



Request for Proposals (RFP)
Piloting a learning network: Longitudinal datasets for early intervention in anxiety, depression and psychosis

1. RFP Background & Objectives

Mental Health Strategy and Vision

Wellcome is a politically and financially independent charitable foundation. We improve health for everyone by funding research, leading policy and advocacy campaigns, and building global partnerships.

Within this broad mission, Wellcome's Mental Health team is pursuing an ambitious agenda to drive a step change in early intervention in anxiety, depression, and psychosis. You can find more information about Wellcome's Mental Health programme [here](#).

A Learning Network: Longitudinal datasets for early intervention in anxiety, depression and psychosis

Longitudinal datasets that include mental health-relevant data are a vital resource in deepening our understanding of how anxiety, depression and psychosis develop, persist and resolve. Participant data spans the biological, psychological and social domains and is often collected at multiple time points over many years.

Research commissioned by Wellcome ([Landscaping International Longitudinal Datasets report, 2023](#)) has identified 3000 longitudinal datasets that show promise for anxiety, depression and psychosis research. However, there are challenges to unlocking this value. These challenges include leveraging the unstructured qualitative data that exists in some of these datasets, recruitment and retention of participants, developing cross-cultural standards and metrics and embedding sound data governance.

Wellcome wants to establish a global, interdisciplinary learning network to make significant headway on these challenges. In the pilot phase, it will focus on one priority challenge: unlocking the value of qualitative longitudinal data for research into anxiety, depression and psychosis.

Unlike many other health conditions, mental health diagnosis is fundamentally self-report and language based. Our primary approaches to identifying and (in many cases) treating mental health conditions rely heavily on using language and experiences to understand how those conditions change over time. Currently this is largely done through questionnaires completed at intervals. However mental health conditions are complex and fluctuating, making them notoriously difficult to capture using standardised questionnaires at distant spacing. Unlocking the potential of qualitative data (such as free text in electronic health records, in depth



interviews and audio diaries) and integrating this with other data sources within longitudinal datasets could help us better understand how anxiety, depression and psychosis develop, persist and resolve.

The learning network pilot will be an active, problem-solving group. It will bring together a broad range of relevant disciplinary expertise (eg longitudinal data holders; anxiety, depression and psychosis researchers; lived experience and governance experts; software developers; large language model, machine learning and statistical and qualitative methods experts; data curators; clinicians; epidemiologists). It will progress methods and technical and ethical standards for quantitatively analysing existing qualitative data within longitudinal datasets and integrating it with other data sources that will enable researchers to identify early markers of depression, anxiety and psychosis and so better targets for early intervention.

If the pilot is successful, our ambition is that the learning network could go on to unblock other specific challenges in using longitudinal data to help understand how anxiety, depression and psychosis develop, persist and resolve.

This RfP aims to find a supplier to lead on ~15 months of delivery. The **structure of this activity** includes:

- Planning the learning network, including devising the learning network model, membership criteria, pilot activity programme and evaluation plans (~3 months)
- Piloting the learning network, with a focus on leveraging value from qualitative data for research into early interventions for depression, anxiety and psychosis (~ 11 months, including at least 9 months of learning network activity)
- Evaluation and a final report to include a future delivery plan if the pilot is successful (~ 1 month).

The final full report will include recommendations for future learning network activity in service of the Wellcome mental health strategy. We will look to support the scale up and roll out of such a learning network if the pilot is deemed successful.

2. RFP Specification

This section sets out the specification of services for this RFP exercise. Suppliers should use this section to fully understand Wellcome's requirements and to develop their response.

Planning stage

The supplier will develop plans for a learning network to tackle the challenges associated with using longitudinal data for anxiety, depression and psychosis research. The planning stage will include:



