

A large, stylized orange graphic element in the center of the page. It consists of several overlapping, semi-transparent orange shapes that form a large, irregular shape pointing to the right. The text is centered within this graphic.

**MS Society Centre of  
Excellence Programme  
Grant Open Funding Call**

**Applicant guidance**

This guidance document should be used to help you complete the "Centre of Excellence programme grant initial application form"

August 2019

Let's stop MS together

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## 1. Funding brief

### 1.1 Introduction

The MS Society's number one goal is for everyone with MS to have access to effective treatments to slow, stop or reverse the accumulation of disability. To date, MS Society Centre of Excellence Programme Grant funding has proven to be a successful model to drive forward progress in basic and translational research towards this goal.

By 2020, the existing Cambridge Centre for Myelin Repair and the Edinburgh Centre for MS Research will have been running for 14 and 12 years respectively without open competition for funding. It is now appropriate for the next phase of MS Society funding for Centre(s) of Excellence to be awarded through open competition.

The ultimate aim of the MS Society Centre of Excellence Programme Grants will be to drive progress towards developing effective treatments which slow stop or reverse the accumulation of disability. This work should be grounded in basic science, but should also push translation and feed the treatment pipeline.

Grant funding will be focussed heavily on science, but can also include some support for infrastructure, equipment and administration. A focus will be placed on leveraging additional funding into MS research and building capacity in the field through career development.

**The MS Society is now inviting applications for 5 year Centre of Excellence Programmes and will make up to two awards with a maximum budget of £1.85 million per award.**

Following the funding call, the MS Society has the intention to work closely in partnership with the Centre Directors to support progress and generate maximum impact for the field and for people affected by MS.

### 1.2 Application Process

This call will follow a two-stage application process, comprising an initial application followed by a revised application incorporating panel comments for shortlisted applicants.

**To request the application form, please email [research@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:research@mssociety.org.uk).**

Please read this applicant guidance carefully when completing your application, and email your completed application to [research@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:research@mssociety.org.uk)

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this funding opportunity further, please contact Dr Sorrel Bickley ([sorrel.bickley@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:sorrel.bickley@mssociety.org.uk)).

<b>Indicative timeline</b>	
Deadline for initial applications	29 November 2019
Peer review and applicant response	December 2019
Initial panel meeting	January 2020
Shortlisted applicants invited to submit revised applications incorporating panel feedback	February 2020
Deadline for revised applications	March 2020
Final panel meeting	April 2020
Applicants advised of outcome	May 2020
Award start date	June 2020

Applications will be assessed by peer and lay review, followed by consideration by a Review Panel made up of scientific members and people affected by MS.

Applicants will be expected to make a presentation at the initial panel meeting and to answer questions from the panel. Invited applicants will then have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their applications in response to panel feedback.

The review panel will consider the revised applications and will make a funding recommendation to the MS Society, with final decisions to be made by the MS Society Board of Trustees.

### 1.3 Monitoring & reporting

The MS Society will work with the successful Centres to develop a program to support cross working and collaboration through joint meetings or exchanges.

The successful Centres will be required to submit annual reports, which will be subject to a substantive review. A mid-term report and in-person mid-term panel meeting will also be held at the half way point of the funding period.

### 1.4 Application Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by external peer and lay reviewers and by a Centre of Excellence Programme Grant review panel.

Applications will be reviewed against the following criteria:

- a) *Scientific strategy*
- b) *Plan of Investigation*
- c) *Research environment and track record of success*
- d) *Leadership*

- e) Added value through collaboration*
- f) Building capacity in MS research*
- g) Communication*
- h) Value for money and leveraging additional funds*

## 2. Guidance on completing Application Form sections

This guidance document should be used to help you complete the Microsoft Word application form provided to you separately. Due to technical constraints this stage of the application process will not be using our usual web-based grant management system.

General enquiries regarding this application can be made to [research@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:research@mssociety.org.uk)

More specific questions regarding this brief can be sent to Sorrel Bickley, Head of Biomedical Research [sorrel.bickley@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:sorrel.bickley@mssociety.org.uk)

### B. 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, plain English 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.

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.

#### Structure

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 about the potential benefits your work could bring. How will it move the field forward?

##### **What is the reason for this study?**

This section should clearly set out the rationale for the project, what is already known from past research, how this project is original, and what you hope to find out.

