

# PhD Grants

## Information for Applicants

Thank you for your interest in our PhD grant funding scheme. If you have any queries during the application process, please email us at [grants\\_admin@breastcancer.org](mailto:grants_admin@breastcancer.org)



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## About Us

Breast Cancer Now is the UK's largest dedicated breast cancer research funder. To date, we have invested over £250 million in ground-breaking research. We also provide life-changing care and support services for people affected by breast cancer, and we campaign to make sure that everyone affected by breast cancer receives the best possible treatment, services, support, and care.

## Purpose and Scope

Our PhD grant funding scheme aims to support scientific excellence and innovative research into breast cancer. It is the expectation that PhDs will enrich scientific understanding and expertise in breast cancer research.

- PhD grants are available to established researchers working in an institution in the UK or Ireland, and are designed to capture new and highly qualified science graduates into a career of breast cancer research.
- Collaborative applications from within UK and Ireland are welcome, although the contracted grant (and associated funding arrangements) will be with the Lead Applicant's institution. Named academic/clinical Co-Applicants and Collaborators are permitted from outside the UK and Ireland.
- PhD funds can be requested for three or four-year studentships, and can cover student stipend, student fees, college fees (where applicable), research expenses and essential equipment.
- The total amount requested must not exceed £142,000 for PhDs outside London and £150,000 inside London for a four-year PhD. The budget for a three-year PhD should be costed accordingly using the guidance outlined below.
- We are keen to receive applications from researchers working across all fields of breast cancer.

## Eligibility

Applicants should read our research [grant conditions and research policies](#) before completing the application.

- The Applicant and PhD studentship must be based at a recognised university, research institution or NHS trust in the UK or Ireland.
- If researchers require a visa to work in the UK, they may qualify for the accelerated [Global Talent Visa route](#). This is open for promising and talented individuals in specific sectors wishing to work in the UK.
- Lead Applicants should have conducted independent research in the field of breast cancer.
- Applicants should have a track record of identifying and maximising potential in others (e.g. through managing and mentoring their own staff and early career researchers, as primary supervisor of PhD students).
- Lead Applicants should hold employment or honorary (if a clinical academic) contracts that extend beyond the period of the grant.
- Lead Applicants with a fixed-term position may apply, but they must include a letter from the Head of Department to indicate that their salary will be covered for the duration of the PhD.
- Lead Applicants may **not** apply for more than one grant as Lead Applicant but may apply as a Co-Applicant or Collaborator on more than one application.

- Applicants may have spent time away from research (e.g. a career break, maternity leave, long-term sick leave). Our reviewers will allow for this when the application is considered.
- Co-Applicants and Collaborators may be based at institutions outside the UK/Ireland and/or at pharmaceutical or biotech companies.
- We will consider applications for research that will take place within the NHS. Should the research become part of a clinical trial, we will fund the research but will not act as a sponsor.
- We will consider applications for students undertaking a part-time PhD to facilitate flexible working arrangements.

The following will **not** be accepted:

- Applications from a commercial entity.
- Applications from the potential students themselves.
- Applications from clinicians taking time out of programme to undertake a PhD.
- Research proposals into conditions other than breast cancer.
- Applications for equipment only. We will accept requests for small pieces of equipment (up to £5000) as part of your proposal, but you must include a clear justification for this request.
- Applications which request funding for consumables or running costs only.
- Applications from an individual who is NOT employed by an eligible institution, i.e. a university or research institute.
- Applications for methods or service development.
- PhDs part-funded with other funders.

If you are unsure about the eligibility and remit of your PhD, please contact the Research Funding team at [grants\\_admin@breastcancernow.org](mailto:grants_admin@breastcancernow.org) **before** you submit your application. Once the deadline has passed there will be no opportunity to consider individual circumstances and applications not meeting the requirements will be rejected without peer review.

### Lead Applicant

Applications should be made using our online [Grant Tracker system](#). You must complete all sections of the application form.

