

MHP C&I PPIE Awards – Example of Research Plan (max 4 page) – For Illustrative Purposes Only

The content in this document is provided as a sample for guidance and illustration.

Below is an example structure. It does not need academic language. Plain English writing is strongly encouraged.

1. Project Summary (½ page)

A short overview of your project idea. Include:

- The issue, challenge, or experience your project is about
- Why this matters to people with lived experience of mental health difficulties
- Your core research question or aim
- Who is involved (e.g., lived-experience contributors, partners, community groups)
- Alignment with funding themes and connecting at least two Hubs

Plain English is perfectly acceptable.

2. Background & Why This Project Is Needed (½ page)

Explain the context in a simple, accessible way:

- What is currently known about this issue? (You don't need a full literature review)
- Why this issue is important to your community or group
- What gap your project will fill

You may include:

- Insights from your own lived experience
- Conversations with others
- Observations from services or communities

No academic citations are required unless you want to include them.

3. Project Aims & Research Questions (¼ page)

Set out:

- What you hope to achieve
- 1–3 main research questions or objectives

Make these realistic and achievable within budget/timeline.

4. Methods & Activities (1–1.25 pages)

Describe how you will answer your research questions. Include:

A. Participants

Who you will involve

- People with lived experience
- Carers

- Professionals
- Community groups

How many you plan to involve (an estimate is fine).

B. Activities / Data Collection

Examples:

- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Workshops or co-design sessions
- Surveys
- Creative methods (photovoice, storytelling, etc.)
- Reviewing existing materials or evidence

Pick methods you feel comfortable leading.

C. Timeline

Outline the sequence of activities, for example you can provide breakdown for a 12-month period

Month	Activities
1-3	Planning, recruitment
4-6	Workshops or interviews
7-9	Analysis & reflection
10-12	Sharing findings

This can be a simple table and you can provide a monthly breakdown too.

D. Ethics

Explain how you will:

- Respect and dignity for all participants
- Informed consent
- Managing emotional distress sensitively
- Signposting to support if needed
- How you will protect confidentiality

If you need formal ethics approval, say how you will get it (support can be provided).

5. Data Management (1/4-1/2 page)

Explain how you will collect, store, and protect any data:

A. What data you will collect

Examples: audio recordings, notes, surveys, artwork, anonymised stories.

B. How the data will be stored securely

- Password-protected files
- Secure university or organisational systems
- Encrypted devices
- Restricted access only to authorised team members

Do not store sensitive data on personal devices without security.

C. How privacy will be protected

- Removing names and identifiable details
- Using codes or pseudonyms
- Keeping consent forms separate from research data

D. How long data will be kept and how it will be destroyed

Follow partner organisation or host institution policies if available.

Plain English explanations are welcome, you do not need technical jargon.

6. Risk Management (¼–½ page)

Explain any risks to the project and how you will manage them.

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	How the Risk Will Be Managed / Mitigated
A. Risks to Participants			
Discussions may trigger difficult emotions or distress	Medium	Medium	Provide clear information before sessions; remind participants they can pause/stop; offer breaks; co-facilitate; signpost to appropriate support services.
Discomfort sharing personal or sensitive experiences	Medium	Medium	Make participation voluntary; allow people to choose what they share; use trauma-informed approaches; offer alternative ways to contribute (e.g., written or creative methods).
Challenges in a group setting (conflict, feeling unsafe, dominating voices)	Low-Medium	Medium	Set group agreements; ensure respectful facilitation; allow participants to contribute 1-to-1 if preferred; manage group size; follow safeguarding guidance.
B. Risks to Researchers / PPIE Leads			
Emotional impact of sensitive topics on the PPIE Lead or team	Medium	Medium-High	Build in debrief sessions; access supervisory/support structures; take breaks; set clear emotional boundaries.
Workload pressure or burnout	Medium	Medium	Plan tasks realistically; share tasks across co-leads; adjust timeline if needed; use admin support; prioritise wellbeing.
Personal triggers or lived-experience-related distress	Low-Medium	High	Work at a comfortable pace; pause involvement if needed; identify a supportive colleague/mentor; use reflective practice.
C. Project Risks			
Difficulty recruiting participants	Medium	Medium-High	Recruit via multiple routes (services, community groups, online); allow flexible times; offer small incentives.
Scheduling or venue availability issues	Medium	Medium	Have backup venues; offer online options; plan booking early; maintain clear communication with partners.

Delays in approvals (e.g., ethics or governance)	Low-Medium	Medium	Start the approval process early; get support from partner organisations; adjust timeline if needed.
Technology failures (recording equipment, online platforms)	Medium	Low-Medium	Test equipment; have backup devices; provide written alternatives; record meetings in multiple ways if appropriate.
Budget pressures or unexpected costs	Low-Medium	Medium	Keep a small contingency; monitor spending monthly; adjust non-essential costs if needed.

7. Co-production & PPIE Involvement (¼-½ page)

Explain how lived-experience contributors will shape the project:

- Co-designing the approach
- Helping with data collection or analysis
- Making decisions together
- Ensuring findings reflect real priorities

Describe how contributors will be fairly paid and supported.

8. Outputs, Impact & Sharing Learning (½ page)

Explain what difference the project could make and how you will share the findings:

Possible outputs:	Impact examples:
Community event	Improving service experiences
Short report	Highlighting unmet needs
Infographic or visual summary	Building community capacity
Video or podcast	Influencing practice or policy
Workshop for local services	Empowering lived-experience voices
Blog or social media content	
Poster or magazine	

Academic publications are not mandatory but are welcome.

9. Justification of Resources (¼ page)

Summarise why the requested funding (up to £20,000) is needed:

- Staff time
- PPIE involvement
- Travel, events/workshops
- Equipment < £10,000
- Accessibility support
- Transcription and materials

Full budget breakdown goes in the 1-page budget plan; this section only explains your choices.