

# INTEGRATING LIVED EXPERIENCE INVOLVEMENT IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH FUNDING

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Reflections on evolving practice



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# SUMMARY

The Violence Abuse and Mental Health Network (VAMHN) brings together and supports research by experts from a range of disciplines, sectors, and backgrounds - some with lived experience, others with expertise from the work that they do, and survivor researchers with both. This report provides guidance to ensure that lived experience is safely and purposefully embedded throughout research projects. It is primarily aimed at funders of academic research but is also of relevance to trusts, foundations, commissioners, and others who award funding to services.



The report outlines the evolution of lived experience involvement in VAMHN grant competitions. It is intended to be a living document, and we welcome feedback and suggestions for refinement from current and potential users.

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



People with lived experience should be purposefully and significantly involved in the setting of funder and research priorities, the design of grant processes, and in assessing grant applications and making funding decisions.



People with lived experience should be provided with the training and tools to undertake this work.



Showstopper criteria [1] for lived experience engagement should be used, covering design, delivery, and evaluation of projects/research funded.



People with lived experience must be compensated for their time, as any other professional within this process would be. The National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) INVOLVE guidelines should provide the minimum benchmark [2]. Compensation must include preparation time and time outside of meetings to process the emotional impact of involvement.

[1] Showstopper criteria are used as pass/fail questions – applications which did not pass all scoring domains relating to lived experience involvement were not progressed for further review as they were deemed outside the scope of the funding requirements.

[2]<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/ppi-patient-and-public-involvement-resources-for-applicants-to-nihr-research-programmes/23437>

# THE VIOLENCE ABUSE & MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK (VAMHN)

VAMHN is a network of individuals and organisations aiming to reduce the prevalence of mental health problems by addressing associated violence and abuse, particularly domestic and sexual violence. We bring together and support research by experts from a range of disciplines, sectors, and backgrounds - some with lived experience, others with expertise from the work that they do, and survivor researchers with both.

VAMHN runs a range of free to attend events and activities, including:

- Providing training bursaries and small grants
- Hosting meetings, lectures, and conferences
- Developing new resources, including an online research database
- Disseminating research findings and funding opportunities
- Identifying priorities for future research
- Submitting evidence to consultations and inquiries.

The research and other activity undertaken by the VAMHN falls under four key themes:



## **Measurement**

Measuring the extent and impact of domestic and sexual violence in relation to mental health



## **Understanding**

Understanding the pathways that lead to domestic and sexual violence and their relationship to mental health problems



## **Interventions**

Planning interventions and services to reduce and address domestic and sexual violence in people with mental health problems



## **Coercive Control**

Conducting research and raising awareness of this understudied form of abuse.

# VAMHN AND LIVED EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT

The VAMHN Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) has been steering the activities of the network since its formation in 2020. Lived experience engagement is sometimes referred to as 'co-production'. Co-production refers to

“

*A way of working in which people come together on an equal basis to create a service or come to a decision that works for everyone and is built on the principle that those who use a service are best placed to help design it [3]*

”

It therefore seeks to ensure the voices and experiences of those who have direct experience of a subject area are used to help shape and create systemic change.

As a group, the LEAG strives to ensure members are given equity that enables equal voice (not just during the meetings, but also via follow up and email/additional communication support for as and when needed) recognising that there are group members who have differing needs.

“

*“Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome”.*  
[4]

”

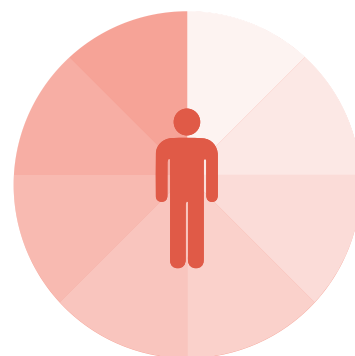
The LEAG comprises 8-12 members, all of whom have experiences of violence, abuse, and mental ill-health. The group is supported by our Lived Experience Involvement Consultant, also with lived experience, who ensures all members hold an equitable voice and are embedded across the VAMHN activities. The group meets quarterly to discuss issues facing VAMHN, make recommendations for improvements, and help shape the focus of the network. Outside of meetings they are invited to take part in a range of activities including the development of grant

