



## CROHN'S & COLITIS UK RESEARCH AWARDS TARGETED CALL 2026 – GUIDANCE NOTES

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**Definition:** The words 'the Charity' when used in this document mean Crohn's & Colitis UK

### INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Please ensure you have read our [Terms and Conditions of Award](#) prior to applying. If successful, these are the terms under which the grant will be awarded.

#### Application format

**Applications to the 2026 grant round will be assessed via a two-stage process. Please note, this process has recently changed. If you have applied to us before, please ensure you have read the guidance fully, so you are aware of the new process.**

Stage 1: Submit an outline application. The application submission deadline is **12 noon, Thursday, 09 April 2026**. To support in your application you can find a Word version of the form [here](#). **Applications will need to be submitted on our grant portal, [Flexigrant](#).**

Stage 2: Shortlisted applicants will be invited to complete a full application via Flexigrant for peer review. You can find a Word version of the 2025 [full application form here](#). Please note this is the 2025 version and the format/wording of questions may differ.

**Applications will only be accepted via Flexigrant and must be submitted before the submission deadline. Supplementary information cannot be added after the deadline and late applications will not be accepted.**

Any queries about the preparation of your application should be directed to the Research Team, at Crohn's & Colitis UK ([research@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:research@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk)).

## **Area of Research**

In the 2026 grant call, we would like to **spotlight priority areas identified by people living with Crohn's and Colitis in the [Top 10 Impacts of Crohn's and Colitis report](#)**. We particularly encourage applications that build understanding of IBD, strengthen diagnosis and monitoring, improve care, or explore the impact of the conditions on people living with IBD.

The highlighted areas of focus are:

1. Fatigue and energy management
2. Anxiety about toilets and accessing them
3. Living with unpredictable symptoms and flares
4. Living with physical symptoms
5. Feeling embarrassed and self-conscious
6. Dealing with poo
7. Complex emotions (e.g. frustration, worry, grief)
8. Always being alert to signs and symptoms
9. Having to plan and strategise activities and events
10. Sleep disruption

This highlight notice welcomes applications from a range of professionals working in IBD diagnosis, follow-up, rehabilitation and care.

While strong proposals outside the highlight notice remain eligible for funding, **applications aligned with the highlight notice will be prioritised during assessment.**

The Charity can only accept applications from a UK-based university, research institute or NHS setting at this time and cannot accept applications from commercial organisations.

We are committed to strengthening research capacity among groups that are underrepresented in IBD research and particularly encourage principal investigator (PI), Co-PI, and co-investigators (Co-I), from these communities. We value diversity across disciplines; types of health professionals; lived experience; and characteristics such as race, disability, and other underrepresented identities.

## **Relevance of the proposed research**

Your application must demonstrate that the proposed research:

- aligns with the scope of the grant call
- the proposed work is novel and important
- the proposed research will directly impact, or has the potential to directly impact people living with IBD and there is an achievable plan for evaluating impact

- the proposed work is addressing an area of unmet need as outlined in the grant call, either in the field of IBD research or for people living with IBD
- when appropriate, is fully informed by previous relevant research and the existing evidence base in this area

**If you are applying for funding for a pilot, feasibility study, or sub-study, you must clearly explain what part of the wider research study this award will support.** Your application should detail the specific aims, activities, outcomes, and anticipated impact of the component we are being asked to fund and explicitly describe how these relate to the overarching main study. Applications that do not distinguish between the main study and the proposed sub-study or pilot can make it difficult to assess feasibility, value for money, and potential impact; therefore, please ensure the scope, contribution, and added value of the work we would be funding are unambiguous.

### **Dissemination and impact**

Your application must describe the intended outputs, outcomes and impacts of the research.

At Stage 2, we will also be asked to:

- demonstrate that key stakeholders, knowledge users and people living with IBD have been identified
- provide a clear approach to dissemination co-developed with key stakeholders and people living with IBD, to maximise research impact

### **Costings**

At the outline stage, we are only looking for summarised, top line costings. If you are asked to submit a full application for Stage Two, you will be expected to produce a full, detailed budget. We anticipate there may be some changes to budget lines between Stages One and Two, but would not expect to see the budget completely change by more than 10% without prior discussion with the Charity.

