

Combination therapies for Parkinson's: Funding Call 2025

Guidance for applicants

Cure Parkinson's is welcoming applications for funding for suitable research projects seeking to investigate combination therapy approaches for disease modification in Parkinson's. This document provides guidance for potential applicants on the process used for assessing projects and the criteria used during assessment, as well as instructions on how to apply.

Summary

Cure Parkinson's is inviting applications for **preclinical and/or clinical** projects focused on **developing rationally designed combination therapies** for disease modification in Parkinson's. Applications must include a **strong, well-supported rationale** for the proposed combination.

The funding call is open to applicants from **industry or academia**, with applicants able to submit a maximum of two applications as a named principal investigator.

Key information:

	Preclinical	Clinical
Budget	~£300,000	~£1 million
Duration	1-3 years	2-4 years
Expression of interest deadline	Monday 24 November, 11.59pm (GMT)	
Funding decision	May 2026	

What type of research do we fund?

Cure Parkinson's is an international funder of preclinical and clinical research projects with the potential to cure Parkinson's. By "cure", we mean disease-modifying therapies – interventions that slow, stop or reverse the underlying disease progression. Our priority is to find novel treatments for those living with Parkinson's now. We do not fund research which is directed only to symptomatic relief, basic science, or early drug discovery. Preclinically, we are looking for proof-of-concept studies before clinical translation. A key part of our remit is that we prioritise preclinical research which has the potential to translate into the clinic within five years.

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

What is the aim of this funding call?

Cure Parkinson's is opening a funding call to test **rationally designed combination therapies for disease modification in Parkinson's**. This funding call will be open from Wednesday 1 October until Monday 24 November (inclusive). We are looking for applications that test two or more drugs in combination. Applications are welcomed

for both clinical and preclinical research, with applicants able to submit a maximum of two applications as a named principal investigator.

Combination therapies

For the purposes of this funding call, when talking about a combination therapy, Cure Parkinson's is referring to a treatment that involves two or more active agents to achieve a desired biological effect. Although we recognise that combination therapies can involve interventional treatments like diet and exercise, in this instance, we are solely referring to combinations of drugs. Combinations can be novel, meaning they have not been tested together before, or repurposed/repositioned meaning that the combination of agents is already licensed for another disease indication.

Taking guidance from the world of antibiotic research, Cure Parkinson's recognise three different types of combination therapy (see [Keith, Borisy & Stockwell, 2005](#); [Tyers & Wright, 2019](#)):

1. **Congruous** – **Two or more drugs that target pathways believed to be essential to the condition.** When used individually, the drugs may show limited efficacy, but when used in combination they exhibit joint efficacy and provide an additive benefit. An example of this type of combination for Parkinson's could be an alpha synuclein aggregation inhibitor working in parallel with a LRRK2 inhibitor – two different pathways clearly associated with Parkinson's.
2. **Syncretic** – **The addition of drug B supports the effects of drug A, increasing its overall impact.** These agents have a synergistic effect, relying on the modulation of essential and non-essential targets. A good example of a syncretic combination already used in the symptomatic treatment of Parkinson's is Sinemet (the combination of levodopa (the essential component) and the peripherally restricted decarboxylase inhibitor carbidopa (targeting the non-essential element)). Without carbidopa, little levodopa reaches the target organ, and it therefore has limited efficacy.
3. **Coalistic** – **Acting on non-essential but synthetically functional targets.** When used alone, these agents have minimal effect, however when targeting both, the desired effect can be achieved. An example of a coalistic combination for Parkinson's could be the senolytic agents dasatinib (tyrosine-kinase inhibitor) and quercetin (flavonoid) which have been reported to effectively eliminate senescent cells in preclinical models of neurodegeneration.

Applicants will be required to state what type of combination they propose to test (congruous, syncretic or coalistic), as well as providing a strong, evidence-supported rationale regarding why the combination has disease-modifying potential in

Parkinson's. The purpose of this declaration is to encourage applicants to consider the nature of their combination.

The proposed combination in each application will be judged on the strength of the rationale and the data supporting any claims. Supporting data could include:

- **Genetic** - if the drug target is associated with Parkinson's genetic risk factors
- **Epidemiological** - if one of the agents is associated with a reduced incidence of Parkinson's
- **Single cell sequencing** - if data suggests a specific biological pathway should be targeted
- **Biochemical** - if data indicates an interaction between two pathways
- **Preclinical** - demonstrations that each agent is neuroprotective in models of Parkinson's
- **Clinical** - demonstrating that each agent is safe/tolerated in people with Parkinson's

