

## **Quarterly Open Funding Round: Guidance for Applicants**

Cure Parkinson's (CP) welcomes applications for funding for suitable research projects. This document provides guidance for potential applicants on the process used for assessing projects and the criteria used during assessment as well as instructions for how to apply.

If any queries arise, potential applicants may contact CP using the details at the end of this document.

### **What research do we fund?**

We fund laboratory or clinical research projects with the potential to cure Parkinson's. By "cure", we mean disease-modifying therapy or therapies. Our priority is to find a cure for those living with Parkinson's now. This means we only fund research with the potential to prevent, slow, stop, or reverse the underlying disease progression. We do not fund research which is directed only to symptomatic relief, basic science or early drug development.

We fund clinical trials involving people with Parkinson's, projects that support clinical trials such as sub-studies and infrastructure projects or preclinical research investigating therapies that show potential to translate to clinical trials. A key part of our remit is that we prioritise research which has the potential to translate into the clinic within five years.

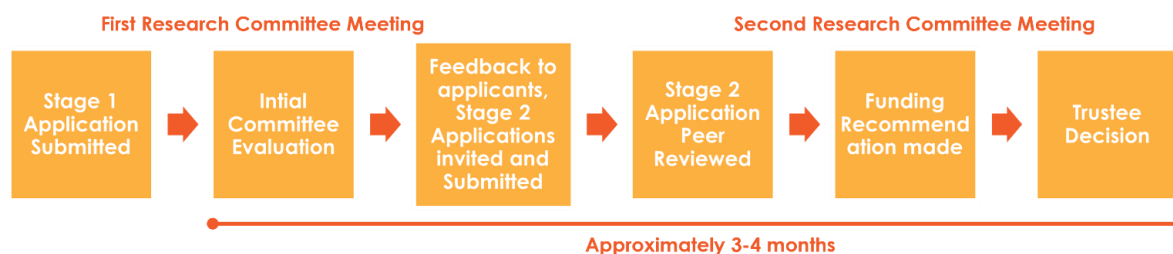
Our full [Research Strategy](#) can be found on our website [here](#) and gives more information on the types of research we fund and our funding priorities.

Cure Parkinson's also welcomes applications outside of the UK but requires projects to contract in GBP. Please contact the CP research team for further support with this.

### **Application and evaluation process**

#### **Applications now follow a 2-stage process.**

By offering a shorter stage 1 application, we aim to make the application process less burdensome for new applicants and ensure proposals are within our funding remit.



### **Stage 1: Outline Application**

- a. The principal investigator (lead applicant) will be required to submit an initial outline of the proposed research project, which is designed to be short and easy to complete, through our online Grants Management System. At this stage, applications do not require official institutional or financial sign off.
- b. This application will be reviewed internally by the CP research team for eligibility and compliance with CP's funding remit (in a 'triage' process) according to our Research Strategy.
- c. All stage 1 applications will be presented to CP's independent Research Committee (RC) for assessment. This includes those that fail the triage process as an opportunity for reconsideration by the RC (unless manifestly ineligible, incomplete or non-compliant).
- d. Successful stage 1 applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal at stage 2, immediately following the RC review.

### **Stage 2: Full Application (including written external expert review)**

- a. Successful stage 1 applicants will be given any feedback from the RC and invited to complete a stage 2 application. This will include more information regarding study design, the project budget and required institutional support. At this stage, the final budget is required to be approved by the contracting organisation, including a detailed breakdown with justification for each budget line. A signed and dated letter of support from the host institution is also required at this stage and can be submitted via the 'additional information' tab of the application.
- b. Stage 2 does not request information already covered in stage 1. Information submitted as part of stage 1 will be automatically transferred to the stage 2 application on Grant Tracker and will be available to edit and amend.
- c. Stage 2 application submissions will be due for the next quarterly funding round deadline, which can be found on our website [here](#). Applicants can delay full submission by one quarterly round if further time is required to respond to RC feedback. If this is the case, please contact the CP Research Team for support.
- d. Full applications will be sent for written external expert review to at least two independent researchers in or close to the relevant scientific or clinical field selected by or on behalf of the Chair of the RC after open recommendation and discussion by RC members and/or the CP Research Team. For larger applications (typically those more complex and/or over £500,000), three written peer reviews are preferably sought. In the case of a clinical project, the RC will seek review by a person or persons with Parkinson's.
- e. The external expert reviews and full applications will then be considered by the RC, who will decide whether to:
  - i. Reject the application.
  - ii. Revise the application with feedback, responding to the applicant with further questions or suggestions. Applications that are revised may be invited for resubmission at the RC's discretion.
  - iii. Recommend the application to the CP Trustees for funding.

### **Commercial review**

Applications from or in-collaboration with commercial entities are required to submit a commercial entity form as part of their online application. This provides more information on the company applying and financial background. We recommend potential commercial applicants contact us before applying to ensure that commercial sensitivities are addressed.