[3] <https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Latest/Top-Ten-Tips-for-Co-production-One-page-profile-and-Easy-Read-version/>

[4] [https://www.marinhhs.org/sites/default/files/boards/general/equality\\_v.\\_equity\\_04\\_05\\_2021.pdf](https://www.marinhhs.org/sites/default/files/boards/general/equality_v._equity_04_05_2021.pdf)

programmes, delivery of webinars, advising on design and implementation of national organisation or academic research projects and authoring commentaries for academic journal articles. Members of the LEAG either attend, or are represented by, our Lived Experience Involvement Consultant, at all meetings of the network. LEAG members can access support from the Lived Experience Involvement Consultant at any time and are paid in line with the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) guidelines. [5]

Lived experience shapes and informs every aspect of VAMHN. The LEAG has developed an extensive series of resources, including blogs, podcasts, research papers, and commentaries. As detailed in this report, they have also been integral to our grant funding process, from the wording of the research briefs through to the development of scoring criteria and assessment of applications. They ensured that applications were only considered fundable if they adequately considered co-production in the design and implementation of the research. They also ran multiple events to guide researchers on how to work with survivors meaningfully and ethically on their projects.



[5] <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-researchers-and-professionals/27392>

# LIVED EXPERIENCE INVOLVEMENT IN VAMHN GRANT COMPETITIONS: OVERVIEW



VAMHN held four grant competitions between 2019 and 2021, focused on measurement, understanding, interventions, and awareness. The level of lived experience involvement increased over the course of these four rounds. In the first VAMHN grant competition, which focused on measurement, lived experience perspectives were provided only by academic grant holders with experiences of violence, abuse, or mental health problems.



The second grant competition, which focused on understanding, improved involvement by having LEAG members score applications and appointing the Lived Experience Involvement Consultant to the funding award panel. However, lived experience remained undervalued: each application was rated by only one LEAG member and appraisals of lived experience involvement were often devalued, relative to other scoring criteria.



Recognising this, VAMHN restructured the grant competition process to ensure more comprehensive inclusion of lived experience across every part of the process in the final two rounds of grant funding.



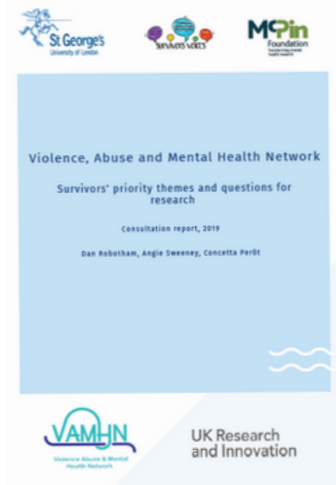
# THE VAMHN MODEL FOR LIVED EXPERIENCE INVOLVEMENT IN AWARDING RESEARCH GRANTS

The VAMHN model for lived experience involvement in grant funding competitions ensures that lived experience is embedded throughout all stages of the process, including the development of the call specification documents, the launch of the grant competition and information sessions, the assessment of applications, and involvement in funding panels.



## DEVELOPING CALL SPECIFICATION DOCUMENTS

Each of the VAMHN grant rounds were accompanied by a concept note and grant application pack, the development of which was led by one or more academics from the VAMHN leadership team. Concept notes were informed by a VAMHN-commissioned but survivor-led research priorities consultation and report, which was used to guide VAMHN activities and decisions about commissioning new research [6]. Under the new VAMHN model, draft concept notes and grant application packs were reviewed by those with lived experience, and the final concept notes were co-edited by the VAMHN team and LEAG members to ensure that lived experience was appropriately embedded.



