society.

▶ **Funding Decisions and Awarding – October 2019**
   The Society's Board of Trustees takes into account GRP1's recommendations for funding to make the final funding decisions. The MS Society will inform those applicants who have been awarded funding. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed at this stage.

▶ **Research begins – earliest start date: 1 January 2020**

5.2 Care and services applications

All Care and Services applications will undergo the following process when submitted, which complies with AMRC guidelines.

▶ **Grant Round opens 28 January 2019**

▶ **Research Network Application Development submission deadline – 12 noon, 18 February 2019**

▶ **Feedback from Research Network returned (if applicable) - 21 March 2019**

▶ **Deadline for grant applications – 12 noon, 11 April 2019**

▶ **Peer and lay review of applications – April to June 2019**
    Applications will undergo external peer and lay review and scoring (minimum of two peer reviews and two lay reviews). Applications requesting <£25,000 will be externally reviewed only at the discretion of the Chair.

▶ **Applicant response to peer and lay reviews – July 2019**
    Applicants receive all public comments provided by peer and lay reviewers. Applicants will have 10 days to respond.

▶ **Junior Fellowship applications only**: **18 July 2019 Interview**
    Candidates for Junior Fellowships attend an in person interview with the Chair of GRP2, an additional GRP2 panel member & a member of the Research Network.

▶ **Triage and Junior Fellowship decisions – late July 2019**
    Peer and lay scores are collated for consideration by a sub-group of the GRP2 panel, including the Chair and people affected by MS. The sub-group propose a cut-off score for applications which is then decided upon by entire panel. Following agreement, applications under a certain score are rejected.
    Junior Fellowship funding recommendations from a sub-panel of GRP2 will be made to the Board of Trustees and applicants informed of award outcomes.

▶ **GRP2 Meeting – September 2019**
    Applications remaining after triage are considered at the GRP2 meeting. All applications are scored and ranked to determine funding recommendations.

▶ **Clarifications – September 2019**
    GRP2 may request further information and clarifications from applicants if required before making a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Requests for clarifications are not a confirmation of funding and final decisions are at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

▶ **Review Panel makes funding recommendations – September/October 2019**
    Following clarifications, GRP2 make their funding recommendations to the Society.

▶ **Funding Decisions and Awarding – October 2019**
    The Society's Board of Trustees takes into account GRP2's recommendations for funding to make the final funding decisions. The MS Society will inform those applicants who have been awarded funding. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed at this stage.

▶ **Research begins – earliest start date: 1st January 2020 (1st October 2019 for Junior Fellowships)**

6. Types of Grant and Eligibility

6.1 PhD Studentship

Purpose	PhD studentships are designed to encourage the best science graduates to embark on a research career in MS.
Eligibility	- Project must be based at a UK university or NHS institution - Must be relevant to MS - Must fit with our Research Strategy - Student must have minimum of upper second class honours degree or equivalent
Funding amount	See PhD finance section
Maximum duration	Up to 36 months
PhD specific review criteria	All applications are scored on relevance and quality of science – please see 'Criteria for review' section for further details. For PhD studentship applications, the research environment and the quality of the training provided will also be key considerations.
Other notes	PhD Studentships are awarded to the prospective supervisor of the project. The supervisor is responsible for identifying a suitable candidate. It is not necessary to name a candidate at the time of application (if this is the case, list the name as "TBC"). Start dates for PhD studentship awards are flexible to allow for student recruitment to coincide with the beginning of the academic year.

6.2 Innovative Grant

Purpose	To provide support for innovative short-term, small-scale pilot or proof of concept projects
Eligibility	- Project must be based at a UK university or NHS institution - Must be relevant to MS - Must fit with our Research Strategy
Funding amount	Up to £40,000
Maximum duration	Up to 12 months
Innovative grant specific review criteria	All applications are scored on relevance and quality of science – please see 'Criteria for review' section for further details. For Innovative Grant applications, it is hoped that these awards will encourage established researchers from both within and outside the MS field to explore innovative ideas in MS research that, if merited, may lead to further support through the Society or other funding sources.
Other notes	Please ensure that Innovative Grant Applications fit the purpose of the award listed above. Please note that there is no lower limit for our Project Grants, so please consider if your application would be better placed there.

6.3 Project Grant

Purpose	To provide support for research projects designed to answer a single question or a small group of related questions. Such questions must be directed towards our Research Strategy. Applications should be hypothesis driven.
Eligibility	- Project must be based at a UK university or NHS institution - Must be relevant to MS - Must fit with our Research Strategy
Funding amount	No lower or upper funding limit, however value for money will be one of the criteria to be considered.
Maximum duration	Up to 36 months
Project grant specific review criteria	All applications are scored on relevance and quality of science – please see 'Criteria for review' section for further details.

6.4 Care and Services Junior Fellowship

Purpose	Junior Fellowships are aimed at attracting and retaining talented scientists, early in their career in MS research.
Eligibility	- Lead applicant must be the Junior Fellowship candidate - Project must be based at a UK university or NHS institution - Must be relevant to MS - Must fit with the Care and Services programme of our Research Strategy (note that Biomedical applications will not be accepted).
Funding amount	No lower or upper funding limit, however value for money will be one of the criteria to be considered.
Maximum duration	Up to 48 months
Junior Fellowship specific review criteria	All applications are scored on relevance and quality of science – please see 'Criteria for review' section for further details. For Junior Fellowship applications, the following will also be taken into consideration: - Quality of the candidate (including potential for future development and their ability to establish an independent research career and group) - The supervisor (demonstrating a proven track-record of high quality MS research and successful track record of developing PhD students) - Training provided
Grant Review Panel	The MS Society will be accepting Junior Fellowship applications for GRP2 only. All Junior Fellowship candidates whose applications pass through triage will be invited to an interview in London. Candidates will be expected to give a presentation on their work as well as answer questions from members of GRP2. **Please note awarding decisions for Junior Fellowships (only) will be made in July/August.**
Other	- A supervisor must be named on all Junior Fellowship applications. - Supervisors must be actively involved in the project and are responsible for the ongoing support of the fellows. - The level and quality of the supervisor and the research environment will also be considered. - Supervisors are required to sign-off the application.