##### **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).

##### **How will your research findings be put into practice?**

This section should clearly set out your plans for dissemination and implementation. Once the project is complete, how will the findings be put into practice or further developed, ensuring that people with MS benefit from your research? This section may also include any planned public engagement activities.

## C. Involvement of people affected by MS

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 that any studies involving people are designed in a patient-friendly way and acceptable to participants with MS

We also encourage applicants to consider how to 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: [http://www.rds-london.nihr.ac.uk/RDSLONDON/media/RDSContent/files/PDFs/RDS\\_PPI-Handbook\\_web\\_1.pdf](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](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.

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

If you would like more information about involving people affected by MS in your research application, please contact the MS Society's public involvement officer, on 020 8438 0844 or email [researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk).

## D. Programme details

Please read this guidance section thoroughly - it includes details of essential information that must be supplied in your application form.

### D1. Programme proposal

#### *a) Scientific strategy*

Please provide details of the vision and aims of the proposed Centre of Excellence, with a focus on how these support the MS Society number one research priority: to find effective treatments to slow, stop or reverse the accumulation of disability associated with MS.

In light of the launch of the MS Society Efficient Clinical Trials Platform in 2020, please also consider how the proposed Centre will feed a strong pipeline of potential treatments entering clinical trials.

#### *b) Plan of Investigation*

Indicate clearly what work is proposed and how you plan to carry it out; any technique that is not widely known should be briefly described.

A Gantt chart or similar should be included to show the expected plan of work over the proposal duration. In this section consideration should be given to the following:

- i. Compliance with any relevant **legal requirements**, such as those regarding the use of dangerous pathogens, genetic manipulation, storing and using human tissue and foetal tissue, among others.
- ii. **Ethical approval** for research proposals involving investigations in people. The MS Society does not require applicants to have an ethical approval at the point of application but information should be provided about when ethical approval will be obtained and what ethics committee (eg. NHS, University) the ethics application will be made to.
- iii. **Recruiting research participants**. If you are recruiting people affected by MS as research participants, please provide information on how you are planning to do this. Please note that the primary way in which the MS Society supports recruitment is by posting information on its website. The MS Society will not generally contact its members directly on behalf of researchers.
- iv. **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/ms-resources/ms-society-policy-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.

**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>

v. **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.

Expenses for cost recovery tariffs for brain and spinal cord tissue should also be included in the budget.

For more details and tariffs, see the MS Society Brain Bank website:  
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/multiple-sclerosis-and-parkinsons-tissue-bank/research/>

*c) Research environment and track record of success*

Please address how the research environment and recent research advances place the proposed Centre in a strong position to support progress and innovation in MS research through Centre of Excellence funding.

*d) Leadership*

Please include details of the proposed Director(s) experience and expertise, and how this would support leading a Centre of Excellence in MS.

*e) Added value through collaboration*

Please address how the research team propose to make use of existing collaborations and establish new collaborations to accelerate progress through the research Programme.

Collaborators associated with the application who are not shown as co-applicants are required to provide a letter of support.

*f) Building capacity in MS research*

The MS Society places a strong focus on supporting career pathways in MS research. Please address how talented individuals would be supported and mentored and their careers developed through the proposed Centre of Excellence funding.

*g) Communication*

Please address how communication would be managed with the research community, the wider community of people affected by MS, and the public.

*h) Value for money and leveraging additional funds*

Applicants may apply for up to £1.85 million for direct research costs over a grant period of up to five years. Up to two awards will be made.

The budget should be focussed around funding science, but can also include support for infrastructure and administration such as lab technicians or admin/communications staff. The inclusion of equipment is actively encouraged. In the case of equipment, specify where it is to be located and give details of the expertise available for its use and maintenance.

Please also include a target figure and narrative for securing additional funding for MS research leveraged through the awarding of MS Society Centre of Excellence Programme Grant funding.

## D2. Pathway to impact

### **What will be the impact of your proposed project (both in the short and long term)?**

The MS Society understands that impact is a long-term and often vague concept that takes time to realise from the moment the projects come to an end and will involve multiple activities beyond those outlined within this application. However, grant holders from the MS Society should prioritise and be mindful of the impact their projects will achieve both during the lifetime of the grant and once it has reached completion - whether this is societal, economical or scientific (academic) impact.