The concept notes included statements about VAMHN's expectations for lived experience engagement and remuneration and provided links to appropriate resources. Specifically, guidance stated that "we expect the meaningful involvement of survivors within all applications, and for their time to be appropriately costed. For guidance on minimum fee and expenses payments for survivors, please refer to [NIHR INVOLVE] guidance" and that "in developing their proposals, we expect applicants to explicitly draw on NSUN's 4Pi National Involvement Standards [7] to explain how people with lived experience have been involved in development of the application and will be subsequently involved in the project."

[6][https://www.vamhn.co.uk/uploads/1/2/2/7/122741688/consultation\\_report\\_on\\_website.pdf](https://www.vamhn.co.uk/uploads/1/2/2/7/122741688/consultation_report_on_website.pdf)

[7]<https://www.nsun.org.uk/projects/4pi-involvement-standards/>



## DEVELOPING ASSESSMENT AND SCORING CRITERIA

Grant applications were rated against pre-specified criteria. In the first two competitions, we assessed applications for

- 1 Originality and potential contribution to knowledge
- 2 Scientific quality
- 3 Value for money
- 4 Effectiveness of plans for involving users/survivors and disseminating results to them
- 5 Outputs, dissemination, and impact
- 6 Cross-disciplinarity

Each of these criteria were scored on a scale of 0-6. An overall score was also given, again using a scale of 0-6 and operationalised according to UKRI assessment guidelines. [8]

In the final two competitions, we expanded these criteria to ensure that lived experience involvement was assessed across three key areas (design, delivery, and evaluation/dissemination). Additionally, we operationalised scores for each of the assessed criteria. This provided a clearer scoring framework and promoted accessibility, consistency, and transparency. The operationalised scoring criteria are provided in full in the Appendix to this report.

Moreover, we adopted a 'showstopper' policy, strongly advocated by LEAG members. Under this approach, any application which did not score above 3 on any of the three lived experience involvement criteria was not taken forward to the final funding panel meeting. This policy applied regardless of how highly applications scored on other criteria and was clearly stated in the call specification

[8] The scale for the overall score was operationalised as follows: 6 – The proposal is outstanding in terms of its potential scientific merit; 5 - The proposal is excellent in terms of its potential scientific merit; 4- The proposal is important as it has considerable potential merit; 3 - The proposal has significant potential scientific merit but is not of a consistently high quality; 2- The proposal will add to understanding and is worthy of support but is of lesser quality or urgency than more highly rated proposals. Such proposals are unlikely to have a significant influence on the development of the research area; 1 - The proposal is flawed in its scientific approach, or is repetitious of other work, or otherwise judged not worth pursuing; or which, though possibly having sound objectives, appears seriously defective in its methodology; 0 - Not able to assess (including due to falling outside of the remit of the call).

documents. Almost a fifth of the 22 applications to the Interventions grant competition were not eligible for consideration at the final funding panel meeting involvement. All nine applications to our final competition, which called for research-arts collaborations on the theme of awareness, exceeded our minimum standard for lived experience involvement.



## LAUNCHING THE GRANT AND INFORMATION SESSIONS

The LEAG was also involved in launching the grant and led an interactive webinar session on best practice for lived experience in research alongside the lived experience consultant. Over the course of the webinar, LEAG speakers highlighted the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives, whether related to abuse, mental health, or other experiences. Speakers also highlighted, however, a number of barriers to lived experience involvement which could work to reduce diversity of voice. These included a lack of access to information about inclusion opportunities (particularly where opportunities were predominantly advertised via social media or to people receiving support from health or voluntary sector services), onerous and/or competitive recruitment processes, and the use of academic language and jargon.