Funding for any one project will not exceed £150,000 in total over a maximum period of three years.

Crohn's & Colitis UK Research Awards can cover direct costs of the research. This includes costs of materials, laboratory services, expenses, and staff specifically employed in the research, including PhD stipends and fees. Any salary costs for the Principal Investigator, or other directly allocated salary costs, must be fully justified within the application.

We expect PPIE and EDI activities to be adequately costed in research proposals, which should cover payment of fees for the involvement of people with lived experience, and any travel and subsistence. Please [follow this link](#) for more information and other resources to help improve the quality, inclusivity, accessibility and impact of patient and public involvement in research.

You can apply for funds to cover the cost of purchasing equipment (but not costs associated with maintenance of equipment) on the grant, but these must be specific to the project. We will not, for example, cover the costs of generic lab equipment such as fridges or freezers unless required specifically for the purpose of the project being applied for – this must be

clearly justified in the grant application. In addition, we will not consider grants where the item of equipment represents a significant portion of the grant costs. Budget requests must be fully justified in the full application.

You may include any consumables and laboratory materials directly attributable to the project, including animal costs and access charges to shared equipment facilities (e.g. microscopes, flow cytometers, mass spectrometers). You can also include costs for consultancy and statistician advice.

The Charity will not pay for:

- Estates costs
- Equipment maintenance or running costs.
- Staff recruitment costs
- Standard office equipment (e.g. laptops, printers, etc.)
- Apprenticeship levy
- Organisational overheads (e.g. rent, heating, administrative support, etc.) and other indirect costs

Please note that once awarded, whilst changes within the budget can be agreed in the light of the project's development or national pay awards, costs additional to your original budget cannot be agreed without a further grant application through an active funding call.

In calculating staff costs, please ensure that you have allowed the appropriate amounts for any increments due and for any Employers' National Insurance or Pension Scheme costs. You should include an estimate for pay awards in the second or subsequent years and state the percentage increase you have assumed in the item description. Pay awards cannot be added to the budget once the award has been made.

### **Timescale**

While projects can be funded for up to three years, there is no requirement to use the full period. Applicants should justify the duration that best enables them to answer the research question and capture meaningful outcomes. Payment of invoices must be made quarterly in arrears on receipt of an invoice and is dependent on receipt of timely reports as set out in our [Terms and Conditions](#). There is an expectation that the Charity will receive invoices in a timely manner.

### **Research team**

We are committed to strengthening research capacity among groups that are underrepresented in IBD research and particularly encourage lead, joint-lead, and co-applicants from these communities. We value diversity across disciplines; types of health professionals; lived experience; and characteristics such as race, disability, and other underrepresented identities.

Your application should demonstrate that:

- the lead applicant is suitably qualified and experienced to lead the proposed work or, when the lead applicant is less experienced, appropriate mentoring arrangements are in place.
- the research team has an appropriate range and depth of relevant expertise and

clearly described roles.

Supporting Early Career Researchers (ECRs) is an important part of our commitment to developing future research leaders in IBD. If your research team includes an ECR, you will be asked to provide additional information about their role and the support in place to help them develop throughout the project.

For this scheme, an ECR includes:

- doctoral students
- researchers without a PhD
- researchers with up to 10 years' (FTE) relevant experience following completion of their PhD

#### **Public involvement and inclusive research:**

Applications that fail to embed PPIE and EDI adequately in the proposed work will not be shortlisted and invited to submit a full application, irrespective of the strength of the rest of the application. For more information on the Charity's approach to PPIE, please [follow this link](#).

#### **Public involvement**

**We encourage applicants to include people with lived experience in the research team.** There is no formal requirement to do so; however, when people with lived experience are part of the team, please provide a clear description of their role, why they have been included, and any relevant knowledge, skills or experience they bring to the study. For more information on the role of lived experience representatives in research, please [follow this link](#).

Applications should include a well-costed budget for all public involvement activities, including appropriate budget for any lived experience representatives, which should cover payment of fees for their time and any travel and subsistence. Please [follow this link](#) for more information and resources to help improve the quality, inclusivity, accessibility and impact of patient and public involvement in research.

Please note that for public contributors who receive welfare benefits, there may be implications when accepting a contract and advice should be taken before anything is agreed or signed - [Citizen's Advice Bureau](#) can offer support.