6.5 Biomedical Junior Fellowship

Applications for Biomedical Junior Fellowships will not be accepted in this year's grant round. The MS Society has two collaborations with the MRC that may be of interest: Clinical Research training Fellowships and Career Development Awards. The MRC administers the application process and review of these awards so please contact them directly with any queries. Information on these awards can be found at:

Clinical Research Training Fellowships:

http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Fellowships/Clinical/Clinicalresearchtraining/MRC001820

Career Development Awards:

https://www.mrc.ac.uk/skills-careers/fellowships/non-clinical-fellowships/career-development-award-cda-transition-to-independence/

6.6 NIHR Advanced Fellowship

The MS Society also has a collaboration with the NIHR to co-fund Advanced (post-doctoral) Fellowships, with a broad remit. Further information can be found here:

https://www.nihr.ac.uk/our-research-community/NIHR-academy/nihr-training-programmes/fellowship-programme/nihr-advanced-fellowship.htm

7.   Criteria for review

All applications will be scored and judged on the quality of science and relevance to MS. Applications will be reviewed by both external peer and lay reviewers and by Grant Review Panels.

To assist our peer review process please suggest up to five (5) potential peer reviewers for your application, where indicated in the "Project Details" section of the online application form. Further information on this can be found on the "Help" page.

All applications will be reviewed by members of our Research Network.

Applications will be judged by the panel for their fit with our Research Strategy, JLA Priorities and our organisational strategy.

High scoring applications will:
- Address very important research questions; likely to result in significant benefit for people affected by MS or advancement in the scientific understanding of MS
- Potential impact is highly significant and appropriate to grant type, with a clear and realistic pathway to impact
- Very strong team, containing all relevant disciplines
- Excellent research design, appropriate to the grant type applied for
- Very good value for money
- Clear and well written proposal
- Active involvement (PPI) & influence of people affected by MS at all relevant stages of project

Tips on how to write a great grants application can be found in Appendix 2.

Scoring Guidance used by reviewers is found in Appendix 3.

8. Completing your application form

All applications need to be submitted using our online grant application system, CC Grant Tracker, which is available at this address: https://research.mssociety.org.uk/.

If you require technical support, please use the following contacts:

Email: research@mssociety.org.uk Telephone: 020 8438 0822

Support will only be available during office hours Monday to Friday, 09.00 to 17.00.

8.1 Grant Tracker home page and starting your application

Once you've agreed to the terms and conditions, and registered with the online application portal, you will be asked to fill in the 'Basic Information' and 'CV' sections. This information will be stored in the database and added to any new applications you make.

You can update this information by selecting 'Manage my details' on your homepage. You can also change your password or contact email address here. An example of what your homepage will look like is provided in Fig1.
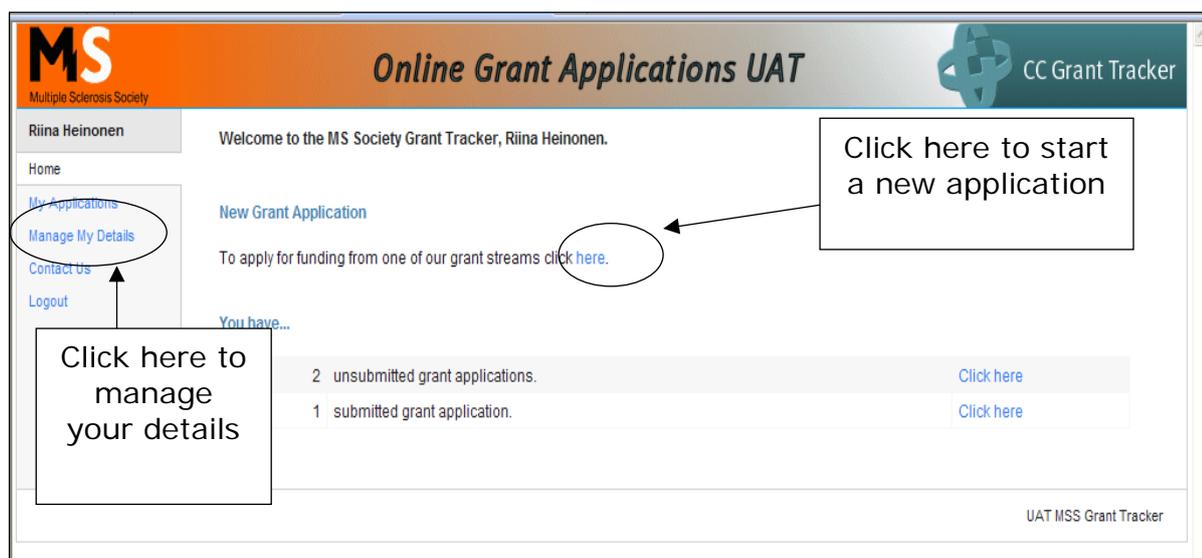

Figure 1 – Homepage

To start a new application, select the button on the homepage shown in Figure 1 or select 'New application' under 'My applications' in the left hand menu. You can also access past or on-going applications on this page.