LEAG speakers also highlighted the importance of supportive engagement and of acknowledging the complexities people might face when engaging with sensitive topics. Supportive engagement is both proactive – asking individuals about what would enable their involvement and what would make it difficult for them – and responsive. It should prioritise safety, including allowing participants who wish to contribute anonymously to do so. Alongside this, researchers should work to reduce the administrative and logistical burdens associated with participating in lived experience involvement activities, including remuneration for participation and the frequency, timing, and location of meetings. On the point of remuneration, it was highlighted that not all participants may want or be able to receive payments via bank transfer and that therefore options to receive payments in the form of, for example, cash, vouchers, or as a donation to a charity of the participants' choice should also be offered. Researchers should be aware of the complexities surrounding payment, and reference the NIHR guidance on this issue [9].

Finally, speakers stressed the need for genuine, well-considered engagement (rather than tokenistic and superficial inclusion) and for clear communication, including sharing information about the availability of researchers and/or

[9]<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-researchers-and-professionals/27392>

coordinators and who to contact in their absence. The VAMHN scoring criteria (see appendix) give more detailed information on levels of involvement.



## **RATING APPLICATIONS**

Under the new VAMHN model, all applications were marked by four individuals: two members of the academic grantholder team and two members of the LEAG. Ratings were equally weighted, leading to an average score. Top-scoring applications were shortlisted and taken through to the funding panel.

LEAG members were provided with training and support ahead of scoring applications, including discussing what evidence counted for each section, as well as using previously submitted applications as examples to work through. This was led by an academic and the Lived Experience Consultant.



## **PARTICIPATION IN THE FUNDING PANEL**

In the final two grant competitions, the Lived Experience Consultant and two members of the LEAG participated in the funding panel to discuss the shortlisted applications and make recommendations for funding. Use of the revised and operationalised scoring criteria helped to specifically articulate the value of lived experience involvement in the development and conduct of the research. Their use also helped make the process of scoring more consistent and less subjective across the board, benefiting both more and less experienced raters and raters with and without lived experience. Having more than one person with lived experience on the panel meant that there was support from peers.



## **REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS**

The move to truly co-design the scoring criteria, and then to co-produce and take part in the process of grant funding has been a journey of evolution, beginning from a place where lived experience was seen as an 'add on' within funding panel meetings and limited engagement in the funding calls. Co-production of grant funding competitions works well when all members of the group are aligned on the process and value of lived experience involvement; everyone must understand and value lived experience involvement for it to work.

The VAMHN model has been refined over time, with reflection on the successes and challenges at each stage. Good co-production requires this reflection, and we would welcome further insights from people who adopt this model in order to keep our guidance relevant.

# APPENDIX: REVISED ASSESSMENT AND SCORING CRITERIA FOR VAMHN FUNDING COMPETITIONS

The following assessment and scoring criteria were used in VAMHN's third and fourth grant competitions.

## 1. ORIGINALITY AND POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE OF PREVENTION/INTERVENTIONS FOR VIOLENCE/ABUSE

REVIEWER SCORE	SCORE DESCRIPTION
<b>6 (Outstanding)</b>	The project is extremely timely, answers an urgent and important research question, and will substantially advance knowledge about prevention/interventions for violence/abuse.
<b>5 (Excellent)</b>	The project is very timely and answers an important research question and will majorly advance knowledge about prevention/interventions for violence/abuse.
<b>4 (Good)</b>	The project is timely and answers an important research question and will advance knowledge about prevention/interventions for violence/abuse.
<b>3 (Satisfactory)</b>	The research question is important but may not be urgent/timely. It will only result in a limited advance in knowledge about prevention/interventions for violence/abuse.
<b>2 (Fair/Some weaknesses)</b>	The research question is relevant but not important or timely and is unlikely to advance in knowledge about prevention/interventions for violence/abuse in a meaningful way.
<b>1 (Poor)</b>	The proposal simply repeats previous work or is attempting to answer a question that is not worth pursuing.
<b>0 (Not able to assess)</b>	The proposal is outside of the remit of the call, or the relevant information was not provided to make a rating.

