Involving People in Research Grant 2026

Submission information

Introduction

The RCOT Research and Innovation Fund supports the development of the evidence base for occupational therapy and the expansion of research capability and capacity within the profession.

Through the Involving People in Research Grant, you can apply for up to £2,000 to involve people with lived experience in developing a grant application. For example, this could include setting up an advisory group that you consult as you develop your grant application, or consulting to understand the priorities of people with lived experience or the feasibility of the research methodology.

We will only provide funding for Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) activities that directly support the development of a new research grant application, as described above. This means we will not fund PPI activities related to research that has already secured grant funding, nor will we fund PPI activities for ongoing PhD research projects.

We value the diversity of our membership, and we strongly encourage grant applications from all sections of our community, especially those from under-represented and minoritised groups. We are committed to improving the equity and inclusivity of our processes and all opportunities provided.

Application guidance

See below for guidance on the different sections in the application form and how to submit your application.

**Plain English summary**

This should be a summary of the future research you plan to carry out, as best as you can give at this stage. We understand your plans will change after you have involved people with lived experience in developing your grant application.

Please note the plain English summary is not about the activity you plan to do with people with lived experience if your application is successful; that is described in a later section of the application.

**Link with the top ten priorities for occupational therapy research in the UK**

Your future research must address at least one of the top ten priorities for occupational therapy research in the UK. You can find the top ten [here](https://www.rcot.co.uk/top-10).

**Description of how you will use the grant funding**

Please describe how you intend to use the grant funding, including consideration of diverse populations and any ethical approval required. You must comply with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 and Research Governance Frameworks for Health and Social Care.

**Future funding streams**

Please name which future funding stream(s) you have identified to apply for and potential deadlines for submission. This can be any funding stream that is relevant to occupational therapy research, and not only RCOT grants.

**Timeline**

Please note the activity must be completed within 12 months of the award being made.

**Funding requested**

We expect the funding section of the application form to include actual costs related to undertaking the activity – for example, administrative costs and materials, travel, room hire and compensation for people’s time to take part in the activity. As a registered charity we do not expect to fund university overheads (such as office space costs).

Ensure you are compensating people with lived experience at the [NIHR benchmark rates](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-researchers-and-professionals/27392#payment-rates).

# Lead applicant

As the lead applicant, you must be a professional member of the British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT) at the time the proposal is submitted and throughout the duration of the funded project.

RCOT employees and current members of Council are not eligible for the Involving People in Research Grant.

# Co-applicants

While it is not necessary to have co-applicants, you may be working with colleagues who will be part of the future research grant application and will be involved in this exploratory work. If so, you may want to include them as co-applicants. Co-applicants who have an occupational therapy qualification and live in the UK must have BAOT membership. Co-applicants who are included because of their lived experience and/or background don’t need BAOT membership even if they have an occupational therapy qualification.

# Completion and submission of proposals

* In sections where a word limit applies, please give the word count total for that section. The maximum word allowance stated is a fixed figure; it does not include allowance of an additional 10%. Exceeding the stated word allowance may result in your application being disqualified.
* CVs and other documents should not be appended to the proposal form as these will not be considered.
* You must submit the proposal form in Word format **(not PDF)**. The completed signature page may be submitted as a separate PDF. We will acknowledge receipt of proposals via email.
* Submit completed proposals electronically to R&IFund@rcot.co.uk.

There is no deadline for submission. We’ll award grants as and when suitable applications are received until all funds for the year have been allocated. Please do check our website regularly to ensure funding is still available, or you can ask by emailing R&IFund@rcot.co.uk. You should receive a response to your application within eight weeks of submission.

# The review process

Applications will be reviewed by two RCOT Research and Innovation Fund Panel members with lived experience and one member with research experience.

Proposals will be reviewed against the following criteria:

* Feasibility of the proposed public involvement and engagement work
* Consideration of diverse populations and their inclusion in the public involvement and engagement work
* Link to the [top ten priorities](https://www.rcot.co.uk/top-10) for occupational therapy research in the UK
* Clearly identified funding stream(s) for future application
* Value for money.

If your proposal is highly rated and has potential for funding, you may be invited to respond to reviewers’ comments to inform the final decision. The three Research and Innovation Fund Panel members will make the final recommendation for funding.

# Project management, contractual deliverables and grant payments

As the grant holder, you’ll assume responsibility for completion of the work.

The following contractual deliverables will apply:

* summary of the work carried out
* informing us of the outcome of the work (such as a grant application)
* supporting the promotion of the Research and Innovation Fund, where reasonably practical. This may include contributing promotional content such as quotes or testimonials for use in social or attending online events.

We’ll pay the grant in full in one instalment. If you need ethical approval for the activity, normally we need evidence of this before the funding is released.

**Further help and advice**

If you’d like to discuss your project proposal or have a question about the application process, please contact Angie Thompson, RCOT Research and Development Officer, in the first instance at: angie.thompson@rcot.co.uk or telephone: 020 3141 4615.

You can find other funding opportunities through the R&D Bulletin and discuss research opportunities and issues with other RCOT members via Research Connect. You can find out how to access both [here](https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/research-and-development#research-networking).