

# ■ Changing Policy and Practice Award 2026/27 Round 1

Guidelines for Applicants:  
Expression of Interest

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## Summary

This document guides you through the preparation and submission of an Expression of Interest application for the Changing Policy and Practice Award.

Submissions will take place via a two-stage process. Expression of Interest (EoI) applications will be accepted from eligible researchers who will be asked to provide a short overview of planned dissemination activities. Expression of Interest applications must be submitted and the application received in its entirety by this deadline. All applications must be submitted via our online grants management system (<https://medicalresearchfoundation.flexigrant.com>). Paper application forms will not be accepted.

Full applications will be by invitation only: applicants who have not submitted an EoI application will not be able to submit a full application.

You will receive notification of your invitation to submit a full application within two working weeks of the EoI submission deadline, following eligibility checks.

Deadline for Expression of Interest form:

**12:00 Wednesday 29 April 2026**

Deadline for full submission:

**12:00 Thursday 18 June 2026**

We advise that you prepare your application in good time to allow for your Research Organisation's checks and approvals to take place in accordance with its internal timelines. You will not be able to submit applications after this deadline. We recommend that you submit your application in advance of the deadline so that any technical issues can be resolved in good time.

The Medical Research Foundation is committed to making this application process accessible to all and will provide assistance where needed. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with our Research Team if you have any questions or concerns about the application process.

Email: [research@medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk](mailto:research@medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk) Tel: +4420 4581 2403

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## Overview

The Medical Research Foundation invites applications from MRC and Foundation-funded researchers for the Changing Policy and Practice Award. This scheme is designed to support the dissemination of research findings beyond the scientific peer reviewed press, with the aim of maximising the impact of medical research by taking the results directly to the patients, healthcare practitioners and policy makers intended to benefit.

The scheme is designed to support researchers in disseminating a specific research finding to a specific audience to inform and influence healthcare policy or practice, or to change patient and public behaviour and opinion.

All areas of medical research will be considered in this funding competition, and applications can focus on any target group outside of the scientific press.

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## The Funder

The Medical Research Foundation is an independent charitable foundation. Formed by the Medical Research Council (MRC) over 100 years ago, we grow and nurture people and ideas wherever we see research opportunities with great potential.

Support for this funding competition comes from the Fleming Memorial Fund for Medical Research, which was established in 1959 in memory of Sir Alexander Fleming.

These awards are co-funded with the MRC, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

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## The Funding

Applicants may apply for up to £50,000 over a flexible time period, up to two years.

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## Who can apply

This competition will be run twice a year and is open to MRC and Foundation-funded grant and fellowship holders based at eligible institutions, as well as MRC-funded and MRC core-funded researchers in MRC research institutes, units and centres. To be eligible, the MRC or Foundation funding supporting the research should be within one-year prior to the grant finishing or within two years after the grant has finished. This time restriction may be reconsidered in exceptional circumstances i.e. for large scale clinical trials which take longer to publish their findings. Applicants must hold a PhD, DPhil or MD.

The specific research finding forming the basis of the dissemination work must have been published in a peer reviewed journal prior to applying to the scheme and must have been funded by their MRC or Medical Research Foundation grant. The MRC or Medical Research Foundation funding supporting the research should be acknowledged in the publication.

To be eligible for funding the applicant should be listed as either the PI or as a Co-investigator on the original grant.

To assess eligibility, applicants are required to complete a short expression of interest application form. Applicants who do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be invited to submit a full application.

Only one application will be accepted per applicant per funding round, though individuals can hold more than one Medical Research Foundation grant at any one time.

Applicants who had their eligibility confirmed in a previous round but did not apply should contact the Medical Research Foundation Research Team to check whether they are eligible to apply for this round.

Please note that applicants who previously applied but were not successful may not re-apply with the same research finding unless invited by the Expert Review Panel. Resubmissions should only be made with a substantially revised proposal and applicants should submit a list of changes made since the original proposal.

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## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Medical Research Foundation is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants and aims to create an inclusive environment that encourages excellence in research through good equalities practice. Diversity is important to the Medical Research Foundation, and we are working to ensure that the ways in which we fund research embraces a diversity of thought, people, geographical locations and ideas.

We strongly encourage applications from under-represented groups including female and ethnic minority researchers, and researchers with disabilities or long-term health conditions. We will support our researchers and their teams to work flexibly and in a way that meets their personal circumstances.

Guidance on the Medical Research Foundation's flexible working policies can be found in our [Terms and Conditions](#). Please contact the Research Team if you have any questions about flexible working:

[research@medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk](mailto:research@medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk).

The Medical Research Foundation encourages lead applicants to consider the diversity of the research team, as well as area of expertise, when inviting Collaborators to support their application.

