

How to apply for a research grant

If you have any queries during the application process, please email us at grants_admin@breastcancernow.org



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Before you start

If you are unsure about the eligibility and remit of your project, please contact the research team at grants_admin@breastcancernow.org as soon as possible. Once the deadline has passed there will be no opportunity to consider individual circumstances. Applications which do not meet the requirements will be rejected without peer review.

The first stage of the application is an eligibility questionnaire. If you fail this questionnaire, you will not be able to proceed with the application. Please check the eligibility criteria and get in touch with the research team if still required, before starting a new application.

Lead applicant

Applications must be made using our online [system](#).

Once you have logged in, you will see the applicant portal. From this screen you can view 'Funding opportunities', 'My profile', 'Organisation profile', 'Action items' and 'Completed items'. Applications and acceptance forms that are in progress are under 'Action items', and applications and acceptance forms that you have submitted are under 'Completed items'. At any point, you can navigate back to this page by clicking 'Home' in the top right corner of the screen.

To begin an application, click on 'Funding opportunities', from here you can choose to start a project grant or PhD studentship application.

Once you start an application, you can download an example application form in Word format if required.

Starting and submitting your application

- Complete the eligibility questionnaire and press 'Submit'
- Use the 'Next' button in the bottom right to move through the sections, or click on the tabs at the top
- Each item will need to be completed to submit your application. Fields marked with a red star are mandatory
- It is recommended to click 'save draft' regularly when completing the application
- Once you have saved a draft of your application, a bar will appear to the left. On this bar is a feature called 'Queries'. If you have any questions for Breast Cancer Now, you can post them here and we will get back to you (you will also receive email notification)
- Some items, such as the cost's tables, will require you to save a draft of your application before you complete them
- You will invite a joint lead applicant, co-applicants, collaborators (as applicable), the head of department and finance officer. Everyone invited must accept the invitation and complete their acceptance form to submit the application; please give everyone enough notice to avoid missing the deadline
 - You can check the status of the invitations under the relevant role tabs. When you have sent the invitation the status will be 'Invited' and once they have accepted via the link in the email, the status will be 'Accepted'

- Once they have accepted the invitation, they need to complete an acceptance form. You can check the status of the acceptance forms on the table on the Contact Information tab. The status will show 'Draft' when it is in progress and 'Approved' once it has been completed and submitted
- The finance officer is the final signatory on the application. Once the lead applicant has pressed 'submit application', the finance officer will receive a request for final approval. This must be completed before the deadline. The lead applicant will receive confirmation by email from the application system once a grant application is submitted
- Please ensure your application is fully submitted by 4pm on the deadline date
- You will be notified by email if, after submission, your finance officer or Breast Cancer Now request revisions, and the application will be returned to you to update

Filling out your application

- For the main proposal, you can submit up to 4 pages of figures/preliminary data
- Applicants should indicate how their proposal meets 1 or more of Breast Cancer Now's key goals as outlined in our **strategy**:
 - Quicker, earlier diagnosis to save and improve lives
 - Everyone getting the best care and support
 - New and better treatments that pave the way for cures
- Provide a succinct abstract of the proposal; abstracts will be used to approach potential reviewers so they can judge whether they can review the application
- Provide 5 or 6 key words that best describe this project; these will be used by the research team to select the most relevant peer reviewers
- If successful, projects must start within 10 months of the award letter being received; please include the most accurate start date when completing your application form

Resubmissions

- If the application was rejected without an invitation to resubmit, we will not consider a resubmission of the same application. However, applications which are significantly different in terms of objectives and scope, and that go beyond addressing the reviewers' concerns of the previous application, will be considered in competition with other applications.
- In this case, you must declare your application as an 'uninvited resubmission' and must submit a covering letter along with the application detailing the modifications which merit its reconsideration
- The final decision on whether the application will continue in the process is at the discretion of funding committee members. We advise all applicants considering a resubmission to contact us at grants_admin@breastcancernow.org in advance of submission to check your eligibility

Joint lead applicants

We would generally expect a project to be led by a single lead applicant; however, you may include up to 1 joint lead applicant. You must provide an explanation in the application to justify the need for a joint lead applicant, as well as which aspects of the proposal they will be leading on and why they are appropriate to

lead on that aspect of the project. The joint lead applicant must meet all the lead applicant eligibility criteria.

