

Lay Summary Guidance

This document provides guidance to UK Biobank researchers for writing their lay summary about their research project. All lay summaries of approved projects are made available on our website and hence need to be understood by the general public.

What is a Lay Summary?

A lay summary is a short summary of your research project that has been written for members of the public, rather than researchers or professionals. It should be written in plain English, avoid the use of jargon and explain any necessary technical terms.

Why is it important?

A good lay summary provides an easy-to-read summary of your research project and will help:

- UKB staff who are assessing your application to have a better understanding of your research
- members of the public to understand the research that is being undertaken

How to write a good lay summary:

There are a few simple rules for writing in plain English. In summary these are:

- avoid, wherever possible, using jargon, abbreviations and technical terms – if you have to use them, provide a clear explanation
- avoid complicated English or uncommon words
- use active not passive phrases, for example say ‘we will do it’ rather than ‘it will be done by us’
- keep sentences short
- plan out the order and structure of the summary
- break up the text, for example use bullet lists or headings
- ask patients / carers / colleagues to read a draft to find out if anything is unclear

It is often good to return to your first draft after a few hours. On review, you are likely to spot opportunities for improvement – such as words that can be removed – that you missed the first time.