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## **Environmental Sustainability**

At the Medical Research Foundation we know that [we need to protect planetary health](#) if we are to deliver our vision of a world with better health. We aim to reach net-zero in our activities as soon as possible and influence the activities of others whom we work with and fund.

As supporters of the concordat for [Environmental Sustainability in Research and Innovation Practice](#) we recognise the need to change how the research and innovation we fund is conducted and our part in promoting solutions. We are taking shared action now and into the future to reduce and eliminate our own environmental impacts and emissions and achieve the transition to sustainable practices.

Applicants are encouraged to design their dissemination activities to use the most sustainable approaches available to them, describe these measures within their grant application and provide a rationale for the choices made. For example, if you are considering attending an event, outline whether you plan to participate online to reduce travel or attend in person. You should explain why this option is the most appropriate and worthwhile for your research or professional development. Please see [our tips and resources for improving the environmental impact of your research](#) for further suggestions.

Applicants may include direct costs in their budget to support the adoption of sustainable practices, where relevant. All costs associated with environmentally sustainable options such as purchasing more sustainable materials or equipment, or choosing lower-carbon travel options should be fully justified within the application, even if these options incur a higher upfront cost.

We recognise that researchers based in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) may face infrastructure and resource constraints which make it more challenging to meet the same sustainability standards as those in high-income settings. However, we still expect LMIC-based applicants to consider environmental sustainability in their design, adapted appropriately to their local context and available resources.

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## **Responsibilities of the Lead Research Organisation and the Principal Investigator**

### Principal Investigator (PI)

The PI is responsible for the intellectual leadership of the dissemination project and for the overall management of the dissemination activities. They will be the Medical Research Foundation's main contact for the proposal. There can only be one PI on any proposal.

The PI must be based at the RO at which the award will be administered.

### Lead Research Organisation

Head of Department and Administrative Authority declarations are not required for the Expression of Interest application but will be required for the full application.

By submitting a full application, a Lead Research Organisation (RO) indicates their formal acceptance of the proposal, approval of the salaries and resources sought and, if the application is successful, acceptance of the terms and conditions of a Medical Research Foundation award.

Administrative authorities have responsibility for ensuring that salaries and resources cited in the proposal are sufficient to undertake the proposed research, attract sufficiently experienced and skilled staff and represent good value-for-money.

Head of Department and Administrative Authority declarations will need to be signed at the full application stage.

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## Application process

Expression of Interest forms will be checked for eligibility by the Medical Research Foundation Research team, taking into account the grant forming the basis of the work, the published research, and the fit of the proposed activities for the scheme.

Full applications will be assessed by a panel of independent experts against three core criteria; the significance of the research finding, the merit of the dissemination plan and the implementation of the findings. Applicants are encouraged to consult or include a science communications professional (i.e. from their university) on the application, although this is not a requirement.

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### Significance of Research Finding

- Prevalence of condition (if disease-related)
- Potential impact of findings for public health or on healthcare policy/practice.
- Contribution of results to current practice or knowledge
- Consideration of other relevant research
- Publication of findings in peer-reviewed journal(s)

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### Dissemination

- Need for wider dissemination beyond the scientific community
- Appropriateness of the target audience and method of delivery
- The value-for-money of the individual elements of the dissemination activities
- Effectiveness of the proposed activities and likelihood of reaching the target audience

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### Implementation

- Impact of the dissemination plan on the target audience
- Potential of the dissemination activities to change behaviour, policy and practice
- Plans to evaluate your dissemination activities and change in behaviour, practice and policy

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## What makes a successful application?

- A clear understanding of the significance of the research findings and the need for dissemination beyond the normal scientific press to the target audience
- A strong consideration of how disseminating the finding will influence behaviour, healthcare policy or practice
- Appropriateness and suitability of the target audience
- Justified and appropriate methods for disseminating the research findings that are effective and likely to reach the target audience.
- Clearly defined objectives that help to guide project activity and facilitate effective evaluation.
- Detail of the longevity of developed dissemination resources (if applicable).
- Considered or defined expected outcomes, influence or impact from disseminating the key finding to the target audience.
- A clear plan to evaluate the proposed dissemination activities including detail of the planned methods of assessing, recording and evaluating the impact of the results on the target audience.

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## What is not within remit for this scheme?

- Applications requesting funding to continue existing research or conduct new research.
- Dissemination plans that are too broad, incorporate multiple messages or are not targeted to a specific audience.
- Dissemination activities not related to the original research findings
- Applications focussing on disseminating research findings to other researchers (for example requests for academic conference travel).
- Applications that request funding for Public Engagement with Science activities without a target outcome.
- Applications that are principally educational in nature.
- Applications focussing on increasing participation in research.