Where appropriate, the RC may seek a commercial review from selected member(s) of the RC, CP staff, CP Trustees and/or their advisers under conditions of confidentiality:

- i. To better understand the situation of the applicant, the reasons for applying to CP, the funding required to undertake the work (including any relevant applications to, or funding granted, by others), and the work in a wider commercial context;
- ii. To advise on justifiable levels of costs claimed in any application; and/or
- iii. To enable assessment of whether the outcome of the research, if successful, may be made available for the benefit of people with Parkinson's.

### **Feedback to applicants**

The RC may respond to an applicant with further questions or suggestions at any stage. All applicants are given timely feedback. All unsuccessful applicants are notified by the Chair of the RC and/or suitable senior CP representative on the Chair's behalf. Successful applicants are notified likewise, after ultimate approval by CP Trustees.

If written external expert reviews are obtained, such reviews are anonymised and shared with the applicants at the outcome of the process.

If the RC suggests amendments to a project, CP may approach an applicant to offer advice, support, or introductions to other researchers of specific relevance (subject always to overriding confidentiality obligations). One aim of CP is to foster appropriate collaborations between different research groups to accelerate progress to a cure.

### **Making your application**

Each application must be submitted by the principal investigator of the project to be funded, identifying the named institution, company or organisation which is to be the legal recipient of the funding.

Our grant application process will now be accessed by an online grant management system, Symplectic Grant Tracker, which you will need to register for before applying. We recommend logging in at an early stage to familiarise yourself with the system and more details on how to apply can be found below.

In order to apply for funding for a research project, potential applicants are requested to:

1. Read our [Research Strategy](#) to ensure that the project falls within our funding scope and understand how we provide funding.
2. Read this document ("Information for Applicants for Grant Funding") in full.
3. Read our ["Apply for Funding"](#) webpage for further information on deadlines, historic funding and current membership of our RC.
4. Read our [Grant Contract](#) which sets out CP's terms and conditions to be applied in the event that the application is successful.
5. Read Grant Tracker's "GT Portal Guidance" document available on the portal, for detailed instructions on use of the system as well as tips for troubleshooting while completing your application.

### **Registration for new users**

New system users must click "Register" and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the registration process.

Please register with an email address you use regularly, as this will be the address the system uses for all correspondence. When you register your email address, a verification link will be sent to the address.

After completing registration, an email will be sent to the address supplied containing a link to create a password and login for the first time.

### **Personal information**

We are collecting equality, diversity and inclusion data from all CP Grant Tracker users. As a member of the AMRC, demographic data collection is used to inform government funding decisions and encourages members to evaluate their EDI strategy for grant applicants and recipients and ultimately improve our funded research portfolio.

A response to the data collection survey is required to access the rest of the portal. Once you have entered a response you won't be asked again, but you can edit your answers through the "Manage My Details" page at any point.

We're asking every portal user to complete the survey to help us improve the diversity of Parkinson's funded research. Your contribution allows us to monitor and act upon diversity data in a meaningful way for the Parkinson's community. However, this is not mandatory. You can scroll to the bottom of the page and choose not to consent to the survey, or you can just answer those questions you're comfortable disclosing information for and select 'prefer not to say' for others. Your decision to engage with the survey will not influence the outcome of your application or future partnership with CP.

Your data will remain anonymous and identifying data will not be used in any analysis. To find out more about how CP uses and manages personal data, you can read our data privacy policy [here](#). For any questions about this survey, please get in touch with the CP research team.

### **Filling in the application**

When filling in the application:

- Read the instructions carefully. For each section, there is pop-up help text for additional information on what to include.
- You must complete all sections in the form and attach any relevant supporting documents.

As you go through your online application, you can save your progress and return to it at any time up until the deadline.

### **Submitting your application**

Once you have completed all sections, go to the "Validation" tab which will highlight any sections left to be completed or sections exceeding word limits.

After successful validation, the Lead Applicant may submit the application. Once submitted:

- A grant reference is assigned to the application.
- All contacts will be informed of application submission via email.
- The application automatically enters the process of being considered for funding.

### **Deadlines for applications**

Grants applications are typically assessed four times per year. Application deadlines are set out in our ["Apply for Funding"](#) webpage.

### **Content of applications**

Projects should be milestone-driven with clear deliverables.

In the stage 2 application form, applicants must disclose whether any funding for the project has been received from a third party or is the subject of an application to a third party.

### **Evaluation criteria**

The RC evaluates applications (see process below) following our [Research Strategy](#) and using the following criteria:

- Appropriateness to CP's core funding remit.
- Scientific rationale.
- Originality.
- Clarity of the application.
- Experimental appropriateness.
- Appropriateness of statistical methods.
- Collaboration.
- Track record of applicant.
- Diversity considerations of animals or participants.

