



INNOVATE NOW WITH WELLCOME

Eligibility FAQs

Innovate Now with Wellcome is a new collaboration between Do it Now Now and Wellcome, offering multi-year grants ranging from £13,000 to £48,000. Through this programme, we will fund Black-led initiatives that support the careers, wellbeing and community of Black and Mixed Black heritage researchers across the UK. Our focus is on removing systemic barriers by strengthening the people and structures that help researchers to start, progress, and thrive. This includes building governance, leadership, operational capacity, and long-term sustainability.

This FAQ document explains in further detail who the programme is for, what we mean by “researchers,” and what types of initiatives we can and cannot fund. Please email funding@doitnownow.com to speak with a member of the team to book a 1-2-1 if you have additional questions not covered in this document.

1. Are you funding research projects?

No.

We do **not** fund research studies, data collection, lab work, audits, or product development.

We fund **Black-led initiatives that support the people who do research** relating to their careers, wellbeing, skills, leadership, and ability to progress in research spaces.

Simple way to think about it:

- ✓ Supporting researchers = eligible
- ✗ Doing the research = not eligible

2. Who counts as a “researcher” in this programme?

We use a broad definition of researchers, with priority given to those on academic research pathways. This includes people at different stages and in different settings, such as:

- **Academic researchers (priority)**
PhD students, postdocs, lecturers, professors, research fellows, lab technicians
- **Professional researchers**
NHS researchers, government and policy researchers, think tank staff, charity and NGO researchers
- **Students on research pathways**
Undergraduates and Master’s students considering or preparing for research careers
- **Community-based researchers**
Peer researchers, people with lived experience trained as co-researchers, and community members investigating issues affecting their communities



3. What does “supporting research careers” actually mean?

It means helping Black and Mixed Black heritage researchers to **start, stay in, and progress** through research careers.

This can include:

- Mentoring and coaching
- Training and skills development
- Wellbeing and mental health support
- Peer networks and safe spaces
- Career guidance and leadership development
- Advocacy to remove barriers in universities, the NHS, or research institutions

4. Can we use the funding to train people to become researchers?

Yes.

If you are helping Black community members, students, or early-career professionals **move into research pathways**, that fits the programme.

Examples:

- Training peer researchers
- Creating pathways into PhDs or research jobs
- Connecting people with universities, NHS research roles, or research institutions

5. We use research in our work; does that make us eligible?

Not automatically.

If research is something you **do** (for example, audits, evaluations, product research, or policy reports), that alone is **not eligible**.

You need to show that your initiative is **supporting researchers themselves**, not just producing research.

6. Can funding be used for wellbeing or emotional support for researchers?

Yes.

This is strongly encouraged. Many Black researchers face stress, isolation, racism, and burnout. Funding can be used for:

- Counselling or wellbeing services
- Safe spaces and peer support groups
- Wellness programmes
- Support for people researching difficult or traumatic topics

7. Does research have to be academic or university-based?

No, but academic pathways are the priority.

Research can be:

- Academic (**priority**)
- Professional (NHS, policy, charities, think tanks)
- Community-based
- Lived-experience-led

As long as people are being supported to grow and develop in research-related careers, it may fit. However, the programme prioritises initiatives supporting those on academic research pathways.

8. Can students count as researchers?

Yes.

We include students who are:

- On research pathways
- Considering PhDs or research careers
- In research placements or internships

9. Can we pay people with this funding?

Yes, if it supports research careers.

For example:

- Paying a coordinator to run a Black researchers' network
- Paying mentors or trainers
- Paying researchers to carve out time to build peer networks, training programmes, or support systems

You **can also pay yourself** if you are specifically carving out time to provide support to researchers, either through mentorship or other activities alike. You **cannot** use the funding to pay for conducting a research project itself.

10. What kind of track record do we need?

You need to show that you are **already supporting Black researchers in some way**, even informally.

This can include:

- Mentoring or peer support you've been running
- A WhatsApp group or online community
- Events, workshops, or training sessions
- Partnerships with universities, NHS teams, or research groups



- Testimonials or social media evidence.

You don't need to be formally registered yet, but the work should **already be happening**.

11. Who must benefit from the initiative?

Your work must mainly support **Black African, Black Caribbean, or Mixed Black heritage researchers in the UK**.

Your leadership must also be **over 50% Black or Mixed Black heritage**.