8.2 The application form

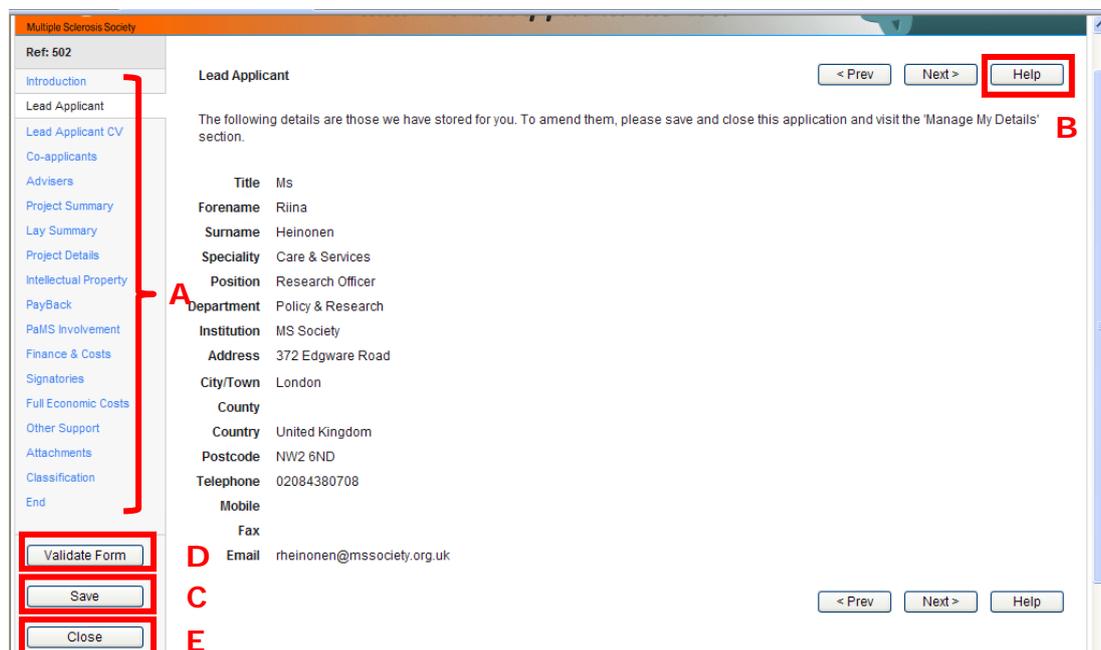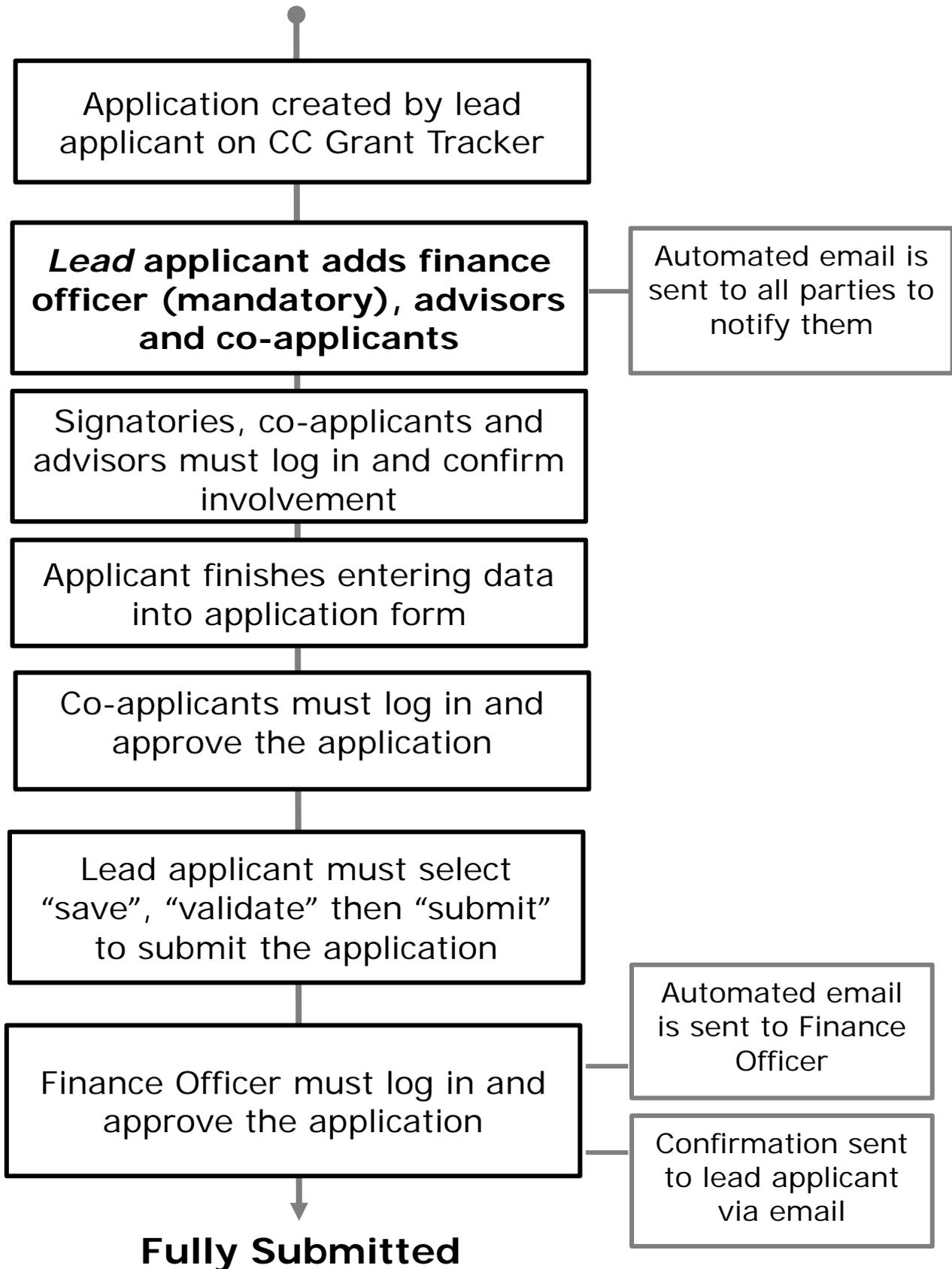This section outlines the key areas of the application form on CC Grant Tracker