## 2. SCIENTIFIC QUALITY

REVIEWER SCORE	SCORE DESCRIPTION
<b>6 (Outstanding)</b>	The proposal employs extremely high quality and appropriate methods and analyses to answer the research question(s) posed. The project is clearly feasible to conduct within the proposed timeframe. Research ethics and data management have been fully considered and approaches to mitigate potential risks/challenges have been carefully outlined.
<b>5 (Excellent)</b>	The proposal employs high quality and appropriate methods and analyses to answer the research question(s) posed. The project seems feasible to conduct within the proposed timeframe. Research ethics and data management have been fully considered and some approaches to mitigate potential risks/challenges are outlined.
<b>4 (Good)</b>	The proposal employs good quality methodology and seems feasible to conduct within the proposed timeframe. Research ethics, data management and risk mitigation have been adequately considered.
<b>3 (Satisfactory)</b>	The proposal is not of a consistently high quality. There may be some concerns about the appropriateness of the methods employed or uncertainty about the feasibility of conducting the project within the proposed timeframe.
<b>2 (Fair/Some weaknesses)</b>	The proposal is of lesser quality than more highly rated proposals. There are likely to be concerns about the methods employed and its feasibility.
<b>1 (Poor)</b>	The proposal is flawed in its scientific approach or is repetitious of other work; or even though it possibly has sound objectives, it appears seriously defective in its methodology. The project is not feasible within the timeframe.
<b>0 (Not able to assess)</b>	The proposal is outside of the remit of the call, or the relevant information was not provided to make a rating.

### 3. VALUE FOR MONEY

REVIEWER SCORE	SCORE DESCRIPTION
<b>6 (Outstanding)</b>	The proposal provides exceptional value for money. This may be achieved by capitalising upon existing substantial investments. The funds requested are essential for the project and are comprehensively justified. Payment for lived experience involvement is included at a higher rate than the £25/hour INVOLVE guidelines.
<b>5 (Excellent)</b>	The proposal provides excellent value for money. This may be achieved by capitalising upon existing investments. The funds requested are essential for the project, include appropriate payment for lived experience involvement, and are fully justified.
<b>4 (Good)</b>	The proposal provides reasonable value for money. The funds requested are essential for the project and most are justified. Appropriate payment for lived experience involvement is included.
<b>3 (Satisfactory)</b>	There may be uncertainty about whether the proposal provides value for money. Appropriate payment for lived experience involvement is included.
<b>2 (Fair/Some weaknesses)</b>	There are likely to be major concerns about whether the proposal provides value for money, there is insufficient justification of the funds requested and/or lived experience involvement is not appropriately costed.
<b>1 (Poor)</b>	The proposal does not provide value for money and the funds requested are not appropriately justified.
<b>0 (Not able to assess)</b>	The proposal is outside of the remit of the call or the relevant information was not provided to make a rating.

#### 4. LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT OF USERS/SURVIVORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE APPLICATION.

REVIEWER SCORE	SCORE DESCRIPTION. <i>Note applications must score at least 4 (good) to be taken forward to the panel.</i>
<b>6 (Outstanding)</b>	Service users/survivors have been involved in multiple ways and at multiple levels throughout development and co-design of the proposal. At least one of the co-applicants has lived experience and is taking a leading role within the application *
<b>5 (Excellent)</b>	Service users/survivors have been involved throughout the co-design of the proposal. One of the co-applicants has lived experience *
<b>4 (Good)</b>	Service users/survivors have been consulted in a meaningful way during development of the application. Ideally one of the co-applicants has lived experience *
<b>3 (Satisfactory)</b>	There has been limited involvement of users/survivors in development of the application or reliance solely on one of the applicants having lived experience (without explicitly stating their involvement in co-design).
<b>2 (Fair/Some weaknesses)</b>	Minimal consultation after development of the application or solely relying on consultation that took place several years ago.
<b>1 (Poor)</b>	No consultation took place with service users/survivors.
<b>0 (Not able to assess)</b>	The relevant information was not provided to make a rating.