#### **Inclusive research**

We expect all applicants to have considered inclusive research design. Your application must:

- provide an evidence-based justification of how the research responds to gaps in knowledge around health and care needs of people living with IBD, or inequalities, or under-served groups, or all (outline and full applications)
- when appropriate, describe how you have considered inclusion when defining the target sample, including in the inclusion and exclusion criteria and recruitment and retention strategies (outline and full applications)
- consider how inclusion will be built into dissemination plans (full application)

**Supporting documentation:**

There is no requirement for supporting letters at the outline stage. The only supporting documents required at Stage One with your outline application are a short CV for the Principal Investigator, and a short scientific proposal.

Full details are in the outline application form.

At Stage Two, when submitting a full application form, you will be asked to upload the following documents to our online portal:

- CVs for the principal investigator and any co-investigators. Each CV should be no more than 2 pages long, and all CVs should be combined into one PDF document for upload.
- Signed Stakeholder Declaration forms for all stakeholders involved in the project. All Stakeholder Declaration forms should be combined into one PDF document for upload.
- Any relevant letters of support, including from collaborators and recruiting centres. All letters of support should be combined into one PDF document for upload.
- Detailed proposal document and reference list.
- Proof of ethics approval if available. Studies that have not yet received ethics approval will be considered, provided the reason for this and expected timescales are made clear in the application. Please note that the grant cannot start before ethics approval is in place. If ethics approval is not yet in place, please ensure the start date of the proposed work is realistic and reflects this.

### **Justification for the use of live animals**

Crohn's & Colitis UK will not support the use of live animals unless there is no alternative. The number of animals requested must be optimised and fully justified, and we emphasise the importance of refinements of procedures to minimise any pain or distress.

**If you propose to use live animals in this research, you must include the following information:**

- i. Why the use of live animals is necessary and what other possible approaches have been considered.
- ii. Why the species requested is the most appropriate, especially if the animals are being used as a model for a human physiological or pathological condition.
- iii. The experimental design should include the case for the number of animals required to achieve statistical significance and the factors that might affect this.

**Crohn's & Colitis UK Research Awards Panels will pay particular attention to the above issues in assessing applications.**

**You are required to provide written confirmation of the following points:**

- i. That the institution which will hold the Award holds (or is not required to hold) a Certificate of Designation under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.
- ii. That the Home Secretary has granted a Project Licence under the above Act (Please give the name of the licensee, the Home Office reference and the date of issue).
- iii. That the necessary personal licences are held, or, if not, have been applied for.

As a member of the AMRC, the Charity supports the AMRC position statement on the use of animals in research, which can be found [here](#).

### **Next Steps:**

If you are successfully shortlisted by the Awards Panel, you will be invited to submit a full application for Stage 2. The full application deadline will be **12noon, Tuesday 21 July 2026**. The Awards Panel may provide feedback that they wish you to take into account while developing your full application.