- Scoping relevant collaborative communities, professional and ethical standards, open research frameworks and resources used within the current practice landscape
- Developing membership criteria to allow for sufficient global expertise and interdisciplinarity to meet the challenge of using longitudinal data to advance understanding of how anxiety, depression and psychosis develop, persist and resolves. For example: longitudinal data holders; anxiety, depression and psychosis researchers; lived experience and governance experts; software developers; large language model, machine learning and statistical and qualitative methods experts; data curators; clinicians; epidemiologists
- Setting out a process by which members will be identified and approximately how many members there should be. As a guide, we envisage at least 4 longitudinal data holders - representing datasets of differing sizes and across different geographies and resource settings - working alongside researchers and data scientists. This will make up a group of 20-40 people. Members should be prioritised, and may change, according to the relevance of their expertise for each phase of the learning network. However, if a supplier believes the learning network should be larger or smaller than suggested here, we are open to discussion
- Identifying insights from other learning networks on how to run successfully, overcome barriers to collaboration and address research culture challenges
- Detailing a streamlined process, handled by the supplier, to remunerate members as appropriate and reimburse them for travel and expenses
- Identifying potential learning network models, including optimal:
 - operational infrastructure and governance
 - resourcing
 - lifespan
- Once members are identified and agreed with Wellcome:
 - inviting and confirming network members for the pilot phase challenge (leveraging existing qualitative longitudinal data)
 - co-developing with members an outline programme for the pilot, setting out specific area(s) of investigation within the overarching challenge (eg identifying a research roadmap; development of methods to analyse qualitative data; best practice for methods to combine qualitative and quantitative data; quality standards for qualitative data curation; relevant open science and ethical governance approaches) as well as frequency and format of events (we ask that suppliers propose the proportion of funds to be used to enable network members to work on the challenge, but would expect this to be a significant portion)

Suppliers are welcome to suggest additional elements for inclusion in the planning stage which they think would be valuable to cover.

The planning stage must conclude with a short list of recommended options for the learning network pilot – setting out the model, membership criteria and process, infrastructure, resourcing, governance, activities and evaluation methods to be piloted under each option. Each option must be based on running a pilot that focuses on leveraging value from longitudinal qualitative data for research into early interventions for depression, anxiety and psychosis. The supplier is welcome to indicate a preferred option.



Pilot

Following consultation and agreement with Wellcome, the supplier will then roll out the preferred pilot model identified in the scoping phase.

The pilot should:

- deliver a minimum of 9 months of activity, as developed with learning network members at the planning stage and agreed with Wellcome on the priority challenge (unlocking the value of qualitative longitudinal data)
- involve the full range of members, based on the membership criteria identified in the planning stage and agreed with Wellcome
- include ongoing evaluation
- be funded from within the budget for the contract overall – there will be no additional funding for the pilot.

Evaluation and recommendations

Evaluation of the pilot including practical recommendations for future learning network activity if the pilot is judged to be successful. This should include a detailed plan for roll out (scale, infrastructure, budget, timeline).

Project management

Through the course of the project the supplier will be responsible for:

- arranging, planning and following up on fortnightly update emails and monthly online progress meetings with Wellcome
- recording, monitoring, flagging and addressing all risks and other issues
- budget management and accounting, including invoicing.

Deliverables

1. Inception report which details the scope of the work, outline of the methodology at each stage, and a detailed timeline for completion of the work
2. Concise planning stage report including findings from each planning activity and analysis of findings; recommendations for pilot activities, membership, infrastructure, resourcing, governance; and executive summary. The report should be professionally designed, [co-branded](#) and presented in a format suitable for publication on [Wellcome Open Research](#).
3. Slide deck and online or in person presentation of key insights
4. Detailed activity plan for the roll-out of the preferred pilot model identified in the planning stage and agreed with Wellcome (to be monitored at monthly progress meetings)
5. Concise reports on each of the learning network's pilot stage activities (events, meetings etc)
6. Full evaluation report of the pilot model including practical recommendations for



future Wellcome-funded learning network activity in this domain. The report should be professionally designed, [co-branded](#) and presented in a format suitable for publication on [Wellcome Open Research](#).

Budget

To assist with supplier planning, we expect to receive bids in the region of £500,000 including VAT. However, this is an outcome specification and suppliers should request the budget needed to deliver the required outputs, including a dedicated portion for network members to work together on the challenge.

We are open to receiving collaborative bids in which organisations would partner with each other to deliver this work.

