

## **Research blog guidelines**

This document provides guidelines and tips on writing a blog for NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre's website. The aim of the blog is to provide relevant, useful information to our website's audience. By doing so, we aim to engage our website community in the work we do and the impact it has.

### **Objectives**

The objective of this research blog is in line with the NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre's goal:

*“Every patient will have a personalised medicine approach, as part of routine clinical practice. Our ability to rapidly translate research will bring major health benefits to a diverse global population.*

*It will also position us as the partner of choice for public, charity and industry collaborators, to develop new tests, treatments, devices and preventative measures for Greater Manchester and beyond.”*

### **Audiences**

The blog will have a number of key audiences, including:

- Life sciences industry
- Research staff
- Public and patients
- Clinical staff (non-research)
- Government departments (NIHR, Department of Health)
- Healthcare charities (Tommy's, Arthritis Research UK, Stroke Association)

As our website is accessed by a variety of people, please consider your audience when drafting a blog. We want our website to be accessible to as many people as possible so please try and use lay language and descriptions where possible.

A good example of science being accessible to everyone is the Cancer Research UK science blog.

<http://scienceblog.cancerresearchuk.org/2015/07/20/shape-shifting-molecular-cousins-are-the-key-to-dna-repair/>

### **Content objectives**

We will publish content that covers all aspect of research from governance to patient stories, and research careers to rapid translation of findings, with the ultimate aim of bringing the story of our research to a wider audience.

Content should be:

- Unique
- Engaging

- Relatable

## Word count

To keep the audience engaged please aim to write no more than 800 words.

## Content pointers

Although our blog posts will be an opportunity for different staff across the division to pen posts, we want to maintain a consistent tone of voice.

This is the same writing style that is used throughout our website, which enables us to develop a strong brand for our research and work.

### **Key message up front:**

We want to get the reader hooked. Use the first paragraph of your blog to get across the key message of post.

### **Consider starting your blog with a question:**

This engages the audience right away, and helps you to stay on track and write short, focused content. If you use twitter end your post with a question as well and ask readers to engage via twitter.

### **To the point:**

Use active verbs to encourage connections, empathy and dialogue. Avoid jargon terms and unnecessary detail and try to ensure your content is concise and straightforward.

### **Be specific:**

Include facts and figures and explain the benefits. You've had your research published in a journal, but what do the findings mean to patients? How will it improve healthcare. Or you've finished a research fellowship, what have you learnt or accomplished? How would you sum it up?

### **What's next / what's the call to action:**

The backbone of medical research is all about innovation, supported by a drive to deliver continuous improvement in healthcare. Where possible you should always share your future plans and next steps or how people can find out more or get involved.

## Formatting

Formatting is important when writing a blog, as website content is harder to read than printed documents. The following points should be considered:

- Use headings and subheadings to break up text. This helps a reader scan through content easily.
- Use sentence case for headings and subheadings.
- Include bullet points of key points. The reader's eye will be drawn to lists when scanning content.

- Make paragraphs shorter than you would with any other writing piece. This provides more white space on the screen, which is good for the eyes of your readers.

Remember that good blog content **educates, engages, and entertains** readers.