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## Examples

Below are examples of previously successful applications.

### **Example 1:** Fluid management of severely ill children in Africa

The dissemination work supported meetings with key international policymakers, development of training resources, production and distribution of a film and development of information packs. Policy changes were made as a result with amendments to Médecins Sans Frontières and WHO guidelines.

### **Example 2:** The molecular causes of five novel disorders affecting developmental processes within North American Amish communities

The team worked with the local community and developed a strategy to share clinically relevant findings with affected families, education providers, clinicians and other healthcare professionals. This involved generating culturally appropriate disorder specific literature, holding family information days and educational meetings for local healthcare providers and special educational needs (SEN) teachers, and online educational tools for specific audiences. The dissemination activities have been linked to a rise in diagnosis rate of these disorders from 5% to 70-80%, with a large effect on the developmental, clinical and social outcomes of the affected individuals.

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## How to Apply

Applications must be submitted and approved by all signatories and the application received in its entirety by the deadline. All applications must be submitted via our online grants management system (<https://medicalresearchfoundation.flexigrant.com/>). Paper application forms will not be accepted.

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## Queries

**Any queries on the competition, the application process, or eligibility should be addressed to Rebecca Milton at [research@medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk](mailto:research@medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk)**

To assess eligibility, applicants should submit a short Expression of Interest form including details of their MRC or Medical Research Foundation grant, the published research they plan to disseminate and the planned dissemination activities.

Applicants will be notified if they have been invited to apply within two working weeks. The deadline for submitting the Expression of Interest form is **12:00 Wednesday 29 April 2026**

Eligible applicants will be sent a link to the full application form.

Please refer to the sections below to complete your application form. If you have any questions about any of the application process, please contact a member of the Medical Research Foundation Research Team [research@medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk](mailto:research@medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk) or +4420 4581 2403

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## Application form question guidance

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### Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion data

The Medical Research Foundation collects equality and diversity data from current grant holders, funding call applicants and Expert Panel members. It is important for us to collect this data so that we can benchmark and therefore work to improve diversity and inclusion within our grant application processes.

To do this, we wish to collect information on key characteristics which can be related to equality and diversity via our online Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) form. The information will form a confidential record database for statistical analysis and will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. The data will be used by authorised personnel only.

The results from your EDI data submission will not be stored with any documents relating to grant or fellowship applications nor will they be seen by those involved in the assessment process.

EDI information is collected via a short form which is associated with your profile. All questions have a “prefer not to say” option.

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### Section 1: Principal Investigator details

There can only be one lead applicant, who should be listed as a PI or Co-I on the original grant funding the research. Any researchers who wish to be considered as applicants in addition to the lead applicant should be listed as co-applicants in Section 2.

Any other individuals involved in the application can be listed as collaborators unless they will be employed on the grant, in which case they should be named as staff members.

Additional Co-Investigators and Collaborators can be added at the full application stage, in addition to those included in the Expression of Interest application, by invite from the Principal Investigator.

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### Section 2: Medical Research Foundation/MRC funding

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#### Published research findings

Applications should be based on research findings from a Medical Research Foundation or MRC grant. This includes awards funded solely by the Foundation or the MRC, as well as co-funded awards.

Please provide details of the grant that supported the research to be disseminated in this proposal.

The research finding to be disseminated must have been published in a peer reviewed journal prior to submission of an application. Please detail the journal reference of the published article include a DOI where possible. Publications must be full, peer-reviewed articles. Pre-prints are not eligible.

Please only reference the publications that have contributed the research basis for the specific dissemination activities proposed. Only publications acknowledging the original award should be included in the application. Other related publications are not eligible and will not be considered. A larger number

of publications will not benefit your application.

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### Lay description of published research

The lay description should be written in a form understandable by members of the public (e.g. current or potential supporters) who are not specialists in the research field.

Please provide a summary of the research findings to be disseminated, highlighting key findings to be disseminated and indicating the research significance.

We may use this section for external communications associated with the Changing Policy and Practice Award and we aim to publish the lay summary of successful applicants on our website. The text style should be suitable to a lay audience and not contain specific details of any sensitive information.

The MRC or Medical Research Foundation funding supporting the research should be acknowledged in the publication.

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### Section 3: Dissemination Activities

If this application is not a renewal of a previous or current Medical Research Foundation Changing Policy and Practice award, please do not fill in any questions related to the renewal scheme. If this application is a renewal of an award, please refer to the Changing Policy and Practice Renewal scheme guidance.