3. RFP Timetable

#	Activity	Responsibility	Date
1	RFP issued to Suppliers and published on Contract Opportunities webpage	Wellcome	08/05/2024
2	Deadline for submitting Expression of Interest and Supplier Questions	Supplier	20/05/2024
3	Return of Supplier Q&A to Suppliers	Wellcome	04/06/2024
4	Deadline for submission of RFP Response	Supplier	17/06/2024
5	RFP Evaluation Period	Wellcome	17/06/2024 - 8/07/2024
6	Supplier Presentations (NB the supplier representative who will be leading the work and the day-to-day contact with Wellcome must be at the presentation)	Wellcome & Supplier	W/C 15/07/2024
7	Notification of Contract Award	Wellcome	August 2024
8	Contract Negotiation	Wellcome & Supplier	August/ September 2024
9	Contract Start Date	Wellcome & Supplier	September 2024

4. Response Format

The following headers support the timetable by providing further detail of the key steps.

Expression of Interest and Supplier Q&A

Suppliers are asked to submit a very short non-binding expression of interest by e-mail to the Wellcome contact in accordance with the RFP timetable, which should contain the following information.

- Confirming whether you are an organisation or individual



- The main contact details for any further communication
- If an organisation, please provide registered name, address, and registration number.
- Any questions you have about the exercise and activity

It is not necessary for suppliers to give any further information (eg about relevant previous projects or how you might approach this project) at the expression of interest stage.

Prior to the submission of your full response to the RFP, suppliers have the opportunity to submit any questions they have about the project. All questions will be collated, anonymised, answered and returned to all suppliers who have submitted an expression of interest in the RFP process. Please make sure you ask all questions at this stage. Any additional questions submitted after the deadline will not be answered to ensure that this is a fair and equitable process.

Submitting an EOI/Q&A is not a binding commitment to submit a full proposal should your organisational priorities change, you will not then be penalised for future opportunities. Suppliers who do not submit an expression of interest may still submit a response to the RFP.

RFP Response

Suppliers are required to submit a concise proposal which responds to the questions below. Please keep your proposal to approximately 5 sides of A4 (11 pt font, 1.5 line spacing) or 14 slides.

#	Question
1	Outline your approach for delivering the key activities and objectives of this RFP. Please include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your proposed stages with descriptions • Timeline • Methodology for the scoping, pilot and evaluation and how you will quality check to ensure reliable and clear outputs • Approach to codesigning activity for the pilot • How you will communicate with the Wellcome team
2	Please provide an example of previous work where you have successfully completed a similar project: effectively scoping or delivering an interdisciplinary research community of practice or learning network; and outline its impact.
3	Outline the project team, including a brief description of skills and experience
4	Outline the major risks and challenges you foresee with the project. Please include your mitigation strategies
5	Provide a brief outline and justification of the proposed costs to meet our requirements, together with the disbursement mechanism you would use to support activities linked to the priority challenge. Ideally this would take the form of line items and which deliverables they will achieve.



6	Outline your approach to equality, diversity and inclusion as this relates to methodology, practice and delivery of this work, and within your organisation.
7	Give contact information for a named point of contact

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Detail	%
Methodology	Quality and coverage: Are the approaches and methodologies appropriate for the scoping, pilot and evaluation? Utility: Will the proposed methodology deliver outputs that are both credible and practically useful.	30%
Experience	Skills and Experience: Does the supplier have the relevant skills, experience and contextual understanding to deliver this work? And to potentially take the activity beyond pilot stage if the pilot is a success?	30%
Delivery & Outputs	Communication: Is there a good plan for communicating with the Wellcome team? Is there a robust mechanism to quality control the outputs? Delivery plan: Is the proposed delivery plan appropriate and feasible? Are there significant risks associated with the proposed timelines and how well are they mitigated?	25%
Budget	Value for Money: Is the proposed work within your budget and good value for money?	5%
EDI	Does the proposal show awareness of EDI and are mechanisms to embed EDI clearly threaded throughout the proposal?	10%
Accessibility	All our content should be WCAG 2.2. AAA compliant. Any documents being provided to Wellcome must pass accessibility requirements. If you are unable to produce accessible documents, budget must be set aside to employ a suitable agency to do this work.	N/A
Total:		100%

Contract Feedback

This section allows Suppliers to provide specific feedback to the contractual agreement which will be used should their proposal be successful. This is the suppliers' opportunity to provide negotiation points on Wellcome's terms and conditions.

Suppliers submitting proposals as a registered company should review Wellcome's Standard terms and Conditions [document](#).

Individuals submitting proposals as a sole trader (not registered) should review this [document](#).



Individuals submitting proposals through their own personal services company please highlight this to the Wellcome contact immediately (see point 6 below).

