

THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FUND: WHAT GOOD PROPOSALS LOOK LIKE

The Fund has a strong focus on outcomes, on learning, and on tracking your progress

When you apply, we want to understand:

1. what change your project is going to make
2. what is the current knowledge or learning you are basing your application on
3. how you plan to track whether your project has achieved what it set out to do, and how you will share learning.

1. An outcomes approach

Tell us about the change your project is going to make in the language of outcomes, and impacts. What's most important is to articulate how your project has the potential to influence people's actions and perspectives.

Outcomes are the changes you want to achieve over the life of the project. For example, '100 young people aged 16-23 will gain an understanding of the scientific issues around [their specific mental health conditions].' '4 participating researchers will learn from young people how these mental health problems affect their lives.'

Outputs are the various activities you'll undertake in order to achieve that change. For example, 'We'll hold 8 creative workshops ...' 'We'll make a 5 minute film and share it with...'

Longer-term **impacts** are effects on participants which are more likely to happen after the project ends. 'We hope to encourage a quarter of the young people involved to participate where appropriate in relevant mental health research.'

It is good practice in project planning to estimate the numbers you might achieve. We know the project may change but are glad to learn about both what does and doesn't work.

Some of Wellcome's wider strategic outcomes are outlined below, as examples to help you understand better the kinds of things we are looking for. We are not necessarily asking you to use any of these outcomes for your own project: we want to hear yours.

Wellcome's aims	Some outcomes Wellcome wants to achieve
To empower people by helping them access, use, respond to, and participate in health research & innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More people feel like health research, evidence, or data is useful to them personally• More people have better health outcomes because they've chosen to use health research, evidence, or data• More people have played an active role in directing the development of health innovations that benefit them

To support better health research by making it more people-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More instances of Wellcome’s work & priorities being influenced & supported by insight gained through public engagement, and by the public and patients themselves • More health researchers & innovators both motivated and equipped to involve the public in their work
To help people value and think critically about science, health research, innovation and the role they play in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people value and can trust the role of research and innovation in improving health • More people value and feel able to participate in science, research, & innovation as a social and cultural activity

2. Previous activities, knowledge and learning your project will build on

When we consider your application, we want to see how you’ve learnt from what’s already taken place before. When we say learning, we are flexible about what this means. Learning could be:

- asking the people you want to engage about what they want from the project (for example through surveys or depth interviews)
- learning from past projects (your own or others’)
- monitoring information, such as case studies, comments or numerical data
- evaluation (internal or independent)

3. Tracking the change you’ve achieved, and sharing it

As well as tracking the outputs (the activities you’ve undertaken), tell us about how you will know if you’re achieving the change you said you would.

This may or may not involve a formal external evaluation. You don’t have to deliver an external evaluation as part of your project. However, we are open to requests for funding this. What we want to see is a commitment to tracking whether your project is a success. We want to understand how you will do so, as well as how you might share what you are learning. Tell us the information you’ll collect, the people you’ll disseminate learning to, and how you’ll disseminate that learning.

We accept that the outcomes you plan for may be different to the ones you end up delivering. We are open to risk and to projects which can adapt to new opportunities. We are happy to hear about, and learn from, what doesn’t work.

General Tips: Do's and Don'ts when applying to the Public Engagement Fund

This is only a guide. Your application doesn't need to be perfect for us to see the potential. We recognise that you only have a short form to get your idea across.

The strongest proposals often	Weaker proposals often
Show they are responding to a current need, solving a problem, or creating change.	Lack clarity about why they're being proposed. Feel 'nice to have', not vital.
Show a clear connection with the stated criteria of the Fund (The 'What we are looking for' section).	Don't articulate how they meet what Wellcome is looking for.
Have a clear sense of the outcomes, outputs and impacts they want to achieve.	Are unclear about what they want to achieve, or focus only on the activity and not the changes that result from the activity. Have no sense of impact or legacy.
Have benefits for the people involved, and have begun to think how to evaluate whether those benefits have been realised	Haven't thought through the benefits. Propose a feasible activity, but one which is unlikely to achieve the benefits it claims.
Innovate, scale, increase sustainable activity, or apply good engagement practice to a new audience or health research issue	Propose old-fashioned or uninspiring methods to connect with people Aren't aware of what other similar projects have done before
Focus on one or more clear target audiences/set of participants. Show why the issue they want to explore is relevant and will appeal to those audiences, and show awareness of barriers to access and ways to remove them. If reaching out to the general public, have compelling ways of reaching them.	Don't know who their audience is. Don't have a convincing approach or compelling issue to engage their chosen target audience. Have a 'build it and they will come' mentality, without evidence people will participate.
Stimulate exciting conversations and actively seek out diverse opinions and responses.	Assume they have the right answer, which they want to 'put into the heads' of the 'less informed'. People aren't engaged by simply being told what to think or do.
Show they have reached out and talked to a range of people in shaping the project: for example, experts, researchers, creatives, communities. This may lead to applications in partnership	Operate in a vacuum Haven't at least tried to contact experts or researchers Do things 'to' audiences rather than involving them from the start
Are achievable, and give a good sense of how they will be implemented	Take on too much, when starting with a pilot or focusing on one area would be more sensible Are impractical Are under-costed for the activities proposed
Represent good value for money, by achieving good reach or deeper impact, e.g. intensive engagement with smaller numbers	Are too expensive for the changes they aim to achieve.