Figure 2 – Application Form

A. Application form sections	- The sections of the application form are listed as a menu down the left-hand side of the screen. You must complete all of these sections. - You can either complete your application in sequence or choose the section you want to complete from the left hand Navigation menu. - The system will prevent you and others on your application accessing your application form at the same time.
B. Help	- All applicants should consult the help section for each part of the application. - The help section includes details on what should be included on each page of the application, including mandatory information. Please note that the help section has been revised in 2018, so there may be new instructions.
C. Save	Remember to save your work. You can save your work as many times as you wish until the application is submitted. This system will not automatically save your work.
D. Validate	After you have fully completed your application form and are ready to submit, you must first press "validate form". See Submitting your application – from start to finish
E. Close	When you have finished your session (and after you have saved your work) you should press the Close button.

8.3 Submitting your application – from start to finish

```
Application created by lead
applicant on CC Grant Tracker
```

```
Lead applicant adds finance
officer (mandatory), advisors
and co-applicants
```
```
Automated email is
sent to all parties to
notify them
```

```
Signatories, co-applicants and
advisors must log in and confirm
involvement
```

```
Applicant finishes entering data
into application form
```

```
Co-applicants must log in and
approve the application
```

```
Lead applicant must select
"save", "validate" then "submit"
to submit the application
```

```
Finance Officer must log in and
approve the application
```
```
Automated email
is sent to Finance
Officer
```
```
Confirmation sent
to lead applicant
via email
```

Fully Submitted

8.4 FAQs

8.4.1 How do I submit an application if I'm a new user?	- If you have never been involved with submitting an MS Society research application, you will need to register with our online system. - To do this, select the "Register" button on the home screen. Please bear in mind the following: o The email address that you register with will be used for all email correspondence.
8.4.2 Do I need to re-register if I've previously submitted an application?	- You will not need to re-register.
8.4.3 How do I add co-applicants, advisors and finance officers?	- Lead applicants (only) can add co-applicants, advisors and finance officers to the application form by searching for existing contacts already registered in the online system or by entering new contact details. - Both new and existing contacts will be notified by email that they have been added to the application. - You can monitor the status of these invitations on the application overview page. - Please do not instruct co-applicants, advisors and finance officers to register with our online system independently via the home screen – they should await the automatic email that is sent when they have been added to the application by the lead applicant.
8.4.4 What do I do if I've forgotten my password?	- If you forget your password, you click the Forgotten Password link on the Registration and Login Page, and ask for a replacement password to be sent to you by email. - This replacement password gives temporary access to the system, during which time you will be asked to provide a new, permanent password.
8.4.5 What do I do if I've been locked out of my account?	- Persistent use of an incorrect password will lock your account; this is to protect you from attempts to access your data by a third party. If this happens you can request a new password via the 'Forgotten password' function.

9. Resubmission Policy

Only **one** resubmission of any previously unsuccessful application will be accepted, unless you have been **explicitly invited** to resubmit. When resubmitting an application, applicants should select this within the **"Other Support"** section of the application form and complete the text box according to the above guidance.

Why?

Due to the amount of applications received each year we are introducing this policy to help reduce the time demand on all involved in our peer review process.

Over the past five years, 8% of resubmissions have been successful.

We expect all submitted applications to have been carefully considered and present a high level of grantsmanship that has been thoroughly reviewed by the applicant and their institution. Our hope is that this resubmission policy will add to this by promoting a culture of high-quality submissions and high-quality reviews that will benefit the applicant, the reviewers and the MS Society alike. In turn this will benefit the MS community as a whole by assisting in the selection and funding of high quality and relevant research that has an impact on people with MS.

What constitutes a resubmission?

A resubmission is any application that was previously submitted to the MS Society Grant Round. This includes and is not limited to:
- Applications submitted under a different name
- Applications submitted under a different stream (e.g. Changing a PhD Studentship to an Innovative Award)

Exceptions
Where there is compelling evidence from peer review, we will invite a small number of further resubmissions where advised by the Grant Review Panels.

Preparing a resubmission:

When preparing a resubmission the following must be included in the *"Other Support"* section, in the text box marked *"How does this application differ from the original?"*
- Responses to any of the comments or considerations previously provided during the review process
- A summary of any substantial changes to the application

What constitutes sufficient change to qualify as a new submission?
- Only major changes will be sufficient to qualify as a new submission. Minor changes or only considering reviewer comments does not qualify as a new submission.