The joint lead applicant must do the following before the submission deadline:

- When the lead applicant invites you to the application, you will receive an email inviting you to participate in the application with a link to access the system
- You need to first accept the collaboration invitation to enter the system and view the application
- After accepting the invitation and registering, you will receive an email with a link to create a password. Breast Cancer Now will need to validate your account before you can access the invitation. If you already have an account, there will be a 'log in here' link
- On the system, under 'Action items', go to the 'Acceptance forms' tab, and click the pink 'Open' button to open the acceptance form
- In the top left-hand corner, there is a pink button called 'Actions'. Click here and then click 'View application in split screen'. You will be able to view the application
- If you are happy to proceed, click Yes on **"Do you confirm your participation in this proposal?"**
- Attach your CV in PDF format
- Click 'Approve'
- Go back to Home (via top left-hand corner), under 'Action items', on the 'Application forms' tab, you will be able to open the application and fill in your information on the 'Joint lead applicant' tab. Click 'Save draft'

Co-applicants

Co-applicants will have intellectual input into, and part ownership of, the research if the application is successful; they are expected to be actively involved in the project.

Each co-applicant must do the following before the submission deadline:

- When the lead applicant invites you to the application, you will receive an email inviting you to participate in the application with a link to access the system
- You need to first accept the invitation to enter the smartsimple system and view the application
- After accepting the invitation and registering, you will receive an email with a link to create a password. Breast Cancer Now will need to validate your account before you can access the invitation. If you already have an account, there will be a 'log in here' link
- On the system, under 'Action items', go to the 'Acceptance forms' tab, and click the pink 'Open' button to open the acceptance form
- In the top left-hand corner, there is a pink 'Actions' button. Click here and then click 'View application in split screen'. You will be able to view the application
- If you are happy to proceed, click Yes on **"Do you confirm your participation in this proposal?"**
- Attach your CV in PDF format
- Click 'Approve'

Collaborators

Collaborators do not have access to grant funds. They will be expected to contribute to the overall intellectual direction of the research project and bring their own resources to the collaboration. They will not be involved in the day-to-day execution of the project.

Each collaborator must do the following before the submission deadline:

- When the lead applicant invites you to the application, you will receive an email inviting you to participate in the application with a link to access the system
- You need to first accept the collaboration invitation to enter the system and view the application
- After accepting the invitation, on your first time registering, you will receive an email with a link to create a password. Breast Cancer Now will need to validate your account before you can access the invitation. If you already have an account, there will be a 'log in here' link
- On the system, under 'Action items', go to the 'Acceptance forms' tab, and click the pink 'Open' button to open the acceptance form
- In the top left-hand corner there is a pink button called 'Actions'. Click here and then click 'View Application in Split Screen'. You will be able to view the application
- If you are happy to proceed, click Yes on "**Do you confirm your participation in this proposal?**"
- Click 'Approve'
- The lead applicant will obtain a letter of collaboration (no longer than 1 page) from each collaborator to attach to the application

Please note, co-applicants and collaborators can view, but cannot edit, the application.

NHS co-applicants and collaborators

Co-applicants and collaborators based in the NHS may experience difficulties receiving invitation emails from our system due to the introduction of stricter GDPR rules. We advise that you follow up with co-applicants and collaborators that you've added to the application to ensure they've received the email with instructions on how to enter their details. If an email has not been received, please contact the office and we will help to rectify the issue.

Letters of support from industry partners

If your application includes any collaboration with an industry partner (for example, the provision of free drugs, equipment, an educational grant), we strongly recommend that you provide a letter demonstrating support for the proposed study and confirming any contribution made.

Head of department

If you are adding a head of department as a co-applicant or collaborator, please add the dean or deputy head of your school or faculty as the head of department instead and ask them to approve the application.

Before submission, the head of department must confirm the participation of the host institution. The head of department will receive an automated email requesting confirmation of participation and that they are at the same host institution as the lead applicant.

The head of department must do the following before the submission deadline:

- When the lead applicant invites you to the application, you will receive an email inviting you to participate in the application with a link to access the system
- You need to first accept the collaboration invitation to enter the system and view the application
- After accepting the invitation, on your first time registering, you will receive an email with a link to create a password. Breast Cancer Now will need to validate your account before you can access the invitation. If you already have an account, there will be a 'log in here' link
- On the system, under 'Action items', go to the 'Acceptance forms' tab, and click the pink 'Open' button to open the acceptance form
- In the top left-hand corner there is a pink button called 'Actions'. Click here and then click 'View application in split screen. You will be able to view the application
- You will need to confirm you are at the same institution as the lead applicant
- If you are happy to proceed, click Yes on **"Do you confirm your participation in this proposal?"**
- Click 'Approve'

The head of department can view, but cannot edit, your application.