12. What's a good example of an eligible initiative?

An eligible initiative:

- Supports Black researchers across disciplines (e.g., a general network or society)
- Supports a subset of Black researchers (e.g., Black women in academia, Black early-career researchers)
- Supports Black researchers in a health-related discipline (e.g., Black in Cancer, Black public health researchers)
- Trains Black people to become peer researchers
- Runs mentoring for Black PhD students or early-career researchers
- Builds a network for Black NHS or policy researchers
- Supports well-being and mental health for Black academics
- Helps Black researchers navigate funding, publishing, or career progression

13. What's a common example of something that is not eligible?

Not eligible:

- Conducting a mental health study
- Running a research audit
- Building a product using research
- Collecting data for a policy report
- Running a commercial research project
- Supporting researchers in disciplines unrelated to health (e.g., Black in Business, Black in Motorsports)
- Supporting creative practitioners, unless the work connects to health research

14. Can university-based initiatives or staff networks apply?

Yes, with conditions.

University-affiliated initiatives can apply if they can demonstrate **Black-led governance and decision-making autonomy**. The initiative should not be fully controlled by the university and must show that leadership and direction sit with Black or Mixed Black heritage leaders.

15. Does match funding improve our chances of being selected?



No.

Having match funding does not increase or decrease your chances. This programme is designed to support under-resourced initiatives, including those that have not previously secured significant funding.

16. Can limited companies apply, or only charities and CICs?

Yes.

Limited companies, charities, CICs, and unregistered groups can all apply, as long as they meet the **Black-led leadership requirement** and can demonstrate meaningful support for Black and Mixed Black heritage researchers.

17. How long does the funding last, and how is it paid?

Funding runs for **2 or 3 years**, depending on your income band. Funds are typically released annually and must be used within the funding period. You will be asked to report on how the funding has been used against what you proposed.

18. Can this funding be used to reduce reliance on volunteers?

Yes.

You can use the funding to pay for roles such as coordinators, mentors, trainers, or leaders, which helps strengthen your initiative's ability to **support researchers sustainably**. The funding should not be used to pay for carrying out research activities.

19. What counts as a “track record” if we are new or informal?

A formal history is not required. Evidence can include:

- Informal mentoring or peer support you've been providing
- WhatsApp or online groups for Black researchers
- Events, workshops, or training sessions
- Testimonials or letters of support
- Social media activity showing community engagement

The key is showing that your work **already exists and is responding to real community needs**.

20. Does leadership need to come from a research background?

Not necessarily.

Leaders do not have to be academic researchers, but they must be **meaningfully connected to the research space** and able to demonstrate that their initiative actively supports researchers or research careers.

21. Can the funding be used for advocacy or policy engagement?

Yes.

Advocacy, publishing, policy engagement, and amplifying the voices of Black researchers are eligible, where these activities help **remove systemic barriers and support research careers**.

22. What if our idea sits between “supporting researchers” and “doing research”?

If your initiative includes both elements, we encourage you to **book a 1-2-1 conversation**. We can help clarify whether your primary focus aligns with supporting researchers rather than conducting research. Please email funding@doitnownow.com to speak with a member of the team.

23. We support researchers in a specific discipline. Are we eligible?

It depends on the discipline.

This programme is funded by Wellcome, a health charity. The types of initiatives we can support are:

- General initiatives supporting Black researchers across disciplines (e.g., Society of Black Academics) - eligible
- Subset initiatives supporting a specific group of Black researchers (e.g., Black women in academia) - eligible
- Discipline-specific initiatives - must relate to human health, life and wellbeing

Examples of disciplines likely in scope:

- Health sciences, biosciences, immunology, epidemiology, public health
- Mental health, psychology, neuroscience
- Health economics, health policy
- Social sciences and humanities relating to health
- Environmental/climate research relating to human health

Examples of disciplines likely out of scope:

- Business, finance, accountancy
- Motorsports, sports science (unless health-focused)
- Architecture (unless specifically focused on health outcomes)
- Arts, music, creative industries (unless health-focused)

If you support researchers in a specific discipline and are unsure whether it connects to health, please book a 1-2-1 to discuss by sending an email to funding@doitnownow.com.

24. We support artists, musicians, or creative practitioners. Are we eligible?

This is unlikely, unless your work connects to health.

This programme is funded by Wellcome, a health charity. Supporting creative practitioners whose work is not connected to health research falls outside the programme’s remit.

However, if your work specifically connects to health (e.g., arts and health research, music therapy research, creative approaches to mental health), please get in touch to discuss by sending an email to funding@doitnownow.com.