Consequences of an Uninvited Resubmission:

If a new application is deemed a resubmission, or if it is an uninvited resubmission that has already been submitted twice, then it will automatically be rejected.

10. Finance and Costs

10.1 Acceptable/ unacceptable costs

Applicants should work with finance offices, clinical trials units, local NHS trusts and the local NIHR CRN network to ensure that all costs of research have been identified and appropriately paid for.

Please ensure that your application complies with the following financial criteria:

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
Staff members	- Salaries for staff who work specifically on the funded project.	- Salary for the lead applicant or co-applicant(s), with the exception of Junior Fellowship applications. In exceptional circumstances, where funding is not already in place for the salary and an appropriate justification is made, a proportion of salary costs may be considered. - Salaries for project supervision. - It is the responsibility of the employing institution, not the MS Society, to provide for maternity benefit and increases in salary costs other than annual increments and cost of living awards. - Apprenticeship levy - Once the award has been made, the Society will not increase the Award to reflect increased research costs, including increased salaries due to nationally agreed pay awards/inflation.	- A copy of current salary scales should be provided by the finance department and attached in the 'Attachments' section at the end of your online application for all salaried staff. - Gradings and salaries should have the approval of the administrative office of the Institution where staff is to be employed. - An appropriate grading and salary must be quoted even where staff members cannot be named. - Salaries must show the separate amounts claimed for basic pay, national insurance (showing % salary and total amount, at current rates), London weighting allowance (LWA) where applicable and superannuation (up to a maximum rate of 18% on basic salary and LWA).

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
Consumables	-Laboratory chemicals and materials (e.g. reagents, isotopes, peptides, enzymes, antibodies, gases, proteins, cell/tissue/ bacterial culture). -Data collection materials, if specific to the project. -Where justified, personal computing costs for named individuals engaged to work specifically on the grant. -Patient and public involvement (PPI) costs. -A full justification is required for all consumables.	- Article publishing or open access charges. - Standard per unit IT charges. - Phone/ computer accessories (drivers, cases, chargers, batteries).	- For further guidance on PPI costs please visit: http://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment-and-recognition-for-public-involvement/involvement-cost-calculator/
Equipment	-Equipment that is specific to the grant and greater than £1000 in value (excluding VAT) should be listed here. Equipment less than £1000 in value may be classed as a consumable, and listed accordingly. -Costs may include purchase, delivery and installation of scientific equipment where that equipment is specific to the grant. -Each piece of equipment should be fully justified.	- Equipment cannot be requested for routine or service use. - Equipment becomes the responsibility of the host institution, which must be responsible for its accommodation, operating and servicing costs, and for any insurance that may be necessary.	- All equipment should be entered net of VAT. - Any single piece of equipment costing in excess of £1000 and funded by the Award is the property of the Society.

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
Animals	-Animal purchase and transportation costs, maintenance (including food) and experimentation costs. -A full justification for their use must be provided in the project details section of the application.	- Home Office Licences and animal handling training costs are not covered.	- The species and number of animals to be used must be stated. - Read more about the information we require about animals in the 'Use of animals' section below.
Human Tissue	-Cost for the provision of human tissue.		- From 1st January 2017 the MS Society Tissue Bank at Imperial College London implemented a cost recovery program. For each tissue request, a fee will be charged to reflect a proportion of the costs associate with providing the tissue. - If human tissue from the MS Society Tissue Bank is to be used in the grant, please include an estimate of the costs according to the tariff found on the Tissue Bank website: http://www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/multiple-sclerosis-and-parkinsons-tissue-bank/research/

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
Conferences	-Conference costs can cover a maximum of £1,000 per year for each member of salaried staff on the application, for each year the salary is supported by the grant.	- First class travel to meetings/ conferences	- Conference costs need to be split evenly across the three years e.g. money cannot be transferred from Year 1 to Year 2. - Conferences costs are pro rata i.e. if a salaried member of staff is part time, they can claim for £500 of fees in one year. - Conference costs can be used to cover travel, registration fee and/or accommodation for meetings/conferences. - Only meetings/conferences directly related to the funded research.
PhD studentship fees	**PhD Stipends** Outside London: Year 1: £14,777 Year 2: £15,145 Year 3: £15,525 Inside London: Year 1: £16,777 Year 2: £17,145 Year 3: £17,525 **PhD tuition fees** Maximum of £7,000 per year. **Running costs** Maximum of £15,000 per year.		- Stipends are in accordance with MRC guidelines, are tax-free and include a 2.5% inflationary increase year on year. - Awarded grants will include the host institution's tuition fees at home/EU student rates. - The MS Society will not be responsible for any increase in fees once an award has been made, and it is recommended that applicants seek advice from their institutions when estimating the

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
	Running costs include costs in the following categories (only): • Consumables • Equipment • Animals • Human Tissue	Running costs do not include student fees or Conference costs.	future level of fees for their application.
Other		- Excess treatment costs. - Institutional overheads - Financial services - Personnel services - Recruitment costs - Public relations - General institution libraries - Departmental services (administration, secretarial, printing, photocopying) - Telephone charges and postage or courier services - Subscriptions to journals - Furniture - Annual software licencing fees	- Excess treatment costs should be funded through the NHS. - On the 1st of October 2018 changes to the way in which Excess Treatment Costs (ETCs) are paid came into force. Researchers applying for clinical research grants will need to complete a Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Template (SoECAT) in order to be eligible for the NIHR portfolio and the support this provides including ETCs. - You will need to factor in the time to complete a SoECAT and have an AcoRD Specialist sign it so that you can upload and include it as part of your application submission.