Please provide a short, 250-word summary of the planned dissemination activities. The summary should include:

- All proposed dissemination methods and approach,
- Planned outputs,
- Who might be involved,
- How you will evaluate your dissemination approach.

**The detailed Dissemination Plan does not need to be submitted with the expression of interest. However, when preparing the summary of the approach to dissemination, applicants may wish to consider the requirements for the full application:**

The detailed Dissemination Plan should not exceed 5 A4 pages (size 12 Arial font). References, diagrams, tables or charts can be included within the text or as an appendix.

The detailed Dissemination Plan will need to include the following information:

1. **Key message** – The key message or implication from the research finding that is to be disseminated.
2. **Target audience** – The specific target group that can act upon the research finding.
3. **Background** – Provide relevant background information that is needed to understand the wider context of your application.
  - Detail the original aims of the MRC/Foundation-funded research and the subsequent published research result.
  - Explain the need for dissemination of the research finding and the rationale of the dissemination methods and approach planned.
  - Place the published research finding in the context of existing evidence.
  - Detail any previous dissemination methods and approach and the impact of prior dissemination if applicable.
  - Justify the significance of the research finding to be disseminated, in terms of its potential to

improve health in the target group, effect a behaviour change or impact on healthcare practice and/or policy.

4. **Aims and Objectives** – Outline the changes in practice, policy or behaviour that the dissemination plan is aiming to achieve.
5. **Dissemination Programme** – Indicate the proposed methods of dissemination. Include information about:
  - Who will deliver the programme,
  - How the activities will be undertaken,
  - Where the activities will take place and the timeframe in which the programme will be completed,
  - The numbers of the target audience that the dissemination method or approach is expected to reach,
  - What the expected outcomes would be from these activities,
  - If applicable, outline any expert advice sought in preparation of, or involved in, the dissemination programme.
6. **Evaluation Plan** – Identify how the impact of the dissemination programme will be assessed. Provide details of how the behavior/practice/policy change will be measured and evaluated. A strong evaluation plan will clearly define what success will look like for this programme of work.
7. **Justification for support** – Justify the resources requested.

The Medical Research Foundation expects that before work commences, the Principal Investigator will have ensured, in collaboration with the lead research organisation, that all appropriate regulatory approvals are in place. These could include those relating to human participation, personal safety and health and safety.

A detailed budget is **not** required in the Expression of Interest application form but will be required for the full application stage. To aid in the planning of the dissemination activities, details of what costs can be requested are detailed below.

Applications could include requests for the costs of:

- Writing, publicising and disseminating non-specialist reports for a target public audience or wider network of healthcare practitioners
- Developing online resources or posters for target audiences
- Organising events, policy working groups or seminars
- Professionals key to dissemination i.e. science communicators, educators or health professionals, as long as this is in relation to a specific research finding and appropriate for the target audience.
- Travel and subsistence
- Research staff (who will directly support the dissemination project, but not the salary of the PI)
- Access charges for specialist equipment or services
- Any other direct costs of dissemination
- Direct costs for sustainability measures. This includes:
  - Environmentally sustainable consumables and materials, including those with a higher upfront cost where they offer demonstrable environmental benefits.
  - Refurbished, second-hand, or shared equipment, or costs associated with the maintenance and repair of existing equipment to extend its usable life for the purpose of the project.
  - Training and capacity-building activities that support the adoption of sustainable dissemination practices within the team for the purpose of the dissemination project.
  - Travel costs that reduce the carbon footprint of the dissemination, including the use of lower-emission transport options (e.g. rail travel in place of flights), even where these incur higher costs.
  - Costs related to sustainable data management and dissemination, including infrastructure that supports low-impact data storage and sharing.

Medical Research Foundation Changing Policy and Practice Awards will **not** fund:

- Any directly allocated costs i.e. estate costs and costs of shared resources such as staff and equipment
- The salary of the PI
- Any indirect costs which cannot be allocated to individual projects (including but not limited to computing and information support, general maintenance and other infrastructure costs, HR and recruitment costs etc.)
- Cost of general public engagement in science work

If the planned dissemination activities are to be carried out outside of the UK, and cannot be facilitated without the inclusion of indirect costs, up to 15% of the total budget can be attributed to reasonable directly allocated and/or indirect costs. Please contact the Research Team [research@medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk](mailto:research@medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk) if you require further advice.

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#### **Section 4: Declaration**

For the Expression of Interest application, only the Principal Investigator is required to submit a declaration.

For the full application form, authorisations and/or declarations are needed from the following application participants:

- Principal Investigator, any Co-Investigators, Research Administrator, Head of Department

The Principal Investigator is required to declare that they will abide by the Medical Research Foundation's Terms and Conditions and will be actively engaged in the proposed research.