*\*Note. In these criteria we recommend having at least one co-applicant with lived experience. We appreciate that co-applicants may not be comfortable disclosing that they have lived experience of violence, abuse, or mental health problems and that we would therefore accept a statement in the application form to indicate that one (or more) of the applicants have relevant lived experience, but they do not have to specify which applicants have/do not have this experience.*



**5. EFFECTIVENESS OF PLANS FOR CONSISTENTLY INVOLVING USERS/SURVIVORS IN CONDUCTING/LEADING THE RESEARCH PROJECT.**

<b>REVIEWER SCORE</b>	<b>SCORE DESCRIPTION.</b> <i>NOTE APPLICATIONS MUST SCORE AT LEAST 4 (GOOD) TO BE TAKEN FORWARD TO THE PANEL.</i>
<b>6 (Outstanding)</b>	Service users/survivors will be involved in multiple ways and at multiple levels throughout the process of conducting and leading the research project. Provides opportunities for career development of one or more people with lived experience (e.g., training in research skills and/or leadership). The research project develops a viable progression post the research collaboration.
<b>5 (Excellent)</b>	Service users/survivors will be involved in multiple ways throughout the process of conducting and leading the research project.
<b>4 (Good)</b>	Service users/survivors will be involved in conducting the research project.
<b>3 (Satisfactory)</b>	There will be limited involvement of users/survivors in conducting the research (e.g., just a steering group with an advisory role).
<b>2 (Fair/Some weaknesses)</b>	Lived experience involvement limited to one or small number of users/survivors and only in advisory role.
<b>1 (Poor)</b>	No involvement of service users/survivors or they are just participants in the research.
<b>0 (Not able to assess)</b>	The relevant information was not provided to make a rating.

## 6. EFFECTIVENESS OF PLANS FOR ENGAGING USERS/SURVIVORS IN THE DISSEMINATION OF THE FINDINGS.

REVIEWER SCORE	SCORE DESCRIPTION <i>Note applications must score at least 4 (good) to be taken forward to the panel.</i>
<b>6 (Outstanding)</b>	Service users/survivors will be involved in multiple ways and at multiple levels throughout the dissemination of the findings. Those with lived experience will design and lead the research outputs.
<b>5 (Excellent)</b>	Service users/survivors will be involved in multiple ways throughout the dissemination of the findings. Those with lived experience are given the option of being co-authors on papers and involved in co-design of the research outputs.
<b>4 (Good)</b>	Service users/survivors will be involved throughout the dissemination of the findings.
<b>3 (Satisfactory)</b>	Service users/survivors will be consulted about dissemination of the findings.
<b>2 (Fair/Some weaknesses)</b>	There will be minimal consultation with service users/survivors about dissemination of the findings.
<b>1 (Poor)</b>	No involvement of, or consultation with, service users/survivors in dissemination of the findings.
<b>0 (Not able to assess)</b>	The relevant information was not provided to make a rating.

## 7. OUTPUTS, DISSEMINATION, AND IMPACT

REVIEWER SCORE	SCORE DESCRIPTION
<b>6 (Outstanding)</b>	Multiple outputs and/or dissemination activities are planned to actively engage a range of relevant stakeholders. The project is very likely to have a significant and long-lasting impact on policy and/or practice.
<b>5 (Excellent)</b>	Several outputs or dissemination activities are planned to engage a range of relevant stakeholders. The project has the potential to have a long-lasting impact on policy and/or practice.
<b>4 (Good)</b>	Several outputs or dissemination activities are planned to engage relevant stakeholders. The project has the potential to have an impact on policy and/or practice.
<b>3 (Satisfactory)</b>	At least one output or dissemination activity is planned to engage relevant stakeholders. The likelihood of having an impact on policy and/or practice may be limited.
<b>2 (Fair/Some weaknesses)</b>	At least one output or dissemination activity is planned to share the findings. The project is unlikely to have any impact on policy or practice.
<b>1 (Poor)</b>	No output or dissemination activity is planned. The project will have no impact on policy or practice.
<b>0 (Not able to assess)</b>	The proposal is outside of the remit of the call or the relevant information was not provided to make a rating.