If you believe that any of the 'unacceptable costs' above should be seen as direct costs for your project you must provide full and detailed justification for this in your application.

10.2 Increase in costs

The Society will not be responsible for any increase in the costs of research (whether caused by increased consumables costs, increased personnel costs or otherwise) and the Society will not increase the award to reflect increased research costs, once the award has been made.

10.3 Full economic costs

The MS Society as an AMRC member charity wishes to monitor the full economic costs of the research they support. Unlike some other funding bodies, such as the research councils, AMRC member charities will not fund the full economic costs of research (fECs), or a proportion of these.

The MS Society will only pay for the Directly Incurred costs related specifically to the planned research to be undertaken in this grant.

Please provide your best estimate for all costs of the project, broken down into the following categories:

Directly Incurred	These include the familiar direct costs of research such as: - Staff (e.g. research assistant salaries) - Travel and subsistence - Equipment
Directly Allocated (Previously called "in-direct costs)	These are shared costs, based on estimates and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis. Previously, these costs came under the 'indirect costs' heading but the following items will now be calculated separately: -Applicants: the time spent by the applicant and co-applicants will be calculated and costed. -Estates: the way these are calculated may vary between institutions. Different categories of space will be costed differently, for example laboratory space will be different to office-based costs. -Other Directly Allocated: these include the costs of shared resources, such as staff and equipment.
Indirect Costs	These costs are necessary for underpinning research but cannot be allocated to individual projects. These costs account for things such as computing and information support, central services, general maintenance and other infrastructure costs and will be calculated separately by each Higher Education Institution (HEI), according to TRAC methodology. We will not cover Indirect Costs or any other non-attributable overhead costs in your budget. However, such costs may be eligible under the Charity Research Support Fund.

11. Co-funding applications

The MS Society is open to co-funding applications with other funders. Applicants should provide full details of the co-funder and amount they would be contributing.

12. Use of animals

All applicants intending to use animals in their research must complete this section.

Applicants should review the MS Society's policy on animal research: https://www.mssociety.org.uk/research/latest-research/animal-research.

As members of the AMRC we fully support their statement on animal research: http://www.amrc.org.uk/publications/statement-on-the-use-of-animals-in-research.

The MS Society will not support the use of animals in research unless there is no alternative. Animal use procedures will be carefully considered in review of grant applications. Research using animals will be supported by the MS Society only when the criteria below are met.

All animal use falls within the regulations laid down by Government, including the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Institutions and applicants are responsible for making sure all relevant Home Office licences are held for the duration of the intended projects.

Any research conducted outside of the UK which uses animal must still meet the EU directive minimum standards. Please follow this link for the full Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes.

3R's

All applicants must address the 3R's (replacement, refinement and reduction of animals in research) in the project details section of the application. Further details on the 3R's can be found here: http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/the-3rs. Applicants will be required to address how they have considered each of the following in their proposal:

Replacement – methods which avoid or replace the use of animals
Reduction –methods which minimise the number of animals used per experiment
Refinement – methods which minimise suffering and improve animal welfare.

Justifications

In their application applicants must clearly state and justify the following:

- The relevance to humans and why there is no alternative to the use of animals in the project
- The species and number of any animals that could potentially be used in the project
- Any refinement procedures to minimise any pain or distress
- Measures taken to avoid bias (e.g. blinding, randomisation)
- Number of experimental and control groups and sample size per group
- How the sample size was calculated, showing power calculations and including justification of effect size

- Overview of the planned statistical analyses in relation to the primary outcomes to be assessed
- Frequency of measurements/interventions to be used
- If necessary, circumstances in which power calculations are not appropriate to determine sample size

Considerations

Applicants should also consider that the MS Society supports the AMRC's signing of the Concordat on Openness in Animal Research, with grant holders encouraged to be open about their use of animals in research. More information on the concordat and resources are here: http://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/policy/concordat-openness-animal-research/

The MS Society encourages the improvement of reporting of animal research to improve reproducibility, as outlined in the NC3R's ARRIVE guidelines. Please consider these guidelines when applying to the MS Society for animal-based studies. This guidance can be found at: http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/ARRIVE

13. Use of human tissue

Applicants whose proposed research involves the use of human tissue must confirm that they will comply with the appropriate legislation and follow the relevant Codes of Practice issued by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA). The type of tissue and quantity must be fully justified in the application.

14. References

Essential references relevant to the proposal should be cited. Please enter all references in the following format:

1st Author: Year: Title: Journal: Volume: Pages

Copies of in-press or submitted publications relevant to the proposal should accompany the application, please add these in the "attachments" section.

Appendix 1: Writing an excellent lay summary

A good lay summary is clear and accessible to people who do not have a scientific background. It is not a 'dumbed down' version of your research, but a clear, <u>plain English</u> explanation, which offers context and explains relevance to people affected by MS.

Your lay summary is important because it will be reviewed by a number of our Research Network members. They are not asked to comment on the quality of science.

However, they will comment and score your project based on:
- how relevant it is to people with MS, and the potential impact;
- the extent of involvement of people with MS in the research planning and design;
- if people with MS will be participants, how well the project has taken into account their needs, and how feasible it is;
- the clarity and quality of the writing.

Please note: lay reviewers will only read your lay summary (section B) and your public involvement plan (section C). This therefore needs to include enough information for them to understand the purpose and methods of your project.