Information Governance

Wellcome is committed to upholding data protection principles and protecting your information. The [Wellcome-Privacy-Statement-2023.pdf](#) explains how, and on what legal basis, we collect, store, and use personal information about you. This includes any information you provide in relation to this proposal.

Under [GDPR/Data Protection law](#), Wellcome must keep a record of all personal information it is processing (i.e., collecting, using, and sharing). This record will be made available to the Information Commissioner's Office upon request.

This is Wellcome's record of data processing activities which meets GDPR article 30 requirements.

Suppliers will be asked to complete the [TPSRA2](#) assessment before presentation stage to assess how you handle data.

Supplier Presentations

Following a submission of the proposal, successful proposals will be invited to a virtual meeting which will last 50 minutes in total and will involve a PowerPoint presentation followed by questions and answers session.

5. About Wellcome

Wellcome improves health for everyone by funding research, leading policy and advocacy campaigns, and building global partnerships. Collaborative research that involves a diverse range of people from different fields of interest is key to progress in health science – and to achieving our aim of fostering a healthier, happier, world. We're taking on the biggest health challenges facing humanity – climate and health, infectious disease, and mental health – to find urgent solutions and accelerate preventions. Find out more about Wellcome and our work at: [wellcome.org](https://www.wellcome.org).

6. Prospective Suppliers Personnel - IR35 and Off Payroll Working Rules

Before the RFP response deadline, Prospective Suppliers must make the Wellcome Contact aware if they are intending to submit a proposal where the services will be provided by any individuals who are engaged by the Prospective Supplier via an intermediary i.e.

- Where the Prospective Supplier is an individual contracting through their own personal services company; or
- The Prospective Supplier is providing individuals engaged through intermediaries, for the purposes of the IR35 off-payroll working rules.



7. Equity Diversity and Inclusion

Embracing [diversity and inclusion](#) is fundamental to delivering our mission to improve health, and we are committed to cultivating a fair and healthy environment for the people who work here and those we work with. We want to cultivate an inclusive and diverse culture, and as we learn more about barriers that disadvantage certain groups from progressing in our workplace, we will remove them.

Wellcome takes diversity and inclusion seriously, and we want to partner with suppliers who share our commitment. We may ask you questions related to D&I as part of our RFP processes.

8. Disability Confident

The Wellcome Trust is proud to be a Disability Confident Employer (DC Level 2) and we encourage all our partners and suppliers to do the same. More information about this can be found on the government website [Disability Confident employer scheme and guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). Disability Confident is creating a movement of change, encouraging employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people.

9. Accessibility

Wellcome is committed to ensuring that our RFP exercises are accessible to everyone. If you have a disability or a chronic health condition, we can offer adjustments to the response format e.g., submitting your response in an alternate format. For support during the RFP exercise, contact the Wellcome Contact.

If, within the proposed outputs of this RFP exercise, specific adjustments are required by you or your team which incur additional cost then outline them clearly within your commercial response. Wellcome is committed to evaluating all proposals fairly and will ensure any proposed adjustment costs sit outside the commercial evaluation.

All our content should be WCAG 2.2. AAA compliant. Any documents being provided to Wellcome must pass accessibility requirements. If you are unable to produce accessible documents, budget must be set aside to employ a suitable agency to do this work.

10. Independent Proposal

By submission of a proposal, prospective Suppliers warrant that the prices in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, agreement or understanding for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices, with any other potential supplier or with any competitor.



11. Funding

For the avoidance of doubt, the output of this RFP exercise will be funded as a **Contract** and not as a Grant.

12. Costs Incurred by Prospective Suppliers

It should be noted that this document relates to a Request for Proposal only and not a firm commitment from Wellcome to enter into a contractual agreement. In addition, Wellcome will not be held responsible for any costs associated with the production of a response to this Request for Proposal.

13. Sustainability

Wellcome is committed to procuring sustainable, ethical and responsibly sourced materials, goods and services. This means Wellcome seeks to purchase goods and services that minimise negative and enhance positive impacts on the environment and society locally, regionally and globally. To ensure Wellcome's business is conducted ethically and sustainably, we expect our suppliers, and their supply chains, to adhere to these principles in a responsible manner.

14. Wellcome Contact Details

The single point of contact within this RFP exercise for all communications is as indicated below;

Name: Alyce O'Connor
Role: Procurement Officer
Email: RFP@wellcome.org