



National Cardiovascular
Research Network
Rhwydwaith Cenedlaethol
Ymchwil Gardiofasgwlaidd

AURORA

Making Heart and Circulatory Research More Inclusive

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

OVERVIEW

The National Cardiovascular Research Network (NCRN) is pleased to welcome applications for the **AURORA** initiative - *Addressing Under-Representation through Outreach and Research Access*.

AURORA was established to help tackle long-standing inequalities in cardiovascular health by making research more inclusive, accessible and relevant to those communities that have historically been under-represented in health studies.

This funding opportunity supports a wide range of **community-based outreach** and **public engagement** activities. It's aimed at engaging people and communities who are more likely to be affected by heart and circulatory disease, including:

- Older adults living in care homes
- Young people
- People from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Women from diverse ethnic communities
- People living in deprived or rural areas
- Women with specific risk factors (such as going through menopause or experiencing mental health challenges).

We welcome creative, locally tailored approaches to engaging under-represented communities. These might include co-developed activities, culturally relevant outreach, peer-led initiatives, or novel ways of using digital or in-person platforms to build trust and overcome barriers to participation. Applicants are encouraged to think collaboratively and draw on local knowledge and lived experience to shape meaningful engagement.

AURORA's overarching goal is to build stronger relationships between researchers and these communities, so they can be more involved in research that affects their health. Through this initiative, the NCRN will support efforts to raise awareness, improve education, and ensure that patients and the public have a meaningful voice in shaping cardiovascular research.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Applicants: We welcome applications from individuals and organisations based in Wales, including:

- Charities, social enterprises
- NHS employees & organisations
- Community-based health organisations



- Community groups, patient groups, social care groups
- Local Authorities
- Schools, youth groups
- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

If you'd like to discuss your eligibility or suitability of your application to the AURORA initiative, please contact admin@NCRN.uk

WHAT WILL THIS FUND PAY FOR?

Funds <u>can</u> be used to pay for	This fund <u>cannot</u> be used to pay for
Patient or Public Outreach and Engagement Activities including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Facilities / Venue Hire ✓ Food & refreshments (excluding alcohol) ✓ Travel expenses ✓ Participant expenses ✓ Accessibility Support ✓ Consumable costs such as printing & stationary ✓ Digital engagement tools ✓ Advertising & promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Equipment / hardware ✗ Staff time ✗ Overheads ✗ Conference attendance ✗ Activities for which other funding has been received, unless there is clear additionality ✗ VAT where it can be reclaimed ✗ Profit-making activities

Award Amount: We will consider funding requests of up to £2,000 for direct costs only. In exceptional cases, projects in excess of £2000 may be considered - please contact admin@ncrn.uk to discuss further.

Award Duration: up to 6 months

Application Deadline: No application deadline - we anticipate making awards up to four times per year, with decisions communicated within a maximum of 3 months after submission.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed by the NCRN's AURORA funding panel, which includes members of the NCRN Leadership Team, Universities, and NHS partners, and people with lived experience, including patients and members of the public. Applications will be assessed against the criteria below:

- ✓ **Relevance & Fit**
 - Does your project/activity clearly support the aims of the NCRN and the AURORA initiative?
 - Does it focus on groups or communities that are currently underrepresented in cardiovascular research?
 - Are the activities achievable within the time and budget?
- ✓ **Quality of the engagement plan –**
 - How are the activities tailored to the target audience?
 - Are your activities designed to be inclusive and engaging? For example, will you use workshops, co-production, or other creative approaches?
 - Is your target audience clearly defined, with a focus on under-represented groups?

✓ **Anticipated Benefit**

- Will your activity help raise awareness, encourage participation, or support involvement in cardiovascular research undertaken by the NCRN?

✓ **Value for money**

- Are the costs reasonable and clearly linked to the activities and outcomes you've described?

✓ **Collaborations:**

- Is there evidence of collaboration with others?
- Have you engaged with the NCRN to discuss your application?
- We encourage applications that involve working across different sectors – for example, partnerships between universities, the NHS, charities, or industry.

HOW CAN I APPLY?

Before starting your application, we encourage you to engage with the NCRN to discuss your application. This is not mandatory but is encouraged.

Please submit your completed application form via email to admin@ncrn.uk.

The funding panel will meet up to four times per year, and we aim to notify applicants as soon as possible following the panel meeting. We really appreciate the time and effort put into each application. Whilst we're unable to provide detailed feedback on unsuccessful applications, we'll do our best to signpost alternative funding opportunities where possible.

CONTACT US

For queries related to the application process, please contact: admin@ncrn.uk