The Iolanthe Midwifery Trust

Guidance for completing applications for the Iolanthe/RCM Jean Davies Award for challenging maternal health inequalities

Introduction to the Jean Davies Award

This award has been created in honour of Jean Davies who served for many years as a trustee of the Iolanthe Midwifery Trust, stepping down in 2012, and in various roles for the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) during her career. Jean's focus in her work as a practising midwife and researcher was to help those families experiencing social and economic disadvantage. She retains an interest in all Jean Davies Award Winners.

The Iolanthe/RCM Jean Davies Award at a glance

Amount Granted	Maximum £3,000 (single award) funded in part by the RCM
When to Apply	Applications open on 1 Dec 2025 and **close on 1 February 2027**. The award winner will be announced in early June 2027.
Eligibility Criteria	NMC registered midwives, student midwives or groups, including interdisciplinary groups. **Current RCM membership of the lead applicant is essential.**

You cannot normally apply for more than one Iolanthe award in any one year. However, an exception is if you are applying for another Iolanthe award, such as the Jean Davies Award, and are also eligible and wish to apply for a Dora Opoku Diversity and Equity Award.

If you have previously received an individual Iolanthe Award, you must wait two years before applying again. For example, a 2026 Award winner could next apply for a 2028 Award.

However, the Jean Davies Award is the only Iolanthe Award that may be applied for by a team and may therefore be the exception, with no specific time needing to pass before a previous *individual* winner is part of a *team* applying for the Jean Davies Award. A previous Jean Davies team recipient may also apply at any future time for an individual award.

What type of projects and research are suitable?

1. Any project to improve care and/or support vulnerable groups who are less likely to engage with care. Projects that involve changes to an existing service to make it more accessible will also be considered.
2. A research project (for academic credit or not) with the main and explicit aim of reducing maternal health inequalities in some way
3. We welcome applications from inter-professional teams, providing the lead applicant is a midwife or student with RCM membership. Co-applicants should be declared within the text of the application. There is no minimum time of membership of the RCM required.
4. Projects must be UK based, at least in part, but we welcome applications which include international collaborations.

Groups that may be at risk of maternal health inequalities may include:

- Single or young mothers/parents
- Families of lower socioeconomic positions or in geographical areas of high deprivation
- Black and Asian mothers/parents
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Mothers/parents leaving care
- Families with social services involvement
- Mothers/parents who experience difficulty (physical, environmental or social) in accessing care (for instance, Romany and travelling communities)
- Homeless families
- Women/pregnant individuals suffering abuse
- Women/pregnant individuals in prison
- Those of LBGTIQA+ sexual/gender identities

Topics that have a potential to ameliorate health care inequalities include:

- Continuity of care and case loading
- Breastfeeding
- Obesity
- Infectious diseases
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Housing and local access issues
- Mental health
- Learning difficulties
- Smoking
- Research projects which originate from the community, or have collaborative elements
- Projects with lay-person involvement

See below for A Guide to Writing a Good Application

A Guide to Writing a Good Application

	What goes wrong?	What do good applications have?
The purpose of the application	Giving too little information about your proposed project	Clearly justify your choice of project and tell us what makes it worthwhile or innovative. Identify how this will benefit the wellbeing of mothers/parents and/or babies. Projects which are collaborative (for example, using public involvement and engagement in the design stages) are viewed more positively. Include plans to disseminate the results of the research/project
Is the application going to investigate or reduce maternal health inequalities?	Not giving enough thought about how you, your employer, the midwifery profession, maternity services and women/families will benefit. Not explicitly stating how you will investigate or reduce maternal health inequalities.	Spell out the benefits of your project to yourself and others (parents and babies, other midwives, and the profession and/or employer). Clearly state how your project will address maternity health inequalities
Costs	Including excessive, irrelevant or personal costs Not being clear in your project description about what the money will be spent on	Give detailed well-researched costs with a brief justification for why these are included. Include precise details on what the money will be spent on in the section describing your project. Ensure your project is value for money. Don't include personal costs which you are not expecting to get funded (e.g. holiday excursion). Provide evidence of other fundraising – we view this positively as a sign of commitment.
The overall quality of the application	Missing out sections and applications which are too long and unfocused.	Make sure your application is complete, well presented and readable. Use the word counts to help focus the information. Reference your application with research or policy if appropriate but not excessively. Write with feeling and persuasion.

Support and commitment.	Not enough evidence of support to do the project. Applications which are not supported by your employer or academic departmental lead are less likely to be funded.	Include a supporting letter from your manager/academic lead/course tutor. Acknowledge other support, eg time off or part-funding. There should be evidence there you are committed to undertaking the project, and will be able to complete it. Please ensure you give sufficient notice to those providing supporting letters so that they are available before the application deadline. **Supporting letters cannot be added after the application deadline.**

See below for your Guide to Completing the Online Application Form

Guide to Completing the Online Application Form

We have designed the form to be as easy as possible to fill in. If you have any difficulties understanding what is required please contact awards@iolanthe.org and we will be able to help you. You can apply for the award at https://www.iolanthe.org/jean-davies-award

If you do use AI to help you draft your application, please make sure it's a realistic and honest reflection of your proposal. When you apply to us we want to learn about you and what you want to do. The writing style or grammar doesn't matter to us. What we are interested in is what you're trying to achieve and how you're going to do it.