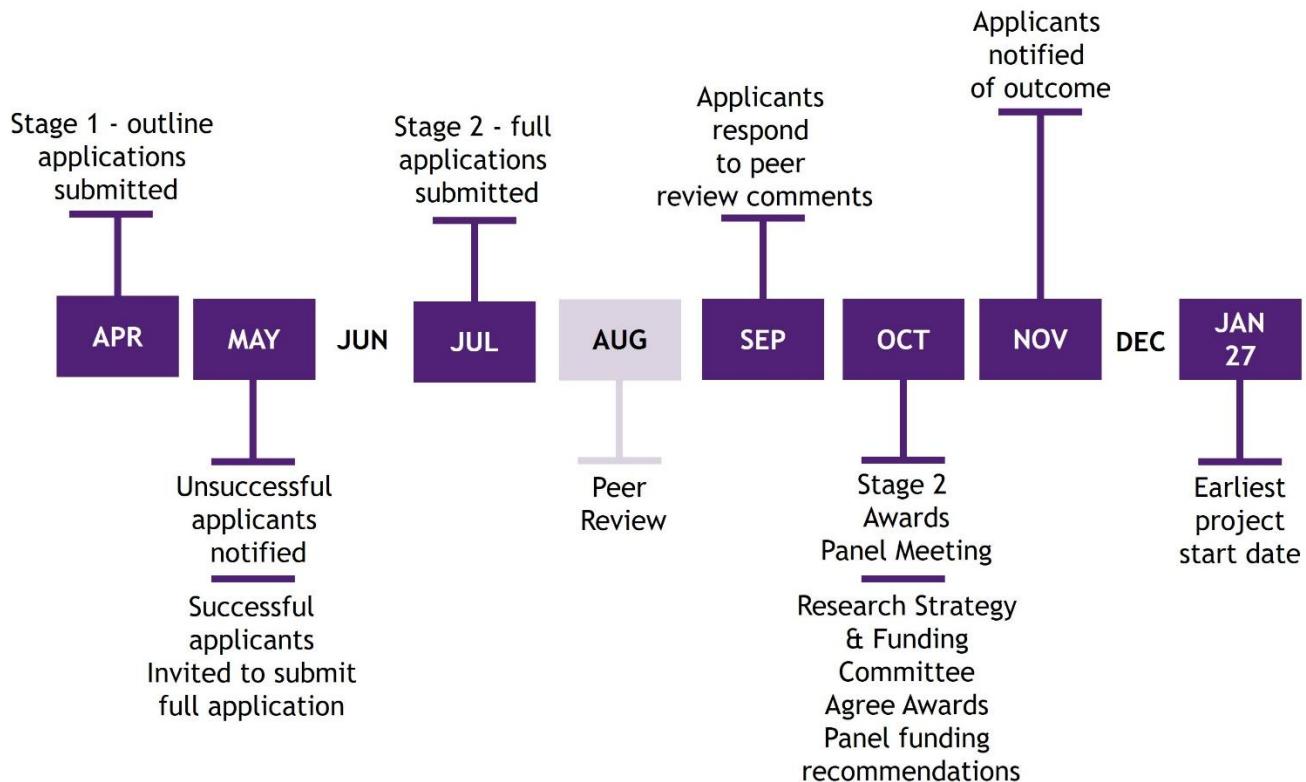
Once you have submitted your full application, this will be sent for external peer review. You will be given the opportunity to respond to the peer reviewers' anonymised comments.

The Awards Panel meets in late October and will produce a recommendation for funding that

will then be considered by our Research Strategy and Funding Committee (RSFC).

The Committee then makes the final funding decisions with delegated authority from the Board of Trustees based on the available research budget for the year.

### Timeline



### What happens if you are offered an Award?

You will be sent an award letter and a set of Terms and Conditions to sign and return. Please make sure you (or an appropriate person at the Host Institute) have read these in advance of applying and are confident that your Host Institution will be able to accept the grant under these Terms. We may get in contact to ask for additional information from you or the Host Institute to allow us to prepare the Terms.

The principal investigator and an authorised signatory for the Host Institution will be required to sign the Terms and Conditions by a set deadline, which will be detailed in the award letter.

Details of the project in respect of which an Award is made may be shared in confidence with potential funders of the Charity to raise funding for the Award.

The grant start date will need to be agreed in writing (by email) once any conditions set out in the award letter have been met and ethical approvals (if required) are in place.

### Payment of Awards

Awards are paid on receipt of a valid invoice (detailing approved costs incurred during a

defined period) from the department administering your research funds. The Host Institute should invoice quarterly, in arrears for actual expenses incurred. There is an expectation that the Charity will receive invoices in a timely manner.

Host institutions must invoice any final costs within six months of completion of the award. Any invoices received after this time will not be paid.

### **Supervision**

The Charity Commission places a duty on the trustees of charities which fund research to ensure that adequate arrangements are made for the proper supervision of the research that is being undertaken. The Charity does not have any permanent staff who are able to undertake a supervisory role directly and, therefore, the Charity requires that Host Institutions have in place policies and procedures to protect against scientific fraud.

The AMRC suggests that a procedure for dealing with accusations of scientific fraud would cover the following elements:

- a guidance document or code of practice on standards of professional behaviour.
- provisions for induction and training of staff.
- Monitoring.
- regulations and procedures for handling allegations.
- fair procedures and appropriate protection for both the accused and the 'whistleblower'.

The Charity requires Principal Investigators and Host Institutions to supervise the research undertaken in line with the [Universities UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#).