In answering this question you will create an Impact Summary that describes the anticipated impact of your research in the short and long term for people affected by MS. Please identify the realistic potential improvements to people affected by MS and the contribution to relieving disease/disability burden and/or improving quality of life. This could include the expected outputs on the health and care of patients, the public, the research community, and on health and care services in the short and long term. Please indicate the anticipated timescale for the benefits to reach patients, the public and services, providing a quantitative estimate of the scale of these potential benefits, if possible.

In sum, your Impact Summary should address the following questions:

- What do you think the impact of your research will be and for whom?
- How will they benefit?
- When do you expect the impact to be achieved?

### **What would need to happen during the lifetime and after this grant (if successful) to realise the long term impact for people affected by MS?**

In answering this question you will create a Pathway to Impact statement for how the impact will be achieved, both during and after the grant. A clearly thought through and acceptable Pathway to Impact statement should focus on the activities which will help realise the potential impacts as outlined in the Impact Summary.

Your Pathway to Impact should:

- Outline the planning and management of associated activities to achieve your anticipated impact, by providing brief details of the steps required and how you intend to pursue them. Ensure that planned activities are appropriate to the research that will be undertaken. We would expect all investigators to be able to undertake activities beyond scientific presentation. However we are aware that the pathways to impact for basic research are likely to be different to those for translational research.
- Outline further funding for the steps required if this research is successful, including proposed funders and funding schemes, if relevant, or describe plans to fund future work through commercial licencing or exploitation.
- Outline the barriers and facilitators for implementation into practice (if your research is to develop a specific intervention for adopting into practice). Please describe how the barriers would be addressed in the steps outlined in your pathway to impact. For example this could be from the perspectives of those receiving the intervention, those providing the intervention (e.g. healthcare professionals) and those commissioning and paying for an intervention.

- Describe how any new or improved outputs generated through the proposed research will be recognised, captured, managed and used directly by the UK health and care system or wider society to benefit people affected by MS, rather than just by the research community.
- Identify and actively engage relevant users of research and stakeholders at appropriate stages. Address how you will inform and engage patients, NHS and the wider population about your work. Try to think of your research in the context of two-way engagement not just outreach.
- Articulate a clear understanding of the content and needs of users and consider ways for the proposed research to meet these needs or impact upon understandings of these needs.

Tips for writing your response:

- Be project-specific and not generalised.
- Be flexible and focus on potential outcomes.
- Do not cut and paste the text provided within the Impact Summary into Pathways to Impact. The purpose of the Impact Summary is to provide a short description of the beneficiaries and potential impacts, which could be used in the public domain. Pathways to Impact should set out what the applicant(s) will do to realise the potential impacts.

### **D3. 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 'Attachment' section.

### **D4. Peer Reviewer Suggestions**

To aid our peer review process and to encourage the most appropriate review of applications, please provide the names and institutions of up to **FIVE (5)** potential peer reviewers for your application.

Potential peer reviewers should be experienced academic researchers that could objectively comment on the scientific quality of the proposed research. They should not have a conflict of interest, for example they should:

- not be an advisor or co-applicant on the application
- not be at the same institution
- not closely collaborate (have published together in the last 5 years) with the lead or co-applicant(s).

Peer reviewer suggestions will be taken into account when finding peer reviewers for the application, however final decisions remain with the Research team and suggestions provide no guarantee of reviewer identity.

You may also provide us with justification for peer reviewers you would prefer us to exclude (please provide name and institution).

## E. Financial schedule

Costs must be listed in British pounds sterling.

Inflation will not be paid in year one; inflation in years two to five is allowable up to 3%. Please indicate whether inflation should be applied to each section.

### Equipment

The purchase of equipment within a Centre of Excellence Programme Grant is welcome and encouraged. Please specify each item of equipment and maintenance costs separately.

The Director must ensure that the Finance Officer (or other approving authority) at his or her institution has checked and approved the financial details contained in this application prior to submission.