- Applications must be submitted by **4pm on the deadline date**.
- The Lead Applicant, Co-Applicants, the Head of Department and the University or Institution Research Grants office (or finance office if not applicable) must complete the declarations at the end of the application form in order to submit your application. Please give them enough notice to avoid missing the deadline.
- Applicants will receive confirmation by email from the online applications system once a grant application is submitted.
- For the main proposal, you can submit up to four pages of figures/preliminary data.
- Applicants should indicate how their proposal meets one or more of Breast Cancer Now's key strategic objectives as outlined in our [strategy](#):

- Improving treatments, care and services for those affected by secondary breast cancer.
  - Improving support for the physical and mental health, and the emotional wellbeing of people affected by breast cancer.
  - Developing kinder, smarter treatments for people with breast cancer and improving access to treatments for those affected.
  - Improving detection and diagnosis of breast cancer.
  - Furthering our understanding of why breast cancer occurs and spreads and using our knowledge to help prevent breast cancer developing.
- The duration of the PhD should not exceed 48 months.
  - Provide a succinct abstract of the proposal. Abstracts will be used to approach potential reviewers so they can judge whether or not they can review the application.
  - Provide five or six key words that best describe the research. This will be used by the Research Funding team to help select the most relevant peer reviewers.
  - If successful, PhDs must start within **twelve** months of the award letter being received. Please include the most accurate start date when completing your application form.
  - Tell us if the application is being submitted elsewhere, and provide details of where the application has been submitted and when a decision is expected.
  - Indicate if the application is for a new grant where the work is a direct follow on from a successful current grant that is due to end. This could include where a successful project grant may lead to a proposal for a PhD studentship.
  - 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 a revised application, and must submit a covering letter along with the application detailing the modifications which merit its reconsideration. Please select **Resubmission** in the **Details** section of the online application form and upload a covering letter. The final decision on whether the application will continue in the process is at the discretion of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Grants Committee. We advise all applicants considering a resubmission to contact us at [grants\\_admin@breastcancer.org](mailto:grants_admin@breastcancer.org) in advance of submission to check your eligibility.

### 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 PhD. Each Co-Applicant must do the following before the submission deadline:

- Register with our online Grant Tracker system.
- Update their CV by visiting the **Manage My Details** section.
- **Confirm** their participation as Co-Applicant for this application, to be allowed to view the application.
- **Approve** the content of the application. This must be done before the application can be submitted.

## Collaborators

Collaborators do not have access to grant funds. They will be expected to contribute to the overall intellectual direction of the research PhD or programme of research, and bring their own resources to the collaboration. They will not be involved in the day-to-day execution of the PhD. Each Collaborator must do the following before the submission deadline:

- **Confirm** they are a Collaborator for this PhD to be allowed to view the application.
- **Approve** the content of the application. This must be done before the application can be submitted.
- The Lead Applicant will fill in the reasons for Collaboration (200 words max) and obtain a letter of collaboration (one page max) from each Collaborator to attach.

Please note, Co-Applicants and Collaborators can view, but **cannot** edit, your application.

## **NHS Co-Applicants and Collaborators**

Co-Applicants and Collaborators based in the NHS may experience difficulties receiving invitation emails from our database due to the introduction of stricter GDPR rules in the NHS. As such, 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.

## **Letter(s) of Support from Industry Partner(s)**

If your application includes any collaboration with an industry partner (e.g. 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 of your school or faculty as a 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 approval of the application. The Head of Department must do the following before the submission deadline:

- **Confirm** participation as Head of Department to be allowed to view the application.
- **Approve** the content of the application. This must be done before the application can be submitted.
- 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, 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 two days to approve the application **AFTER** you have submitted your application. The Finance Officer must do the following 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, and to submit the application for final approval from the Finance Officer.
- **Approve** the application. This step is the final approval required for the application to be fully submitted. The Finance Officer will receive a request for final approval by email once the applicant has pressed Submit.
- The Finance Officer can view **and** edit your application.

### Application Review Process

Our Grants 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, applicant track record and the suitability of the project and research environment for a PhD student.

- Each application will be reviewed by two members of our Grants Committee.
- Applications are scored using a 10-point system. A score of 0 = not fundable, and a score of 10 = highly fundable.
- The Grants 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 from when you submitted your proposal, and we will send you feedback from the Grants 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 Grants Committee meeting.
- Applications that have not been viewed favourably by the peer reviewers collectively will be triaged at this point.
- Applications that pass the Second Triage will be reviewed and discussed by the Grants Committee.
- The Grants Committee will make recommendations for funding to Breast Cancer Now's Board of Trustees.
- Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will receive an outcome letter and feedback from the Grants Committee and external reviewers within 4 weeks of the Committee meeting.

### Costing your Application

For more detailed information, please click the **Help** buttons next to each section.