## 8. CROSS-DISCIPLINARITY

REVIEWER SCORE	SCORE DESCRIPTION
<b>6 (Outstanding)</b>	There is an extremely strong project team involving multiple research disciplines and collaborations with other sectors (e.g., third sector organisations).
<b>5 (Excellent)</b>	There is a strong project team involving multiple research disciplines and/or collaborations with other sectors (e.g., third sector organisations).
<b>4 (Good)</b>	The project team involves multiple research disciplines or collaborations with other sectors (e.g., third sector organisations).
<b>3 (Satisfactory)</b>	There are at least two different research disciplines represented in the project team or there is a collaboration with another sector.
<b>2 (Fair/Some weaknesses)</b>	The project team may lack relevant cross-disciplinary and cross-sector expertise
<b>1 (Poor)</b>	The project team involves researchers from a single discipline and does not include any cross-sector collaborations.
<b>0 (Not able to assess)</b>	The proposal is outside of the remit of the call, or the relevant information was not provided to make a rating.

## OVERALL SCORE:

REVIEWER / PANEL SCORE	SCORE DESCRIPTION BASED ON SCIENTIFIC QUALITY <i>All assessment criteria should be considered before arriving at an overall score.</i>
<b>6 (Outstanding)</b>	The proposal is outstanding in terms of its potential scientific merit. The project is extremely timely and answers an urgent and important research question and is very likely to have a significant and long-lasting impact on policy and/or practice. It employs high quality methodology, is clearly feasible to conduct within the proposed timeframe, and provides exceptional value for money. There is an extremely strong cross-disciplinary and cross-sector project team including those with lived experience who are involved in multiple ways throughout the project and have leadership roles.
<b>5 (Excellent)</b>	The proposal is excellent in terms of its potential scientific merit. The project is very timely and answers an important research question and has the potential to have a long-lasting impact on policy and/or practice. It employs high quality methodology, seems feasible to conduct within the proposed timeframe, and provides excellent value for money. There is a strong cross-disciplinary and cross-sector project team including those with lived experience who are involved in multiple ways throughout the project.
<b>4 (Good)</b>	The proposal is important as it has considerable potential merit. The project is timely and answers an important research question and has the potential to have an impact on policy and/or practice. It employs good quality methodology, seems feasible to conduct within the proposed timeframe, and provides reasonable value for money. There is an appropriate cross-disciplinary and/or cross-sector project team including those with lived experience who are involved in throughout the project.
<b>3 (Satisfactory)</b>	The proposal has significant potential scientific merit but is not of a consistently high quality. The research question is important but may not be urgent and there may be some concerns about the appropriateness of the methods employed. There may be uncertainty about the feasibility of conducting the project within the proposed timeframe and/or its value for money. Those with lived experience may play more of a consultation role rather than being involved directly in the project. The likelihood of having an impact on policy and/or practice may be limited.

<p><b>2 (Fair/Some weaknesses)</b></p>	<p>The proposal will add to understanding but is of lesser quality or urgency than more highly rated proposals. There are likely to be concerns about the methods employed, feasibility and value for money. Such proposals are unlikely to have a major influence on the development of the research area or any impact on policy or practice. The project team may lack relevant cross-disciplinary/cross-sector expertise and there is only minimal consultation with service users/survivors.</p>
<p><b>1 (Poor)</b></p>	<p>The proposal is flawed in its scientific approach, or is repetitious of other work, or otherwise judged not worth pursuing; or even though it possibly has sound objectives, it appears seriously defective in its methodology. The project is not feasible within the timeframe and does not provide value for money. There is no involvement of, or consultation with, service users/survivors.</p>
<p><b>0 (Not able to assess)</b></p>	<p>The proposal is outside of the remit of the call or the relevant information was not provided to make a rating.</p>

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