

Lived Experience Advisory Panel Engagement Policy.

The document offers guidance for engaging with the lived experience advisory panel (LEAP) in your research. Please use this document in conjunction with guidance from your funding body, [NIHR guidelines](#) and [NHS guidelines](#).

What is LEAP?

LEAP is a Lived Experience Advisory Panel made up of a group of people with diverse lived experience (e.g., mental and physical ill health, disability, engagement with criminal justice systems, engagement with mental health services, military, and more). LEAP was brought together to support inclusion in research, community engagement, and to ensure that what we do as researchers aligns with the priorities of the communities we work with. Lived experience and patient and public involvement have been shown to improve the relevance, reach, and impact of research.

Each LEAP member has a profile which details their lived experience and their expertise in designing, delivering and disseminating research. LEAP, and all associated processes and documents, have been codesigned with lived experience experts.

Principles of engagement

- Respect and equality: LEAP members are co-producers of knowledge, not token contributors.
- Co-production: Value shared decision-making in project design, analysis, and dissemination.
- Trauma-informed practice: Follow ethical guidelines and trauma informed policy.
- Transparency: be clear about the scope, purpose, and time commitment.
- Reciprocity: Ensure mutual benefit, not extractive relationships.

Academic staff responsibilities

- Submit a contact form with a short (no more than 1 page) outline of the project goals, timelines and expectations of the LEAP member(s). If you think you have identified a match for your project from the LEAP profiles, please state this on your application form.
- You will be invited to attend a facilitated pre-engagement meeting to set expectations and boundaries.
- Academics must commit to feeding back how lived experience shaped the work. This will support the longevity of LEAP. An end of project/funding application follow-up with all engaged panel members is mandatory.

LEAP ethics and safeguarding

- 1-2-1 interactions with LEAP members must be treated with confidentiality.
- LEAP members must have clear routes to report harm or distress (for example, through contact with your head of department).
- LEAP members must be able to opt out of any engagement without penalty. Payments for work carried out to date must be honoured.
- Reasonable adjustments must be made for neurodiversity, disability or trauma (see [AU's Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028](#) for guidance).
- If academics plan to collect data (e.g., Patient and Public Involvement [PPI] surveys or Lived experience survey), then PPI ethical approval must be granted through Psychology Departmental Ethics Panel or [Research Ethics Panel](#).

Costing LEAP into bids and grants

- Please use the LEAP payment policy to determine costs for contributions to funding bids, grants, and research.
- Include both costs for contributions and expenses, where appropriate.
- Arrange a pre-payment system for LEAP members to avoid out-of-pocket expenses.
- Costs for LEAP engagement will usually be included in PPI or lived experience sections of grants and bids.
- For major bids and where feasible, cost in a PPI or Lived Experience Coordinator role.

If you have any questions about LEAP, please contact Kate at kap58@aber.ac.uk