Finance officer

The finance officer will act as the final signatory of the application. Once the lead applicant has pressed 'submit application', the finance officer will receive a request for final approval. Due to high volumes of traffic on our system on deadline days, we occasionally experience a time lag in our system. Please allow your finance office at least 2 days to approve the application after you have submitted your application.

The finance officer must do the following two steps before the submission deadline:

- Confirm participation as finance officer to be allowed to view and edit the application. This step is required to validate the application form
- Approve the application once it has been submitted by the lead applicant so it can be fully submitted to Breast Cancer Now

To confirm participation:

- When the lead applicant invites you to the application, you will receive an email inviting you to participate in the application with a link to access the system
- You need to first accept the collaboration invitation to enter the system and view the application
- After accepting the invitation, on your first time registering, you will receive an email with a link to create a password. Breast Cancer Now will need to validate your account before you can access the invitation. If you already have an account, there will be a 'log in here' link
- On the system, under 'Action items', go to the 'Acceptance forms' tab, and click the pink 'Open' button to open the acceptance form

- In the top left-hand corner there is a pink button called 'Actions'. Click here and then click 'View application in split screen. You will be able to view the application
- You will need to confirm you are at the same institution as the lead applicant
- If you are happy to proceed, click Yes on **"Do you confirm your participation in this proposal?"**
- Click 'Approve'

To approve the application:

- The finance officer will receive a request for final approval by email once the applicant has pressed 'Submit application'. Follow the link in the 'Application submitted for your review' email.
- On the system, under 'Action items', go to the 'Applications' tab, and click the pink 'Open' button
- Please review the application form, and if you are happy to proceed, you can click the green 'Approve' button at the bottom of the screen
- If you want the lead applicant to make any changes, please scroll along the tabs to the 'Revisions requested' tab, where you can detail amendments that the lead applicant needs to make, and then click the yellow 'Request revisions' button at the bottom of the screen

The finance officer can view, edit and request revisions to your application.

Application review process

The funding committee will assess your application based on importance and relevance of the research question, originality, methodology, preliminary data, justification for animal use and severity of procedures, and applicant track record. Our reviewers are not allowed to input application contents into, or use, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT or Gemini.

- Each application will be reviewed by 2 members of the committee
- Applications are scored using a 10-point system. A score of 0 = not fundable, and a score of 10 = highly fundable
- The committee identify applications that they agree will not be competitive in the process and these applications will be triaged; we refer to this as the first triage
- Triage applications will not be sent out for external peer review and will not be considered for funding
- If your application has been triaged, we will let you know within 12 weeks of the application deadline, and we will send you feedback from the committee
- Applications that pass the first triage will be sent for external peer review
- Once all external peer reviews are received, a second triage meeting will take place prior to the main committee meeting
- Applications that have not be viewed favourably by the peer reviewers will be triaged
- Applications that pass the second triage will be discussed by the committee
- The committee will make recommendations for funding to Breast Cancer Now's Board of Trustees
- Successful and unsuccessful applicants will receive an outcome letter and feedback from the committee and external reviewers

Costing your application

Applicants should note the following:

- Applicants must apply for funding in British pounds sterling (GBP)
- Applicants should seek the advice of their institution's finance or research office on costing the application well in advance of the application deadline
- If awarded, invoices will be paid quarterly in arrears in GBP (£) and converted to the currency of request by the bank at their exchange rate on the day the transfer or draft is actioned. We are not responsible for losses incurred through fluctuations in exchange rates
- In line with Association of Medical Research Charities guidelines, we will only fund directly incurred costs and not the full economic costs of research (FECs) or a proportion of these
- Grants will be funded on the understanding that the host institution meets the overhead and infrastructure costs (infrastructure costs can include lighting, heating, telephones, use of library facilities, general laboratory equipment, general office expenses, core laboratory services such as wash up and waste disposal, maintenance and running costs of laboratory equipment, estates costs)

Salary and stipend costs

At least 1 salary or PhD stipend must be added to your application. We will cover the salary for a research support post to directly work on the project. This may be a co-applicant. Salaries should be based on the scales in operation at the institution in which the research will take place. Applicants should consult the appropriate administrative authority at their institution to determine the salaries to be requested. We will pay for named staff with specific expertise (for example, statisticians, health economists, nurses) for their time on the project.