### **Reports Required**

A full report is required within three months of the completion of the research project. If you are unable to report within the required timescale, you are required to request a no-cost extension providing a justification for the additional time required. Payment of the last 10% of the grant funds will be held until such time as the report is received. In the case of two- or three-year awards, an interim report is also required at the end of each year of the project for review by a member of the Awards Panel.

Both interim and final reports must be submitted via [Flexigrant](#) and should include a short report of the progress or outcome in language understandable to the general public. This may be published on the Crohn's & Colitis UK website. Reports may also be shared with third party funders who have contributed to the funding of Awards.

Reports on the impact of the research undertaken are also required by way of annual submission through Researchfish in addition to the interim and final reports.

### **Acknowledgement of Crohn's & Colitis UK funding**

It is expected that all publications or presentations arising from Crohn's & Colitis UK funded projects should acknowledge the funding given by the Charity. Greater public and professional recognition of the Charity's role will help us in the task of raising more research funds.

A copy of any publication based on or arising from the research should be sent to [research@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:research@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk)

### **Feedback to Crohn's & Colitis UK members and supporters**

The Charity's members are very keen to learn of progress in research, and it is important that they receive regular feedback on what happens to the Charity's research funds. Our supporters have raised over £11 million for research. This is a tremendous achievement, and you can help us to maintain their motivation by agreeing to give an occasional talk, e.g. to a local Crohn's & Colitis UK network, and by providing the required project reports.

Our Communications Team is always pleased to receive contributions on research that will help members understand the overall context of the project, the work that is being undertaken and the hoped-for outcome(s). Pictures or illustrations are especially helpful if they are available, even general photographs of 'the researcher at work'.

The Charity hopes that any requests for a speaker will be viewed favourably, provided they are not too frequent and do not involve extensive travelling. Any concerns may be directed to the Charity's Director of Services, Research & Evidence, Catherine Winsor ([catherine.winsor@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:catherine.winsor@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk)).

### **Press Statements about Crohn's & Colitis UK-funded Research**

Please inform the Charity's press office ([media@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:media@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk)) in advance if you are issuing a press statement about research funded by us. This helps us to prepare a response for any journalist who may ask us to comment.

Obtaining publicity for Crohn's and Colitis is difficult, and you can help the Charity greatly by giving us advance notice. Local or regional publicity is just as valuable as national coverage.

### **How our Research Awards are made**

Applications are subjected to a rigorous peer review process for which the Charity has been awarded a "Best Practice in Peer Review Certificate" by the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC). The Charity operates a two-stage peer review process, which is supported by its Research Awards Panel and its Research Strategy and Funding Committee (RSFC).

The Awards Panel shortlists outline applications at Stage One, and at Stage Two, makes recommendations for funding to RSFC. RSFC makes funding decisions with delegated authority from the Board of Trustees.

The Awards Panel and RSFC comprise expert medical, academic and people living with IBD. Each panel or committee operates under terms of reference which delineate their roles and responsibilities and address the issues of confidentiality and conflict of interest.

**Outline applications assessment criteria:**

<b>CRITERIA FOR SCIENTIFIC/CLINICAL PANEL MEMBERS</b>	
<b>Originality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed work is novel and important.</li> </ul>
<b>Scientific/Academic Merit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed work is particularly creative or innovative in the solution /intervention it proposes.</li> <li>• The proposal is of high quality and will add significantly to the scientific body of knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Feasibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed approach(es) is realistic, well developed and is likely to achieve the aims within the timeframe set out.</li> </ul>
<b>Research Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research team has the necessary skills to carry out the proposed work.</li> <li>• The research team has an appropriate range and depth of relevant expertise and clearly described roles.</li> </ul>
<b>Benefit/Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed work is addressing an area of unmet need as outlined in the grant call, either in the field of IBD research or for people living with IBD.</li> <li>• The work will provide clinicians and/or patients with the tools and resources to manage the disease.</li> <li>• The proposed research will directly impact or has the potential to directly impact people living with IBD, and there is an achievable plan for evaluating impact.</li> </ul>
<b>Value for money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justified budget that demonstrates good value for money.</li> <li>• Estimated expenditure is proportionate and appropriate against the planned activities outlined in the application.</li> </ul>
<b>Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant(s) have involved people living with IBD in the development of the proposal and have clear plans for involvement and engagement as the study progresses.</li> </ul>
<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant(s) have considered issues around health inequalities and equality, diversity and inclusion and have plans to embed EDI in their work, including in participant recruitment (if applicable).</li> <li>• The applicant(s) have provided a justification of how the research responds to gaps in knowledge around health and care needs, or inequalities, or under-served groups, or all.</li> </ul>