* **indicates essential reading**

Field	Explanation
***Data protection**	Applying for an award will require you to go to our online application system on an external website based in the USA. By entering data on the application form, you are agreeing to have your data stored and processed within and outside of the UK and the EU as well as by Iolanthe Midwifery Trust. Further details about what this means and the rights you have over the data can be found in our Privacy Policy
***Saving the application**	You can save the application at any time by clicking on Save at the end of the form. You can then continue entering data or choose to resume later. If you want to come back later, you will be given a link (or choose to have the link sent to you in an email) so you can return to the form at another time. **Please note**: The form does not save automatically if you use the back button or close the browser tab or window. Save regularly so you don't lose your work.
Applicant's name	The lead (or sole) applicant must be a midwife or student midwife
Applicant's PIN	If the lead application is a midwife, their NMC registration pin must be entered in this box
RCM Membership Number	This award can only be given where the lead application is an RCM member
Telephone number	A personal mobile telephone is preferred
Email addresses	We request two email addresses in case your preferred email address is linked with a job or place of study which expires when you move on. This is particularly difficult if it happens in the course of the award administration
Address	For students, this should be your permanent home address, not your term-time address.
1. Co-applicants	These do not have to be midwives or student midwives – we welcome collaborative projects
2. Abridged CV of applicant	The reviewers will be looking for evidence that you as lead applicant have the capacity to undertake and complete the work. Please include in the additional information section any relevant exceptional performance in training or a job. Please be honest about your CV and explain any gaps in the additional information section.
3. Details of Proposed Project	Please ensure that your project is eligible for funding in this award category. The Jean Davies Award is given for UK based projects challenging inequalities in maternal health.

Commitment to course/project	Enter brief but comprehensive details here about what time you will have available for the project, and any previous or current work which demonstrates your commitment to this project.
Manager's support	Your manager's support will add weight to your application. Please add a supporting letter at the end of the online application form (section 9)
4. Outline of proposed project	This section should clearly demonstrate how the project will promote understanding of and/or directly ameliorate maternal health inequalities.
Project outline	This is where you should set out the main description of your project. State clearly how the project will investigate or reduce maternal health inequalities and include an aim, objectives, project design and management, plans for evaluation and dissemination strategy. Applications which involve patient-public involvement or collaborative research will be viewed favourably. The maximum word count is 3000 words but it could be less if you have adequately achieved the above in fewer words. You can make this box bigger by dragging the RH corner of the box downwards. The text should be referenced where relevant (but not excessively referenced). A full list of references should be given in the box below.
References	As above, include the full list of references from the text in the project outline. Please do include all relevant references to evidence and current policy but do not excessively reference.
5. Cost of the project	The total cost of the project can be above £3,000 but only that amount can be requested from Iolanthe. If there is a shortfall please explain in the 'Other source of funding' box where this will come from. Please provide detailed costs with justification, and be aware that receipts or other documentary proof must be provided for any costs that are later claimed. Do not include personal costs you are not expecting to have funded e.g. holiday excursion.
9. Additional documents	Please upload supporting statements from your employer and details of ethical approval. **Supporting letters cannot be added after the application deadline.**
***Save/Submit**	You can save this application and return to it later. You will be given or sent a link to find it again. We advise against having multiple applications on multiple tabs open simultaneously as this has previously caused problems. When you are ready to submit your application, click on Submit. You will be able to download a pdf of your application. You should receive an email acknowledgment of your submission. If you do not receive this, please contact awards@iolanthe.org **before** the closing date so we can confirm if your application has been received. Only submitted applications will be judged. It is strongly advised that you submit your application with plenty of time to spare to resolve any problems with submission. No applications will be accepted after the closing date regardless of circumstances. Saved but unsubmitted awards will be deleted shortly after the closing date. By entering data on the application you are accepting that your data will be stored and processed electronically within and outside the UK and the EU for the purpose of awards administration and judging. More details about how your data will be stored and processed can be found in our Privacy Policy

On submission, applications will be required to agree to the following statements	I am applying for charitable funding to support midwifery practice, provision, education, training or research; I understand that any project activity must adhere to professional midwifery standards and the best available evidence ; I confirm that this application is my own original work and that the ideas, proposals and plans within it are my own. I understand that plagiarism will result in my application being rejected; I have declared, and will declare, any project work that has been developed jointly with colleagues; I agree to acknowledge Iolanthe Midwifery Trust funding in any outputs resulting from this award (for example publications and conference presentations) ; I will undertake to complete the proposed activity as fully as I can within the award period, unless exceptional circumstances arise. In this case I will communicate this promptly to The Iolanthe Midwifery Trust; I will keep and provide receipts or other documentary proof for any costs I claim; I understand that The Iolanthe Midwifery Trust will expect any unused charitable funds to be returned if award activity has not been completed within the agreed award period ; I understand that the decisions of the Board of Trustees of The Iolanthe Midwifery Trust are final and binding.

The closing date/time for this award is 1 February 2027 5pm