A proportion of lead applicant, joint lead applicant or co-applicant salary for supervision/consultancy time is not allowed. We will not fund on a cost recovery basis or meet the salary costs of staff currently funded by the Higher Education Funding Council, NHS or equivalent. If you are unsure whether a specific salary is allowable, please contact us to clarify.

You will be asked to attach the salary scales for your institution in PDF format and to complete the following information: staff member details, level of qualification, role, grade and scale, annual inflation rate and date, basic salary, employer contributions, and justification of the position being requested.

For PhD studentships, we will provide funding for 1 PhD stipend, consumables, and fees. If applicable, consumables for year 4 cover 6 months of research, with the expectation that the final 6 months are used for write-up of the thesis. You will be asked to upload documentation to show that the stipend and fees requested match your institution's standards. Stipends should not be below £20,780, as per the UKRI guidance. £2,500 from the consumables budget is ringfenced for researcher development activities, to attend conferences, external training courses, and workshops over the course of the studentship.

International student fees cannot be supported in full. If an overseas student is appointed, we will pay the UK studentship fees. The remaining cost of the international fees must be sourced elsewhere.

Breast Cancer Now allows visa fees, but not NHS surcharges, to be charged to the grant for all directly incurred staff employed on the grant for at least 50% of their contracted time. We will only cover these costs if your institution does not cover them as standard. This cannot be extended to family members. All costs must be met within the original funds requested. These costs should only be included at the time of application where it is known that they will be required and not as a contingency for any posts that will need to be recruited.

Applications requesting funding for the second or subsequent years of an existing studentship will not be accepted.

The following table of allowed and disallowed costs indicates what is permissible on a grant application but should not be considered exhaustive. The research team may query and ask you to remove costs that are deemed to be outside of our funding remit. If you are unsure about anything, please contact us at grants_admin@breastcancernow.org.

Allowed costs	Disallowed costs
Laboratory materials and consumables directly attributable to the project	A proportion of central support staff salaries (e.g. secretarial support)
Home office licenses	Apprenticeship levies
Pathology service costs	Purchase of books
Travel related to the research proposal (e.g. participant expenses to travel to focus groups, interviews) if justified. This must be added in the 'Other Expenses' section. Please refer to our conference travel guidelines for more information	General office expenses (e.g. photocopying, postage); an exception may be made for secretarial assistance and printing costs for epidemiological/questionnaire-based studies
Animal costs. You can include purchase, housing, husbandry, animal licence costs. You will be asked for the species, number, and unit cost of all animals. Please also refer to our policy on the use of animals in scientific research	Open access charges. Please do not include requests for open access publication charges in your application. For more information on Breast Cancer Now's position on open access, please see our open access policy
Small pieces of equipment (e.g. computers) if essential for the project. If over £5000, please discuss with the office	Equipment maintenance and running costs
Computer software license, if required specifically for the project (e.g. image analysis)	Staff recruitment costs
Access charges for shared equipment (e.g. hourly charge to use microscopy or mass spectrometry equipment)	Publication or printing costs
Statistician advice/consultancy costs	Training courses (e.g. Home Office animal license courses)
Costs associated with authentication and validation of cell lines	A proportion of general technician support/services (e.g. wash up, waste disposal)

Conference and travel costs*. We will cover costs for travel and registration for conferences up to the value of £2,500, for individuals who directly work on the Breast Cancer Now grant	
Microarray or sequencing costs	

*Please click 'Add conference costs' and then click 'Save' to validate the form and allow you to submit. These costs cannot be edited and are entered in year 1 for technical reasons but can be used across all years as required. These costs must be included within the overall total funding requested. No other conference and related travel costs above this are permitted.

Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT)

Do I need to complete a SoECAT?

You must complete a SoECAT if you:

- are applying for research funding, and
- will do your research in the UK, and
- need [Health Research Authority approval](#) for your study

If you meet these criteria, you must complete a [SoECAT](#) even if you do not think your research will involve [excess treatment costs \(ETCs\)](#).

Why do I need to do this?

