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***“Bridging the gap between autism and eating disorders research”***

**The Eating Disorders and Autism Collaborative (EDAC) – Guidance and Application Form**

The **Eating Disorders and Autism Collaborative (EDAC)** is an innovative project funded by UK Research and Innovation aiming to increase research capacity by supporting research collaborations on the interface between **eating disorders (EDs)** and **autism**. EDAC comprises of four integrated workstreams to co-produce inter-disciplinary research, directed by Autistic individuals with lived/living experience of EDs (for more information on EDAC see Duffy and Gillespie-Smith, et al. (2024) or [edacresearch.co.uk](https://edacresearch.co.uk/)).

As part of our third workstream we are looking to support proof of concept research in the field of Autism and Eating Disorders. We are looking for researchers (including early career researchers [ECRs], peer researchers and clinicians) who would like to conduct innovative research in the field to suggest their research projects. While this call is not associated with specific research funding (e.g., staffing or material costs), we do have funds to support patient and public involvement (PPI) and participant payment in the form of vouchers (while we acknowledge the limitations of only offering vouchers, this enables us to expand research activity beyond the core EDAC research team). This call would particularly suit individuals who have innovative, interdisciplinary ideas that require further proof of concept or development in partnership with the Autistic and eating disorder community, but who do not have the means to support meaningful co-production. EDAC can support projects via:

* EDAC team time to support data collection and analysis
* PPI co-production and participant costs
* Access to EDAC mailing list and dissemination network to support recruitment

The research projects must be aligned with the **following co-produced research priorities** (please note that these are provisional priorities and still being developed):

**The Eating Disorders and Autism Collaborative (EDAC) – Emerging Research Priorities**

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| **Research Themes** | **Research Priority Area(s)** |
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| **The complex continuum of autism and EDs – untangling or interacting?**    *Is it possible (or helpful) to untangle the autism (or untangle being autistic) from an eating disorder? Does untangling come from a neurotypical lens?* | Research investigating the practicality, usefulness and ethical considerations of “untangling” autism and eating disorders, and how this may affect approaches for ED treatment. |
| **The impact and experiences of the timing of autism diagnosis on the development of eating disorders** | Research investigating the impact and experiences of the autism diagnosis (child relative to adult individuals) and implications for post-diagnostic support). |
| **Barriers and facilitators to ED recovery** | Research investigating the barriers and facilitators to ED recovery, covering both general and autism-specific factors. |
| **Functions of the ED**    *e.g. stress or burnout response, masking strategy, or**a regulatory/negative feedback strategy* | Research investigating ED development or maintenance in Autistic people including exploring 1. A stress or burnout response; 2. A masking strategy; 3. As a means to regulate cognitive processing (internal feedback loops/thoughts), information processing (sensory input and environmental processing) and emotional regulation. |
| **Factors across ED trajectories (development, maintenance, recovery)**    *Sensory, emotional and cognitive factors* | Research investigating the sensory factors across the ED trajectory (development, maintenance, recovery). |
| Research investigating: 1. Emotional/socioemotional factors and 2. Socio-cultural narratives across the ED trajectory (development, maintenance, recovery). |
| Research investigating cognitive factors (structure, routine, obsessive thoughts, pattern recognition) across the ED trajectory (development, maintenance, recovery). |
| **Understanding co-occurring conditions and complexities**    *Trauma, mental health, intersectionality, role of iatrogenic harm* | Research investigating the role of co-occurring conditions and complexities in Autistic people with an ED (e.g., the role of trauma, intersectionality, poor mental and/or physical health). |
| Research investigating the overlap between Autism, EDs and iatrogenic harm, and the impact of this overlap on co-occurring conditions in Autistic people with an ED. |
| **Intergenerational Patterns in Autism and EDs** | Research investigating biological/genetic factors involved in intergenerational patterns in autism and EDs. |
| Research investigating social factors involved in intergenerational patterns in autism and EDs. |
| **Barriers (e.g., iatrogenic harm) and facilitators (e.g., special interests, ND-training, specific/tailored) of effective support** | Research investigating the general barriers and facilitators to effective support in Autistic individuals with an ED. |
| Research investigating the barriers to effective support in Autistic individuals with an ED via iatrogenic harm. |
| Research investigating the role of special interests as a facilitator of effective support in Autistic individuals with an ED. |
| Research investigating the role of ND-training as a facilitator of effective support in Autistic individuals with an ED. |
| Research investigating the role of specialised/tailored treatment as a facilitator of effective support in Autistic individuals with an ED. |
| **Changing research and clinical culture** | Research investigating the research environment and development of research (e.g., accessible language, accessible material, generation of co-production). |
| Research investigating the clinical culture (e.g., lacking knowledge base to support Autistic individuals with an ED, ED treatment based off a neurotypical framework, simplification of co-occurring conditions). |
| **Autistic male experiences of EDs** | Research investigating Autistic male experiences of EDs and potential implications for ED treatment and recovery. |
| **Biological processes associated with EDs in Autistic people**    *e.g., metabolism/calorie burning processes* | Research investigating the biological processes (metabolic response, energy intake, calorie burning, brain activity/metabolism) involved in the sensory and cognitive processing of Autistic people with an ED. |