### Acceptable/ unacceptable costs

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

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
Salaries	Salaries for staff who work specifically on the funded project.	Salary for the lead applicant or co-applicant(s), 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	A copy of current salary scales should be provided by the finance department in the 'Attachments' section at the end of your application for all salaried staff. Gradings and salaries should be approved by 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 amounts claimed for basic pay, national insurance (showing % salary and total amount, at current rates), London weighting

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
		increase the Award to reflect increased research costs, including increased salaries due to nationally agreed pay awards/inflation.	allowance (LWA) where applicable and superannuation (which will not be higher than the rate used by the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) or NHS pension scheme).
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 (drives, cases, chargers, batteries).	For further guidance on PPI costs please visit: <a href="http://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment-and-recognition-for-public-involvement/involve-ment-cost-calculator/">http://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment-and-recognition-for-public-involvement/involve-ment-cost-calculator/</a>
Equipment	Equipment purchases are encouraged within this programme grant budget. 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.	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
	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.		
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.		For tissue requests from the UK MS Tissue Bank or other MRC brain banks, a cost recovery 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: <a href="http://www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/multiple-sclerosis-and-parkinsons-tissue-bank/research/">http://www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/multiple-sclerosis-and-parkinsons-tissue-bank/research/</a>

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 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.
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. 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.

### **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.

**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:

<p><b>Directly Incurred</b></p>	<p>These include the familiar direct costs of research such as:                  Staff (e.g. research assistant salaries)                  Travel and subsistence                  Equipment</p>
<p><b>Directly Allocated (Previously called "in-direct costs")</b></p>	<p>These are shared costs, based on estimates and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis.</p> <p>Previously, these costs came under the 'indirect costs' heading but the following items will now be calculated separately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Applicants: the time spent by the applicant and co-applicants will be calculated and costed.</li> <li>-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.</li> <li>-Other Directly Allocated: these include the costs of shared resources, such as staff and equipment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indirect Costs</b></p>	<p>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 <u>Charity Research Support Fund</u>.</p>

## 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, plain English 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 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](mailto: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](http://www.access2understanding.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Access-to-Understanding-writing-guidance_v1.pdf)

## Appendix 2. Key Terms and Definitions

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

Term	Definition
<b>3Rs</b>	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: <a href="http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/">http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/</a>
<b>AMRC</b>	Association of Medical Research Charities. We are a member of the AMRC and our funding process complies with their regulations and guidance.
<b>Advisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advisors can be added by the lead applicant. This allows the advisor to view the application, edit the application and provide comments.</li> <li>- Advisors do not need to be actively involved in the project.</li> <li>- 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.</li> <li>- Advisors do not need to sign off the application before it is submitted.</li> </ul>
<b>Co-applicant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A co-applicant is a researcher who will be actively involved in the project should it be successful.</li> <li>- Co-applicants can view and edit applications.</li> <li>- Co-applicants are required to approve applications on our online system CC Grant Tracker before it can be submitted by the lead applicant.</li> </ul>
<b>Finance Officer</b>	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.
<b>CC Grant Tracker</b>	Grant Tracker is the online grants system where you must submit your application. You can access it via the following link: <a href="https://research.mssociety.org.uk/">https://research.mssociety.org.uk/</a>
<b>Indirect costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indirect costs are non-specific costs charged across all projects.</li> <li>- 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.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note <b>the MS Society will not cover any indirect costs</b>, in line with AMRC guidance. Examples of indirect costs are listed in the '<u>Finance and Costs</u>' section of this document.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Applicant</b>	<p>The named lead applicant will be considered to be the project leader.</p> <p>In addition, the lead applicant will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be the contact person for all correspondence relating to the application.</li> <li>- Must accept overall responsibility for the award, if granted, and must be actively engaged in its direction.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Engagement</b>	<p>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 <a href="http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/">http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/</a></p>
<b>Public Involvement (PPI)</b>	<p>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 <a href="http://www.invo.org.uk">www.invo.org.uk</a></p>
<b>Public Participation</b>	<p>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 <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Clinical-trials/Pages/Introduction.aspx">http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Clinical-trials/Pages/Introduction.aspx</a></p>
<b>Research Network</b>	<p>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.</p>

## **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](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) [www.facebook.com/MSSociety](http://www.facebook.com/MSSociety)  
[twitter.com/mssocietyuk](https://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](mailto:nireception@mssociety.org.uk)

## **MS Society Cymru**

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

Multiple Sclerosis Society.  
Registered charity nos. 1139257 / SC041990.  
Registered as a limited company by guarantee  
in England and Wales 07451571.

 **Let's stop MS together**