Tips on language and layout

Do	Don't
- Try to explain your research in 25 words, and then use this as your first sentence - Consider including a glossary of key terms - Use bullet points and headings to break up long blocks of text - Use simple diagrams and non-scientific analogies to explain complex concepts - Ask a non-scientist to review your summary before you submit - Speak directly to your reader.	- Use overly complicated or uncommon words - Use jargon, abbreviations, acronyms or technical terms without explanation - Forget to check spelling and grammar - Use overly long sentences (25 words or less is a good guide) - Introduce new ideas late in the text

Language should be person-centred rather than focusing on the circumstance, symptom or disability. For example, 'people with MS' is preferable to 'MS sufferers'. A person 'has MS' rather than 'is a victim of MS'.

Structure

Section B of our application form asks for your lay summary. Please address the following questions:

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

This section should clearly set out the aims of the project, and focus on why they are important and relevant to people affected by MS. Please be as specific as you can

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about the potential benefits your work could bring. What will we know at the end of your project that we don't know now?

What is the reason for this study?

This section should clearly set out the rationale for the project. What do we know from past research? How is this project original?

How will this project be carried out?

This section should clearly set out the methods that will be used, and explain why you have chosen to use them. If people with MS will be participants, clearly explain how you will recruit them, and what will be asked of them (and any control group).

Where could your research findings lead next?

In this section please briefly explain where your research project could lead once complete. For example, how will it advance our understanding of MS? Will there be implications for clinical practice? Would you be likely to apply for a larger study? This should help people affected by MS to understand the possible impact of your research and how this project fits in the wider picture.

How will you share your results?
This section should explain how you plan to share your findings with the MS community, and your public engagement activities.

Patient and public involvement (PPI)

Section C of our application form is about patient and public involvement (PPI) in your project. You will need to explain how people affected by MS have been involved in the planning of the project so far, and how you intend to involve throughout the project people should you receive funding.

Please see Section 2 above for useful resources on patient and public involvement. If you would like support in involving people affected by MS in the running of your project, please contact researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk

Please note that by 'involvement' we are not referring to engagement activities which raise awareness of your research with the public. We are also not referring to the recruitment of people as participants in research. Involvement specifically refers to including people affected by MS in the design and overseeing of your research, and using their insight into MS to develop your project.

Helpful resources

- INVOLVE 'Make it Clear' campaign - http://www.invo.org.uk/makeitclear/
- Plain English campaign - http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/free-guides.html
- Access to Understanding 'Writing about biomedical and health research in plain English' - http://www.access2understanding.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Access-to-Understanding-writing-guidance_v1.pdf

Appendix 2: Tips for writing a great MS Society Research grant application

MS Society research funding is highly competitive, with a success rate of around 20-25% over the past 5 years. Winning applications demonstrate high scientific quality and must be very relevant to people affected by MS in the UK. You can improve your chances of success by using the tips below, which we've compiled from the most frequently cited concerns of our grant review panels (GRPs). You can use this guide to help you submit the strongest possible application to the MS Society Grant Round.

Give us more justification and details of your chosen methods (and statistical approach)

The most common reason for why applications are rejected are due to a lack of detail or justification in the chosen method(s) or statistical analys(es). You should explain and justify every method, sample size (including power calculations unless justified) and analysis technique you use. These details will help the panel to understand how scientifically sound, feasible and value-for-money your proposal is.

Show us the proposal is well-designed

The second most common reason for rejection is due to design flaw(s). We consult with international experts in the field (peer reviewers) to scrutinise the scientific details of a proposal.

The concerns they flag up can vary depending on the nature of the application but may include issues with the techniques involved, area of focus (e.g cells or participant group), sample size, follow-up period or concerns regarding bias.

We encourage you to make use of the free NIHR Research Design Service which provides design and methodological review services that will improve your application.

Do a spell and sense check before submission

Too many applications have poor spelling, grammar or inconsistent details (for example, mismatch between the Gantt chart and application form) which can make an application difficult to understand. An application submission should be a team effort so ensure that all applicants have thoroughly reviewed the proposal for spelling and logical flow before submission.

Involve people affected by MS in your proposal design

Involving people affected by MS (PaMS) forms an essential part of our research strategy and application review process. Involving PaMS help to ensure the research we fund is of high quality and relevance to their needs.

Usually 25% of an application's score is from our lay reviewers, so it is very important for your lay reviewers to understand your application. Some of the key areas they consider include the strength of public-patient involvement (PPI) of an application and the clarity of the lay summary.

Absent or weak PPI, and unclear lay summaries is common feedback from our reviewers. PaMS should be involved in all parts of your research, from the planning of the research project to the dissemination. We can help you with this – more below.

Remember that PPI members are often volunteers, some of whom may have never been involved in research before. Ensure that adequate support is in place and they will not be overburdened (these principles also apply to patient participants in your proposal).

Appendix 1 of our Applicant guidance offers helpful tips on writing lay summaries. We're here to help; the MS Society hosts a Research Network, formed of PaMS, who are able to help review your application as well as your lay summary. This is called **Application development** process. We also hold **PPI training courses** which you may find helpful to attend. Be mindful that there is a deadline for signing up to this course as well as Application development.

Demonstrate the relevance and potential impact of your application

While we also consider applications outside of these areas, our panel members look favourably on applications which align with the priorities set by people affected by MS and our research strategy. Your proposal should aim to address a demonstrable gap in MS research.

