



Chest  
Heart &  
Stroke

Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke

# Tips to writing a lay summary.

We only fund the highest quality research. We use a thorough process, which takes around five months, to help us choose the best applications.

You are asked to provide segments of your application in lay terms. This serves a number of functions - our lay reps on the SRC (our decision making committee) use the lay section to inform their decision. It used by our Senior Management team to consider whether your study is a good fit with us as an organisation. Our Comms department use it to communicate about your research to our stakeholders; and Fundraising use it to communicate to donors, and to generate funds for the research programme. So, Don't overlook the lay sections. They're critical.

## Essential pre-application reading

Spend some time to review the

- workshop Powerpoint slides and associated notes - these outline the decision making process;
- Workshop videos - particularly Prof Mike Clarke's workshop on research question formulation; and
- Our research strategy (<https://nichi.org.uk/assets/resources/Research-Strategy-2018-2023-final-update-mar2019.docx>)

<https://nichi.org.uk/research-policy/research/research-application-process/how-to-apply-to-the-srg-programme>

## Tips for a lay summary

**A good lay summary should include:**

1. Simple language.
2. Where technical terms cannot be avoided - provide a lay glossary
3. Justify why the study is needed - how will it benefit the reader or their loved ones?
  - Context: Why are you doing the research? Why is it needed? Are your research questions shaped by the experiences of patients / service users?
  - Aims and outcomes: What do you hope to find? What benefit do you hope your research will result in? Who benefits and when?
  - Method: Describe clearly what you are actually going to do throughout the project.
  - Involvement: how will you involve patients / service users? Will they be involved in the study design, delivery and/or as research participants? How will they be supported, e.g. will they be provided any training? What incentives will they receive for their involvement?

**A good lay summary should avoid:**

4. Detailed explanations, unnecessary jargon, abbreviations and technical terms.
5. Wordy sentences. Try to keep sentences short and simple.

## Some resources

1. NIHR Plain English guidance: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/plain-english-summaries/27363>
2. Plain English campaign: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>
3. Make it Clear campaign: <https://www.invo.org.uk/makeitclear-2/?print=print>
4. Readability calculator: <https://readable.com/>