The SoECAT ensures that costs are attributed in line with the [AcoRD principles](#) consistently across the UK.

It helps to produce a full picture of the site-level study activities to understand the resource implications involved for different parties:

- activities that are research costs will be supported by the grant funder
- activities that are service support costs will be supported by the NIHR RDN (if the study is [eligible for the NIHR RDN Portfolio](#)) in England
- any [excess treatment costs](#) (ETCs) will be supported by the Department of Health and Social Care based on the SoECAT-derived ETC per participant value in England, with payments administered by the NIHR RDN via the National Payment System.

How do I complete a SoECAT?

1. Contact your local [AcoRD specialist](#) as early as possible in the application process. They can advise on completing the SoECAT and provide a bespoke service to meet the needs of your study. There are different ways to contact an AcoRD specialist, depending on where you are in the UK:
 - England: [NIHR website](#)
 - Scotland: [NHS Research Scotland website](#)
 - Wales: email research.fundingsupport@wales.nhs.uk
 - Northern Ireland: [HSC R&D division website](#)
2. Complete an online SoECAT. If you do not have an NIHR Central Portfolio Management System (CPMS) account, you will need to create and activate one. Please refer to the [NIHR RDN user guide](#) for support with this. Once your account is created and active, you can complete an online SoECAT by selecting the 'Apply for a service for a new study' pathway. Further guidance can be found on the [Online SoECAT guidance page](#).
3. Ensure that you have added a lead site-based 'Study Representative' who can review the site resources for your study. Further details can be found in

the [managing study team contacts](#) on the [Getting started and logging into CPMS webpage](#).

4. Request authorisation of your SoECAT.
5. When you have authorisation, include the 'funder export' Excel document from your SoECAT as part of your grant application.
6. If we award you a grant, you must access the SoECAT from the 'My Service Applications' dashboard in CPMS and complete the 'Submission' tab of the SoECAT, including uploading the grant award letter, and submitting the SoECAT.

More information

[NIHR: What is AcoRD? page](#)

[NIHR: Online SoECAT guidance page](#)

[NIHR: Online SoECAT guidance module](#)

[NIHR: Study Representative Online SoECAT Top Tips infographic](#)

[NIHR: Excess treatment costs page](#)

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities, Breast Cancer Now will only fund the costs for activities attributed to the Research part A costs category, in line with the AcoRD [guidelines](#).

The following costs should not be included in your budget:

- Research part B costs (the NHS pays these costs where the funder is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities)
- Service support costs
- Treatment costs
- Excess treatment costs (ETCs)

Please note that the AcoRD specialists **cannot** be held accountable for any delays for late submissions to funding bodies. Please contact your [regional Research Delivery Network team](#) as early as possible when developing your proposal. Other sources of assistance and support are the NIHR early contact and engagement [team](#) or the NIHR study support helpdesk at supportmystudy@nihr.ac.uk.

Please convert the completed SoECAT form 'funder export' to a PDF and upload it to the SoECAT tab of your application form. To convert the SoECAT form to PDF and include all tabs in the spreadsheet, do the following:

- Click 'File' and then 'Export'
- Create PDF/XPS
- Click 'Options' in the dialogue box
- Select 'Entire Workbook' in the 'Publish What' section
- Click 'OK'
- Select the file you want to save it in and click 'Publish'
- Upload it by selecting 'Attach' and searching for the folder you saved the SoECAT form in

A letter of support must be included with the application from the lead NHS provider acknowledging the amount requested and confirming that these are the likely costs. Please upload the letter of support using the NHS letter of support function. Useful information when applying for funding for a clinical study can be found in the table below.

Institution	Useful information
UK Clinical Research Collaboration	Registered Clinical Trial Units
Breast Cancer Now	Biobank
National Institute for Health Research	Clinical Trials Toolkit
UK Clinical Research Collaboration	Tissue Directory and Coordination Centre
Medical Research Council	Guidelines on Human Tissue and Biological Samples for Use in Research

Research proposal

We receive a high volume of applications in each funding round so it's vital that you make your application stand out from the crowd. Please note, the 'Research proposal' section of the application form has a 5000-word limit. It is not a requirement to meet the word limit; it is there to provide flexibility for those who need it.