<b>CRITERIA FOR LIVED EXPERIENCE PANEL MEMBERS</b>	
<b>Benefit/Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research proposed is addressing an area of unmet need or is of importance for people living with IBD.</li> <li>• The proposed research will directly impact, or has the potential to directly impact, people living with IBD.</li> <li>• There is an achievable plan for evaluating impact.</li> </ul>
<b>Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant(s) have involved people living with IBD in the development of the proposal and have clear plans for involvement and engagement as the study progresses.</li> </ul>
<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant(s) have considered issues around health inequalities and equality, diversity and inclusion and have plans to embed EDI in their work, including in participant recruitment (if applicable).</li> </ul>
<b>Clarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project overview section of the application is written clearly in plain English, and the applicants have avoided the use of technical jargon or explained any terms or abbreviations where necessary.</li> </ul>

**Full applications assessment criteria:**

<b>CRITERIA FOR SCIENTIFIC/CLINICAL PEER REVIEWERS AND PANEL MEMBERS</b>	
<b>Methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research plan is robust and includes clear research questions, objectives and design.</li> <li>• The methods are clearly explained and appropriate, and there is a clear rationale for the patient population being targeted in the study.</li> <li>• Clear milestones, the identification and mitigation of possible risks, and ethical considerations are included.</li> <li>• Appropriate plans for effective project management, governance, institutional support (where appropriate) and contract management</li> <li>• If relevant, there are no ethical concerns raised in the proposed work.</li> <li>• If the application involves the use of animals, is this appropriate and in line with the 3Rs principles?</li> </ul>
<b>Feasibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed approaches are realistic, well developed and likely to achieve the aims within the timeframe set out.</li> <li>• The research team has the necessary skills and access to required infrastructure to carry out the proposed work.</li> <li>• The budget is sensible and adequate to carry out the proposed work.</li> </ul>
<b>Value for money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-justified budget that demonstrates good value for money</li> <li>• Show that planned expenditure is proportionate and appropriate against the planned activities outlined in the application.</li> </ul>
<b>Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant(s) have involved people living with IBD in the development of the proposal and have clear plans for involvement and engagement as the study progresses.</li> </ul>
<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant(s) have considered issues around health inequalities and equality, diversity and inclusion and have described the specific activities they will undertake to embed EDI in their work.</li> <li>• If participants are to be recruited to the study, inclusion has been considered when defining the target sample, including in the inclusion and exclusion criteria and recruitment and retention strategies.</li> <li>• The applicant(s) have provided a justification of how the research responds to gaps in knowledge around health and care needs, or inequalities, or under-served groups, or all.</li> <li>• The applicant(s) have considered how the results of their study could be widened so they are representative of the IBD population.</li> </ul>

<b>CRITERIA FOR LIVED EXPERIENCE PANEL MEMBERS</b>	
<b>Feasibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If relevant, any barriers concerning recruitment of people to the study have been identified and addressed.</li> <li>• If relevant, there are no ethical concerns raised in the proposed work.</li> </ul>
<b>Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant(s) have involved people living with IBD in the development of the proposal and have clear plans for involvement and engagement as the study progresses.</li> <li>• The level of PPIE for the project is appropriate for the type of work e.g. there is a steering committee/working group for large, clinical projects.</li> <li>• The plan for providing feedback to participants or people who have been involved in shaping the research is well thought-out and appropriate.</li> <li>• There is a wider engagement plan to communicate results to people affected by IBD and/or the general public.</li> </ul>
<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant(s) have considered issues around health inequalities and equality, diversity and inclusion and have described the specific activities they will undertake to embed EDI in their work.</li> <li>• If participants are to be recruited to the study, the applicant(s) have considered issues around health inequalities and EDI?</li> </ul>
<b>Clarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project overview section of the application is written clearly in plain English, and the applicants have avoided the use of technical jargon or explained any terms or abbreviations where necessary.</li> </ul>