- Applicants must justify the funds requested.
- 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 full 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 the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) guidelines, we will only fund directly incurred costs and not the full economic costs of research (FECs) or a proportion of these.
- PhD grants will be funded on the understanding that the host institution meets the overhead and infrastructure costs. Infrastructure costs include items such as lighting, heating, telephones, use of library facilities, general laboratory equipment, general office expenses, core laboratory services (wash up and waste disposal), maintenance and running costs of laboratory equipment, estates costs.
- 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.
- Applications requesting funding of the second or subsequent years of an already existing studentship will **not** be accepted.

We will provide funding for one PhD stipend, consumables, and fees up to the maximum amounts per year as listed in the table below. You can edit these to match your institutions stipend and fees, but the total amount must not exceed the overall totals indicated. Consumables for Year 4 cover six months of research, with the expectation that the final six months are used for write-up of the thesis.

		GBP (£)	Index	Total (3 Years)	Total (4 Years)
<b>Stipend</b>	Outside London	£19,000	0%	£57,000	£76,000
	Inside London	£21,000	0%	£63,000	£84,000
<b>Consumables</b>	Years 1-3	£13,500	2.2%	£41,398*	
	Year 4	£6,500	2.2%		£47,898*
<b>Fees</b>	Years 1-4	£4,567	2.2%	£14,005	£18,880

	Total (3 Years)	Total (4 Years)
<b>Outside London</b>	£112,402	£142,777
<b>Inside London</b>	£118,402	£150,777

**\*Note:** £1,900 from the Consumables budget is ringfenced for researcher development activities to attend conferences, external training courses, and workshops over the course of the studentship. The amount remaining for Consumables will therefore be £39,498 (3 Years) or £45,998 (4 Years). This £1,900 will be added in the **Conference Costs** section of the budget.

The following table of allowed and disallowed costs indicates what is permissible on a PhD grant application, but should not be considered exhaustive. The Research Funding 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@breastcancer.org](mailto:grants_admin@breastcancer.org).

Allowed Costs	Disallowed Costs
Laboratory materials and consumables directly attributable to the PhD.	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 <b>Other Expenses</b> section. Please refer to our <a href="#">conference travel guidelines</a> 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 <a href="#">use of animals in scientific research</a> .	Open access charges. Please <b>do not</b> 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 <a href="#">open access policy</a> .
Small pieces of equipment (e.g. PC) if essential for the PhD. If above £5000, please discuss with the office.	Equipment maintenance and running costs.
Computer software license, if required specifically for the PhD (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 salaries (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 £1,900, where work funded by Breast Cancer Now is being presented.	
Microarray or sequencing costs.	

\*Please click **Add Conference Costs** and then click save in order to validate the form and allow you to submit. These costs cannot be edited and are entered in year one for technical reasons, but can be used across all years as required. These costs must be included within the overall total of the PhD and not in addition to. No other conference and related travel costs above this are permitted.

### NHS Costs

We accept applications for research taking place within the NHS. If applying for NHS support costs or treatment costs, applicants should complete a SoECAT form, which is available to download from the NIHR's website [here](#). The costs of non-commercial research are met by different funders depending on the type of cost. Guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care for the Attribution of Costs for Research and Development ([AcoRD](#)) sets out the principles for

determining who pays for the different costs. Please refer to this guidance before completing the costs section of your application. As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), 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 an AMRC Member)
- Service Support Costs
- Treatment Costs
- Excess Treatment Costs (ETCs)

NHS Service Support Costs should be funded via the Clinical Research Networks. NHS Treatment Costs, including any ETCs/Savings, will be met by the NHS through normal patient care commissioning arrangements. Further background information and links to resources are provided below.

### **Excess Treatment Costs (ETCs)**

ETCs occur when treatment costs (the patient care costs) in a research study are greater than in routine care. For example, a patient taking part in research may be given a new drug to see how it performs in comparison with the standard drug given to non-research patients. If the cost of the new drug being tested in the study is more than the one usually prescribed, then it is an excess treatment cost, as it would not occur in standard care. For non-commercial research studies, these costs are the responsibility of the NHS.

NHS England, with the NIHR and HRA, want to improve the management of these costs and thereby, through a more rapid, consistent, and standardised approach, cut delays, maximise patient recruitment and make administration simpler than previously. In line with this, NHS England has implemented a new national ETC process. The ETC process is managed by the NIHR Local Clinical Research Networks (LCRNs), on behalf of their local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), and in collaboration with NHS England's Specialised Commissioning function. This will create a single point of access for all proposals for which ETCs may be applicable and is designed to make the process simpler for researchers to navigate. As part of this process, researchers will be required to complete a SoECAT form for clinical research. To ensure HRA approval and NIHR portfolio adoption, a completed SoECAT form must first be approved and signed by an AcoRD specialist. For further details see the next section.