Below are some tips and pitfalls to avoid when preparing your grant application to give yourself the best chance of success:

- Read our [grant conditions and research policies](#) and make sure what you're requesting is allowable
- Give all the information required in the correct format
- Ask someone to proofread your applications; reviewers will be put off by typographical and grammatical errors
- Ensure figures are correctly labelled and referenced
- Read the Academy of Medical Sciences' [10 top tips for grant applicants](#)

Power calculations

Many grant applications are declined because they fail to provide clear power calculations. Please provide an outline of your experimental design and power calculations where relevant. You can provide an additional 1-page document (PDF) containing details of your power calculations. This will be reviewed by a statistician on the committee. Where details of specific experiments are not known, you may provide an illustrative example.

Confidential unpublished data

If you wish to include confidential unpublished data in your application which you do not wish to be seen by external reviewers, this should be emailed to grants_admin@breastcancernow.org in a separate document from the application form. This information will be treated as confidential; it will be held in the office and will only be seen by 2 members of the committee.

Use of generative AI tools in funding applications and assessment

We recognise generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT or Gemini, present opportunities and bring benefits in the context of research such as supporting content generation for computer code or assisting neurodivergent researchers or reducing potential language barriers.

However, the use of generative AI tools in the funding application and assessment process also presents potential risks for research in areas such as rigour,

transparency, originality, reliability, data protection, confidentiality, intellectual property, copyright, and bias. We want to protect against potential ethical, legal and integrity issues in the use of generative AI tools to maintain the high standards of the research and innovation we fund.

When developing funding proposals, researchers must ensure generative AI tools are used responsibly and in accordance with relevant legal and ethical standards where these exist or as they develop. As best practice, any outputs from generative AI tools in funding applications must be acknowledged.

Maintaining confidentiality is essential for safeguarding the exchange of scientific opinions and assessments. As such, our peer reviewers must not input content from our confidential funding applications or reviews into, or use, generative AI tools to develop their peer review critiques or applicant responses to critiques. Our peer reviewers are selected for their expertise and experience in their field, and we value their unique perspectives.

Additional information

Patients

Where projects involve patients, we require that patients are treated according to the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki and the guidelines for good clinical practice.

Using stem cells

Indicate whether the research involves the use of human stem cells and provide further justification if embryonic stem cells are to be used. As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities, we support the use of human embryonic stem cells when the research has the potential to make significant medical advances.

Using human clinical material and the Breast Cancer Now Biobank

For information about what is available in our Biobank, please visit our [website](#) or contact the Biobank at biobank@breastcancernow.org.

If your grant application is successful, you may apply to the Biobank for the materials you require. This will not include a repeat of the peer review already undertaken on your grant application, but it will involve our Access Committee checking that the material you require is suitable for your aims.

Breast Cancer Now funded researchers can access standard samples and data from the tissue bank for free. Details of the samples available can be found on the [website](#).

If you are interested in material or data that is not listed above, please [contact us](#) as we would be happy to discuss further whether the Breast Cancer Now Biobank can help you with your sample requirements. Bespoke requests will incur cost recovery.

When working with human tissue, you should consider if you need expert input from a pathologist. If this is the case, a named pathologist is required as a collaborator. The Biobank may be able to provide pathology support on a collaborative basis; please indicate in your grant application if you plan to ask for this when you apply to the Biobank for material.

If the research will involve the use of cell lines provide information about the types of cells to be used. If you plan to obtain new cell lines, please give details of where they will be sourced from and how they will be authenticated on receipt.

All researchers using cell culture must incorporate a specific cell line authentication protocol into their experimental framework, following the general principles of Good Research Practice (MRC, 2014) as well as best practice for cell culture procedures (UKCCCR Guidelines for the Use of Cell Lines in Cancer Research).

Details on what procedures will be undertaken to validate/authenticate the cell lines, to ensure they are free from cross contamination, microbial contamination and phenotypic drift must be given. Plans to validate cell lines at the start of the project and throughout the research must be given.

Lay overview

We rely on the generosity of our supporters and have a responsibility of reporting back to them, as well as to the public on what research projects we are funding and how they are progressing. For this reason, the lay overview section of the application is extremely important. A good lay overview helps the wider public to understand what you are doing as a researcher and helps us to raise funds and ensure we continue funding the best research into causes, prevention, and treatment of breast cancer. We ask researchers to write these sections in plain English to be understandable to a non-scientific audience, such as lay reviewers, patient representatives, Breast Cancer Now supporters, and members of the public.