We will prioritise projects that are:

* Interdisciplinary partnerships
* Involving researchers across the autism and eating disorder research fields
* Involve innovative proof of concept work
* Applications by early career researchers (ECRs)
* Are going to be led or co-produced with Autistic individuals with eating disorders
* Projects that can be used to support further funding applications

Applicants can apply for between £250 and £2000 per application, please use [NIHR guidance on Participant and PPI reimbursement](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-researchers-and-professionals/27392) to consider costings. Examples of use of funds could include 1) participant costs for research, in isolation or in combination with 2) costs for PPI as part of the research team e.g., development of the research methods, leading the research, supporting analysis, advising on dissemination, supporting post proof of concept grant writing. You may wish to refer to EDAC’s [Best Practice Principles](https://edacresearch.co.uk/img/news/EDAC_best_practice_guidelines_v2.pdf) for co-production to support you in planning. All applications will be reviewed by a lived experience panel.

Projects would be expected to start **late 2024** and be completed within **6 months**. To have your proposed project considered by EDAC, please complete the following application form.

Applications are due by the **29th of August at 5pm**.

**Research Application Form**

***Instructions:*** *Please complete all sections of the following application form. All sections must be completed for an application to be considered. If you have provided any reference material for your submission, please include these within the appropriate section at the end of this document.*

*Once complete, please send this document to* [*EDAC@ed.ac.uk*](mailto:EDAC@ed.ac.uk)*.*

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| ***SECTION 1: APPLICANT DETAILS*** |

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| ***1.1. Applicant Name(s):*** |
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| ***1.2. Applicant Email(s):*** |
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| ***1.3. Applicant Organisation(s)/Institution(s):*** |
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| ***SECTION 2: PROJECT DETAILS*** |

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| ***2.1. Project Title:*** | | | | |
| *Please provide a title for the proposed research:* | | | | |
| ***2.2. Project Abstract: (max. 300 words)*** | | | | |
| *Please provide an abstract for the proposed research:* | | | | |
| ***2.3. Project Aims:*** | | | | |
| *Please list the aims and objectives for the proposed research. If your proposed project aims to answer multiple research questions, please list them separately as primary and secondary objectives:* | | | | |
| ***2.4. Project Methodology: (max. 500 words)*** | | | | |
| *Please describe the methodology for the proposed research project:* | | | | |
| ***2.5. Project Timeframe:*** | | | | |
| *Proposed start date of project:* | *\_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_* | *Proposed end date of project:* | *\_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_* | |

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| ***SECTION 3: PROJECT INFORMATION*** |

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| ***3.1. Project Team: (max. 300 words)*** |
| *Please describe your project team, inclusive of interdisciplinary partners, Autistic individuals with lived experience and/or early career researchers* |
| ***3.2 Research Priorities: (max. 300 words)*** |
| *How is this project aligned with EDAC research priorities. How will this be of benefit to the Autistic and eating disorder community* |
| ***3.3. Participants and Associated Compensation: (max. 300 words)*** |
| *Please describe your proposed participants and/or PPI involvement with associated projected costings. Please also consider your approach to protect against fake participants* |
| ***3.4 Proposed Next Steps: (max. 300 words)*** |
| *Please describe provisional ideas how you are going to use this proof-of-concept work to support further research and/or grant applications and how you plan to disseminate these findings* |

**Signature(s):** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for completing our Research Application Form. Please send and attach your completed form to [EDAC@ed.ac.uk](mailto:EDAC@ed.ac.uk).

**Points of Contact**

Any questions or concerns? Please email us at [EDAC@ed.ac.uk](mailto:EDAC@ed.ac.uk), or contact us on [Twitter/X](https://twitter.com/EDACautism_ED).

**References (if applicable):**