Novelty and innovation is important, but reviewers also look for applications that have an appropriate balance between ambition and feasibility. Having a clear and realistic pathway to impact will help your application score highly. Applications which are focused and achievable within the time frame and budget proposed are the most sought-after by reviewers. For PhD Studentships in particular, ensure that sufficient time has been considered for a PhD student to learn a broad range of skills.

Get the right team together

The applicant(s) should have expertise in MS and other expertise relevant to the grant (for example, statistical or digital skills), as well as experience in managing grants. Don't assume that the panel will know your area of expertise, and make it clear what each team member will be doing.

For PhD Studentship applications, the supervisory experience will be particularly scrutinised. For Junior Fellowships, additional competencies of the lead applicant such as presentation skills will be considered.

Justify any ethical or legal concerns

In your proposal, it is important to consider the impact of your study on participants or animals (if you are doing an animal study). You should think about any particular risks that your subjects may face, and how you will safeguard against this. This is especially important if you plan to work with particularly vulnerable groups such as children or those at the end of their life. You should also consider the laws around data protection.

Other

- *Incorporating comments for resubmissions* - Panel members have access to your first submission and any associated feedback. Make sure previous concerns have been resolved or justify why they have not.
- *Further justification for costs needed* – all the costs you claim for in your application will be carefully scrutinised to ensure they are necessary for you to complete the research and that they comply with our Applicant Guidance (in particular, see Section 10 Finance and Costs of the Guidance).

Appendix 3: Scoring Guidance for reviewers

Generic criteria	Project grant specific	Innovative grant specific	PhD studentship specific	Junior fellowship specific	Rating	Score	
• Very important research questions; likely to result in significant benefit for people affected by MS or advancement in the scientific understanding of MS • Very strong team, containing all relevant disciplines • Very good value for money • Clear and well written proposal • Active involvement (PPI) & influence of people affected by MS at all relevant stages of project • Potential impact is highly significant and appropriate to grant type, with a clear and realistic pathway to impact	• Excellent, appropriate and highly feasible research design for a project grant (the design, methods and analyses are adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned and appropriate to the aims of the project)	• Excellent, appropriate and highly feasible research design for an innovative award (the project develops or employs novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for the area) • Highly innovative, high-risk, high-reward research which, if successful, has great potential for further development	• Excellent, appropriate and highly feasible research design for a PhD studentship (the design, methods and analyses are well developed and the work is achievable within the timeframe of a PhD) • Excellent training and educational environment	• Excellent, appropriate and highly feasible research design for a junior fellowship (the design, methods and analyses are well developed and the work is achievable within the timeframe of a junior fellowship) • Exceptional candidate; demonstrating high commitment to MS research, clear potential to establish an independent research career; experience in more than one research group and/or institution • Excellent training and educational environment for the candidate with high quality career and network development opportunities.	Exceptional	10	Highly fundable
					Excellent	9	
					High quality	8	
					Good	7	
• Important research questions, likely to result in benefit for people affected by MS or some advancement in the scientific understanding of MS • Team has relevant research experience and contains most of the relevant disciplines • Acceptable value for money • Elements of the application are unclear • Some elements of involving people affected by MS, where appropriate, but not well integrated or well supported • Project would only be fundable with some changes • Potential impact is significant and mostly appropriate to grant type, with a reasonable pathway to impact	• Acceptable research design for a project grant (the design, methods and analyses are acceptable, they are only partially integrated, and further reasoning for how they fit with the aims of the project is required)	• Acceptable research design, appropriate for an innovative grant (concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies are not particularly novel for the area) • Innovative project which, if successful, has potential for further development	• Acceptable research design, appropriate for a PhD studentship (the design, methods and analyses are acceptable and the work is achievable within the timeframe of a PhD) • Acceptable training and educational environment	• Acceptable research design, appropriate for a junior fellowship (the design, methods and analyses are acceptable and the work is achievable within the timeframe of a junior fellowship) • Good candidate; demonstrating a commitment to MS research, potential to establish an independent research career and a group: experience in more than one research group or institution. • Good training and educational environment for the candidate with good quality career and network development opportunities.	Above average	6	Potentially fundable
					Acceptable	5	
					Borderline acceptable	4	
• Irrelevant research questions • Key skills missing from the research team • Poor value for money • Unclear application • Involvement of people affected by MS inappropriate or limited/ lacking • Little or no potential impact or poorly described/not appropriate to grant type, with an unclear/unrealistic pathway to impact	• Poor/ flawed/ duplicative; serious scientific concerns, unsuitable for a project award (the design, methods and analyses are not well developed, not well integrated, and requires further reasoning for how they fit with the aims of the project)	• Research design is unsuitable for an innovative award (concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies are not novel for the area) • Not an innovative project, if success is achieved has no potential for further development	• Poor/ flawed/ duplicative; serious scientific concerns, unsuitable for PhD studentship (the design, methods and analyses are not well developed and the work is not achievable within the timeframe of a PhD) • Poor training environment and educational environment	• Poor/ flawed/ duplicative; serious scientific concerns (the design, methods and analyses are not well developed and the work is not achievable within the timeframe of a junior fellowship) • Candidate lacking relevant experience; not committed to MS research, not demonstrating potential to establish an independent research career and a group • Poor training environment and educational environment for the candidate with poor career and network development opportunities	Below acceptable	3	Not fundable
					Many identified flaws	2	
					Serious scientific weaknesses or other major concerns	1	
					Definitely not fundable	0	

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

Contact us

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

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▶ Let's stop MS together