It is worthwhile asking someone without a scientific background to read your lay summary before you submit your application. Please refer to the tips below on writing a lay overview and see our [website](#) for good examples of lay summaries of the research we fund. The lay overview should be able to demonstrate the relevance and importance of your research to people with, or at risk of developing, breast cancer, as well as its potential impact. It is useful to include a timescale on how long until the results from your work could reach breast cancer patients, or people at risk of developing the disease.

You should use simple and clear language, short sentences with a clear structure, active phrases rather than passive voice, and language that is mindful of people affected by breast cancer. You should avoid unnecessary jargon, abbreviations, and technical terms wherever possible. If you must use them, please provide a clear explanation. You should also avoid using the scientific abstract or other parts of the application intended for scientific audience with a few word changes.

Some useful resources include the [NIHR guidance on how to write a research summary](#) in clear and concise plain English, and the [readability calculator](#), which highlights language features, such as long sentences or specialist words, and calculates a readability score. You will need to enter your email address to use the tool for free. Please also click the 'Help' buttons next to each section for more detailed information.

Patient and public involvement

Complete this section to explain how patient and public involvement (PPI) has informed and/or influenced the development of your application, and how patients

and/or members of the public will be involved in the research. The term involvement refers to an active partnership between patients, members of the public, and researchers in the research process. PPI does not refer to the recruitment of patients or members of the public as participants in a clinical trial or study.

Many resources for involving patients or members of the public in research are available:

- [INVOLVE](#) is a national advisory body funded by the NIHR to support public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research
- [People in Research](#) is a resource to help members of the public find opportunities to get involved in research, and for research organisations and researchers to advertise involvement opportunities
- [Cancer Research UK](#) patient involvement toolkit for researchers
- [Breast Cancer Voices](#) invites people whose lives have been changed by breast cancer to share their experiences and thoughts on Breast Cancer Now's services, research, campaigns, and funding

Involvement activities might include:

- Helping to ensure that the research is a valuable and respectful use of people's time, and the results are likely to be useful to patients/the public
- For clinical studies, advising on the process of informed consent, making it easier for prospective participants to understand the research and potential risks
- Checking that the practical arrangements for participants are appropriate and not overly burdensome, thereby improving the patient experience
- Assisting in oversight and management of the research (for example, serving on a steering committee)
- Improving the communication of findings to people taking part and the wider public (for example helping in the drafting of a plain English summary of findings)

Letters of support

Where relevant, please upload a letter of support from patient involvement groups.

Training and support to those actively involved in your research

Describe any training and support you have offered, or will offer, to people involved in your research. Refer to the INVOLVE guidelines for developing training and support for public involvement in research.

Expenses and payment

Provide details of any reimbursement of expenses and/or involvement payments you have offered, or will offer, to people involved in your research. For further guidance, refer to the NIHR INVOLVE [policy](#) on payments and expenses for members of the public.

If there are no plans for active research involvement, please explain why

If you have not involved people affected by breast cancer in your research to date and/or have no future plans to do so, please explain why research involvement is not considered to be appropriate or feasible.

Data sharing plan

Please complete this section with details of your data sharing plans. In some disciplines, for example bioinformatics and proteomics, it is common practice to make large data sets available in public access databases. Applications in other areas should describe here any mechanisms or databases currently used to share data or indicate any issues and barriers that exist which hinder them from data sharing.

Our position on data sharing

We ask that researchers share the data generated from publicly funded research, to maximise value to the research community and ultimately for patient benefit. We encourage applicants to detail their data sharing plans in their application form.

For more information on Breast Cancer Now's position on open access, please see our [open access policy](#). Please do not include requests for open access publication charges in your application.

Submitting your application

Once your application form has passed the validation stage (including approvals from co-applicants, collaborators, and head of department), you may submit using the 'Submit application' button at the bottom of the page.

If any fields are incomplete, a 'Submission failed' box will appear at the top of the page listing any incomplete fields that require completion before you can submit your application form.

At this stage, an automated email will be sent to your finance officer to approve your application. Your application will not be fully submitted to Breast Cancer Now until your finance office has approved it. This **must** be completed before the deadline.

You will receive a confirmation email once your finance officer has approved and submitted your application to Breast Cancer Now.

If you have any queries regarding your application or have any difficulties submitting your application, please contact the research team at grants_admin@breastcancernow.org.