- Proposed budget and justification.
- Value for money.
- Proposed milestones.
- Overall quality of the application.
- The proximity of the proposal to clinical translation.
- The potential and likely impact of the project within a specified timescale.
- The steps needed to guide the project to clinic.
- Whether the project is a part of a wider programme of research.
- How you plan to share results and data broadly.
- Engagement and involvement of people with Parkinson's in the project design process – this is assessed for both pre-clinical and clinical projects, please review the AMRC guidance that can be found [here](#), or contact the CP research team for further support.

## Budget

In stage 1 applications, budgets are approximate and do not have to be signed off by a finance department, but should be within 10% of the final grant budget in stage 2. At this initial stage, providing a breakdown of costs within the budget is optional and can be added to the application form in the applicants preferred format. In stage 2, applicants will be required to give a full breakdown of costs and justification for each budget line.

The grant budget should only include direct costs relating to the project. We do not fund overheads of host organisations or generally any other indirect costs such as, investigator travel and publications costs (this may be reviewed on a case-by-case basis). Some examples of costs that may be included in the budget are salaries of project team staff, study set-up and admin costs, training costs, nursing time, animal costs (supplies, housing), drug costs (relabelling, storage), medical and laboratory procedures, and participant costs.

## Non-scientific summary

Applications at stage 2 will be required to submit a lay (and non-confidential) summary of the proposal. This will be reviewed by people with Parkinson's and will have an impact on the funding decision. Involving people with Parkinson's throughout the grant review process is central to our ethos and we require all researchers to be able to communicate their projects to the Parkinson's community. It is important this aspect of the application is written in non-scientific language and is clear and easy to understand for our supporters and wider community. The lay summary will be assessed for:

- Use of lay language and/or suitably defined scientific language;
- Clarity of aims and objectives;
- Clear impact to the Parkinson's community;
- Timescale for access of therapy/intervention to patients; and
- Details on how you plan to share results with the wider community.

Please read [here](#) for more information and guidance on writing non-scientific summaries.

### **Communication between RC, CP Trustees and/or applicants**

1. The RC makes recommendations to the CP Trustees to fund specific projects. Where more than one projects are recommended, the RC prioritises the projects in order of merit according to the "Evaluation criteria" above.
2. At any time, CP and/or the Trustees may seek a commercial review from selected member(s) of the RC and/or CP staff in the form as indicated above.
3. The Trustees decide whether to fund any project(s) based on the RC recommendations, available funding, any commercial review and any other factors in their discretion, pursuant to the charitable obligations of CP.
4. All successful applicants are notified at this stage by the Chair of the Research Committee and/or a suitable senior CP representative on the Chair's behalf, along with a grant contract to be executed before the project can begin (see below).

### **For successful applicants**

CP requires that, immediately prior to commencement and for the duration of the research project, all successful applicants:

- [Agree to comply with the charity's terms & conditions as set out in its Grant Contract.](#)
- Disclose to CP if any funding for the project has been or is received from a third party or is the subject of an application to a third party.

Successful applicants must also provide six-monthly reports to CP demonstrating due progress against the milestones set out in the application for funding, as well as a summary of progress, suitable for lay persons, for sharing by CP with donors supporting the project or the general public. The RC is provided with copies of such reports and may advise CP to make further queries in areas of uncertainty or lack of clarity. Payments are typically made by CP in arrears, conditional upon the due receipt of such reports in satisfactory form. If a report or responses to further queries reveal that the funded work is not being completed to the timetable or standards set out in the application, continuing funding may be withheld, and a full investigation carried out.

### **Generative AI**

We recognise the increasing opportunity generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools bring to benefit the research field by supporting written content. If you decide to use such tools in developing your application, applicants must be responsible and in line with relevant legal and ethical standards where these exist of as they develop. It should be acknowledged in an application where AI tools have been used. For more information, please review this [statement](#) by the Research Funders Policy Group.

### **Questions regarding applications**



We recognise that there are many valuable areas of research into Parkinson's that do not fall within the CP's funding scope. If researchers have any questions regarding our funding scope, application process or subsequent work with successful applicants, please get in touch with the research team via the contact details below.

### **Facilitation and assistance**

CP has considerable knowledge and understanding of Parkinson's disease research being undertaken worldwide and aims to act as a hub for facilitation of research. We frequently work with researchers to refine proposals and offer guidance on submissions to other funding bodies. We welcome enquiries from researchers in any of these areas.

### **AMRC membership**

CP is a member of the [Association of Medical Research Charities \(AMRC\)](#) and follows AMRC requirements and guidance for best practice in research. AMRC charities are obliged to follow rigorous peer review processes to ensure that only research of the highest quality is supported.

### **Contacting CP**

Potential applicants can contact CP's Research Team regarding any enquiries by emailing [research@cureparkinsons.org.uk](mailto:research@cureparkinsons.org.uk) or by calling us on +44 20 7487 3892.