See the NIHR [guidance](#) on ETCs for further information about ETCs and the way they are paid. For queries and assistance with ETC payments, please contact the NIHR's helpdesk at [etc.helpdesk@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:etc.helpdesk@nihr.ac.uk).

### **Schedule of Events Costs Attribution Template (SoECAT)**

Researchers applying for clinical research grants need to complete a SoECAT to be eligible for the NIHR Clinical Research Network portfolio and to access the appropriate funding support for the study. The SoECAT is a spreadsheet tool that helps to keep track and calculate the different activities and costs associated with clinical research in a standardised way. Please follow the NIHR SoECAT [guidance](#) and ensure you have downloaded the correct version of the SoECAT [tool](#).

You must submit a completed SoECAT form with your grant application:

- If you are applying for funding for clinical research.
- If you will carry out your research in England.
- If your research requires HRA approval.
- If your research will use NHS England resources.
- Even if your clinical research does not involve ETCs.

NIHR AcoRD specialists work with researchers, R&D support and/or CTUs, to confirm that the attribution of costs is accurate before submission to the HRA and funding bodies. They can also signpost to resources and training to understand the principles of AcoRD, provide tailored advice, help to resolve queries, and validate the attribution of costs. Please note that the AcoRD specialists cannot be held accountable for any delays for late submissions to funding bodies. If you need support from an AcoRD specialist in your region on how to correctly identify and attribute relevant activities, please contact your LCRN representative at the early stage of developing of your application. 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](mailto:supportmystudy@nihr.ac.uk).

Once complete, please convert the completed SoECAT form to a PDF and upload it to the cost section of your application form. Please label the file NHS Support and Treatment Costs. 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 also 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 below.

Institution	Useful Information
UK Clinical Research Collaboration	<a href="#">Registered Clinical Trial Units</a>
National Cancer Research Institute	For clinical applicants based in the UK, it is recommended that your study is reviewed by the NCRI <a href="#">Clinical Studies Group</a>
National Cancer Research Institute	<a href="#">Cancer Clinical Trial Units Group</a>
National Cancer Research Institute	<a href="#">Molecular Biomarkers Advisory Group</a>
Breast Cancer Now	<a href="#">Tissue Bank</a>
National Institute for Health Research	<a href="#">Clinical Trials Toolkit</a>

UK Clinical Research Collaboration	<a href="#">Tissue Directory and Coordination Centre</a>
Medical Research Council	<a href="#">Guidelines on Human Tissue and Biological Samples for Use in Research</a>
National Cancer Research Institute	<a href="#">Clinical Trial Pathology Advisory Group</a>
National Cancer Research Institute	<a href="#">The SPIRIT-Path</a> provides guidance to address the variability in how pathology is planned and delivered in clinical trials

## Research Proposal (4000 words)

We only fund the best quality research so that every penny donated towards research will benefit people with breast cancer. We receive a high volume of applications in each grant round, so it's vital that you make your application stand out from the crowd. 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](#).
- You should include details of the aims and purpose of the proposed investigation, background to the PhD, your plan of investigation and methodology, any potential risks or challenges, your timescale, figures, and references.

### **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. It will be reviewed by a statistician on the Grants Committee. Where details of specific experiments are not known, you may provide an illustrative example. Please see the information provided in the Additional Details section of your Grant Tracker application form.

### **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@breastcancer.org](mailto:grants_admin@breastcancer.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 two members of our Grants Committee.

## Additional Information

For more detailed information, please click the **Help** buttons next to each section.

- Where PhDs 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.
- 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 Tissue Bank.
  - Please state whether this research will involve the use of tissue samples, blood samples or derivatives (e.g. plasma, serum) and/or primary cells. If yes, please indicate whether you plan to obtain this material from our Tissue Bank. If so, please give details. If not, please indicate why you will not use our Tissue Bank.
  - For information about what is available in our Tissue Bank, please visit our [website](#) or contact us at [tissue.bank@breastcancer.org](mailto:tissue.bank@breastcancer.org). The site also provides information on our [Tissue Access Policy](#). If you intend to access samples from our Tissue Bank, please check that we have the samples you require before submitting the application.
- If your grant application is successful, you may apply to the Tissue Bank 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 Tissue Access Committee checking the material you require is suitable for your aims.
- Please do not request funding to cover the costs of the materials; we will cover these costs for you upon application to the Tissue Bank.
- 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 Tissue Bank 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 Tissue Bank for material.
- Cell lines: State whether the research will involve the use of cell lines, and if so, provide further 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 \(MRC, 2000\)](#) as well as best practice for cell culture procedures ([UKCCCR Guidelines for the Use of Cell Lines in Cancer Research, 1999](#)).
- 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 PhD and throughout the research must be given.

