

# AUTISTICA

Building brighter futures through autism research

## Grants for Autistic Researchers: Guidance for Applicants

We want to empower autistic people to take their first steps into research. We are inviting applications of up to £12,500 from autistic adults who want to take their first step in research.

### About Autistica

Our mission is to ensure that all autistic people have the chance to a long, happy, healthy life. We do this by funding and promoting ground-breaking research in the United Kingdom.

### This grant

We know that research can be a game changer for autistic people. But for it to be impactful we need innovative minds working in autism research who can understand the priorities of autistic people and their families. There is tremendous enthusiasm from the autistic community about leading their own research, but many autistic people face real barriers to becoming researchers themselves. The process we have set up aims to overcome those barriers by instilling robust governance, an autism-enabling environment and mentoring, and a research plan developed in partnership with an autism researcher.

### The applicants

We are looking for autistic adults who have little or no previous research experience, who have a desire to pursue a career in research and a research idea that, if answered, would improve the lives of autistic people.

### Funding available

Up to £12,500 per autistic applicant. This could go towards:

- Masters of research tuition fees
- Research costs (direct costs only, see below)
- Salary costs

Autistica only pays direct costs (directly charged to a project as money spent and supported by an audit record). Autistica does not pay indirect costs (costs for resources used by a project that are shared by other activities e.g. proportion of permanent staff member's time) or directly allocated costs (non-specific costs charged across all projects for underpinning resources e.g. estates, shared IT and administration). Autistica are members of the Association of Medical Research Charities so our awards are eligible for Charity Research Support Fund funding to cover indirect costs of research. Funding is available to support up to four awards.

### Application process

**Step 1:** Researchers sign-up to note interest and outline preparedness for supporting autistic people in terms of experience in involvement (track record, willingness to undertake training) and research background (PhD and permanent academic position). Deadline April 30<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 PM local UK time. Applications will be reviewed by the [review panel](#) and researchers will be selected.

**Step 2:** Autistic people then express interest by submitting research ideas through an online submission system (Smart Survey). Applicants will identify a preferred host that they would like to work with from a list of available hosts included on the online submission system. Deadline July 9<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 PM local UK time. These applications are then reviewed by the [review panel](#). Up to 10 people are invited forward to submit an application.

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**Step 3:** Provisional meetings are held between autistic applicants and researchers and they are expected to submit a joint application. This will be reviewed by the [review panel](#).

**Step 4:** Up to 4 awards made in autumn 2018.

## Eligibility

Applicants:

- Must have a confirmed diagnosis of an autism spectrum condition.
- Must be UK residents.
- Applicants are restricted to one proposal per review cycle.

Hosts:

- Must hold a permanent position at academic, research or clinical institutions within the United Kingdom.
- Must demonstrate suitability to host an autistic researcher based on a) previous experience of working with autistic people and b) suitability of the host environment.

## Applicants are advised to consider:

Strategic and research priorities for Autistica

- [The James Lind Alliance Priority Setting Partnership on autism](#).
- Early death in autism – note Autistica's [Personal Tragedies, Public Crisis report](#).
- Under-studied groups such as adults, women, or those with complex needs (individuals with learning difficulties and/or minimal verbal ability)
- Researchers should consider the principles set out in our [research strategy](#).

Further considerations

- Applicants should note Autistica's policies on the [use of animals in research](#) and [conflict of interest](#).
- Pathway to implementation: Autistica establishes evidence or produces data that will lead to interventions and support being delivered in the real world. We would encourage you to think carefully about how your research would lead to benefit for autistic people.
- Feasibility: A clear and realistic plan.
- Involvement of autistic adults and families in the design and production of research is viewed positively by Autistica, and is encouraged where appropriate.
- Autistica funds the Autism Spectrum Database UK at Newcastle University. Do consider these resources for participant recruitment and disseminating research outputs.

## Discover

By applying to this call for proposals, you are also agreeing to join our Discover network. Discover is the first national network for autism research, connecting researchers with autistic people, families and professionals. See our [website](#) for more information.

## Applications process and success rates

Applications at each step of the application process will be reviewed by reviewed by a review panel, consisting of autistic people who are members of our Discover Insight Group and autism researchers. Applications at Stage 2 will be assessed on the basis of academic potential of the

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applicant and potential impact of the proposed research question to improve the lives of autistic people.

Applicants will then receive one of two responses from Autistica's research team, as follows:

*Invitation to submit a full application:* The application is currently rated highly (in the top third or half of all applications).

*Please do not submit an application:* The applicant will not be invited to submit a full application on the basis of one or more of the following criteria: i) not eligible or iii) our review panel has concluded the proposal is not of sufficient scientific quality to have a realistic chance of success at full application stage.

For those who are invited to submit a full proposal, further submission guidelines will be sent at that time. We estimate that final decisions will be provided to applicants in autumn 2018.

Questions regarding this call for proposals should be sent to our Research Network Coordinator, Dr Abigail Thompson at [Abigail.Thompson@autistica.org.uk](mailto:Abigail.Thompson@autistica.org.uk).

[Autistica's research strategy](#)

[Autistica's policies on the use of animals in research and Conflict of Interest](#)

[Autistica's Scientific Review Panel](#)