## PhD Supervisor

The primary supervisor will be required to provide the following information:

- Details of a second supervisor who will take the place should the main applicant/supervisor be absent.
- List of current and past students. Including names, positions, start date and funding body. For past students, how many achieved their degree.
- Information about any planned sabbaticals and who will supervise the student in your absence.
- Training environment, including details about the training offered specific to this project and general research training offered by the host institution.
- Suitability of the project for the student.

- Institution, including what the institution provides (in terms of supervision and assessment) and expects (such as attendance of lectures) from its PhD students.

## 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 PhDs we are funding and how they are progressing. For this reason, the lay overview section of a research PhD in a grant application form and progress report forms is extremely important. A good lay overview helps the wider public to understand what you are doing as a researcher, and helps us as a charity to raise funds and ensure we continue funding 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 a Breast Cancer Now supporter or member of the public.

It is worthwhile asking someone without a scientific background to read your lay section before you submit the application. Please refer to the tips below on writing a lay overview and see our [website](#) here 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.

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 is a computer-based text analysis which highlights language features, such as long sentences or hard 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.

Your lay summary should broadly cover these areas:

- Why are you doing the research? What is the motivation behind the research application? Why is this research needed?
- State clearly the aims and objectives of the research PhD for a lay audience. What do you hope to find?
- Describe clearly what you are going to do throughout the PhD to achieve your aims. Scientific detail isn't necessary, but the major steps in your research PhD should be mentioned. You should also mention the timescale for your PhD.
- Explain how achieving your PhD aims could benefit people with or at risk of breast cancer. You should clearly demonstrate how your research relates to breast cancer and to Breast Cancer Now's strategic aims.

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.

## Patient and Public Involvement

Complete this section to explain how patient and public involvement 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. For additional guidance on involving patients or members of the public in research, many resources are available for researchers:

- [INVOLVE](#) Briefing notes for researchers: Public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research (INVOLVE is a national advisory body funded by the NIHR to support public involvement in NHS, public health and social care research).
- [INVOLVE](#) Briefing note: Why involve members of the public in 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.

Describe how you have involved, or plan to involve, people affected by breast cancer in your research. Briefly describe any involvement activities already completed and if, or how, they influenced development of the research proposal. Outline your plans for research involvement during the research. Involvement activities might include:

- Participation in the choice of research topics. 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 (e.g. serving on a Trial Steering Committee).
- Improving the communication of findings to people taking part and the wider public (e.g. helping in the drafting of a plain English summary of findings).

### **Letter 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, 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, 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. This data sharing plan will not be reviewed as part of the funding decision and will be used for data gathering and monitoring purposes only. 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**

As a member of the National Cancer Research Institution (NCRI), we endorse the [NCRI data sharing policy](#) and ask that researchers share the data generated from publicly funded research, in order to maximise value to the research community and ultimately for patient benefit. We have contributed to the costs of the NCRI Informatics Initiative, which supports the development of data standards and promotes a culture of data sharing. 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.

### **Declaration**

You will be asked to agree to the following statement:

I confirm that all requests listed above have been completed at the time of submission. I understand that Breast Cancer Now will not attach any additional information once the application is submitted. Failure to provide all required information may result in the application being rejected from consideration. I understand that submission of an application indicates full acceptance of the [Grant Conditions](#).

### **Attachments**

This section lists all the documents that have been uploaded/attached to your application. Please check that each document has been clearly labelled for reviewers as all attachments will be at the end of your application.

### **Validation**

This section lists any incomplete fields that require completion before you can validate your application form and submit it. If none of the application form sections are listed, this means your application form has passed all the validation checks and can be submitted for final approval to your finance office.

## 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 on the right-hand side of the page. At this stage, an automated email will be sent to your Finance Officer to **Approve** your application. It is only upon your Finance Department's approval that your application is fully submitted to Breast Cancer Now. This must be completed before the deadline.

If you have any queries regarding your application or have any difficulties submitting your application, please contact the Research Funding Team at [grants\\_admin@breastcancernow.org](mailto:grants_admin@breastcancernow.org)