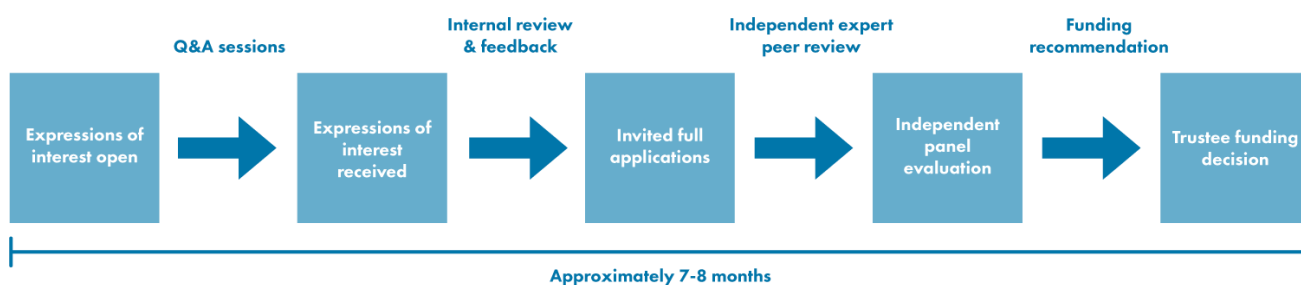
Simply combining available agents will not be viewed as a strong application. The more robust the rationale and supporting data, the higher the chance of success.

Central to Cure Parkinson's ethos is the involvement of people with Parkinson's (PwPs) throughout the pipeline. As part of Cure Parkinson's and Van Andel Institute's 2025 Rallying to the Challenge meeting, a discussion session was held to understand the attitudes and opinions of PwPs surrounding combination therapies. A summary of the discussion can be found [here](#). Applicants are encouraged to read this document and consider how they can incorporate PwPs into their proposal. This forms part of the evaluation criteria (see below).

If you would like to ask about the compatibility of your proposed combination with this funding call, please contact the Cure Parkinson's Research Team at research@cureparkinsons.org.uk prior to submitting an application.

The evaluation process

The funding call will involve a two-stage application process, beginning with an expression of interest:



Expression of interest

- a. The principal investigator (lead applicant) will be required to submit an initial expression of interest application form, a drug CV (one for each agent) and a commercial entity form (if applicable – see more below in 'Commercial Review').
- b. At this stage, applications do not require official institutional or financial sign off. If invited to full submission, the final cost should not increase by more than 10% compared to the proposed budget in the expression of interest.
- c. The deadline for expressions of interest is **Monday 24 November 2025, 11.59pm (GMT)**.
- d. The expression of interest application will be reviewed internally by a selection of the Cure Parkinson's Research Team along with the chair of the independent review panel for eligibility and compliance with Cure Parkinson's funding remit according to our [Research Strategy](#). Any applications found not to be in line with the aims of the funding call or the Cure Parkinson's funding remit will be triaged and not invited to full submission.
- e. Those proposals most aligned with the aims of the funding call will be invited to submit a full application.

Evaluation criteria for expressions of interest

Expressions of interest will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Appropriateness to Cure Parkinson's core funding remit;
- Scientific rationale and supporting data for the combinations of drugs proposed;
- Evidence of involvement from people with Parkinson's, or clear plan on how to involve them;
- Estimated budget and value for money

Additional considerations may include:

- Thought to possible side effect profile;
- Ideas on potential measures of target engagement (what assays could be used in a clinical trial?);
- Patient stratification (would this combination have more potential if targeted at a specifically defined cohort?);

As an international funder of research, Cure Parkinson's welcomes applications from anywhere in the world, but requires projects to contract in GBP. Please contact the Cure Parkinson's research team for further information on this (see contact details at the end of this document).

Full Application (including written external expert review)

- a. Applicants invited to full application will be notified, by email, no later than Friday 5 December 2025 and provided with a full application template and budget form. 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.
- b. A signed and dated letter of support from the host institution is also required.
- c. Applicants are able to directly copy any answers that were required for the expression of interest form if they choose to.
- d. Applicants are not permitted to change their proposed combination of drugs between the expression of interest and full application stages.
- e. Deadline for full applications is **11.59pm (GMT) Monday 26 January 2026**.
- f. Full applications will be sent for written external expert peer review to at least two independent researchers in, or close to, the relevant scientific or clinical field. Peer reviewers will be selected by, or on behalf of, the panel Chair after open recommendation and discussion by the Cure Parkinson's 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 Panel will seek review by a person or persons with Parkinson's.
- g. The external expert reviews and full applications will then be considered by the independent panel, who will decide whether to:
 - i. Reject the application.
 - ii. Recommend the application to the Cure Parkinson's Trustees for funding.

Evaluation criteria for full applications

The expert panel will evaluate applications following our [Research Strategy](#) and using the following criteria:

- Appropriateness to Cure Parkinson's core funding remit;
- Scientific rationale and justification for combinations of drugs proposed;
- Originality of the idea;
- Experimental appropriateness (including statistical methods);
- Track record of the applicant;
- Diversity considerations of animals or participants;
- Proposed budget and justification;
- Project structure and proposed milestones;
- Overall quality of the application.

Additional considerations may include:

- Collaboration;
- The potential and likely impact of the project within a specified timescale;
- The use of contract research organisations (CROs) and associated costs;
- The steps needed to guide the project to clinic;
- Whether the project is a part of a wider programme of research;

- How the applicant plans to share results and data;
- Engagement and involvement of people with Parkinson's in the project design process – this is assessed for both preclinical and clinical projects. Please review the AMRC guidance that can be found [here](#), or contact the Cure Parkinson's Research Team for further support.

All applications (both clinical and preclinical) will be considered and evaluated individually before applications are ranked. For the top-ranking applications that the panel deem fundable, up to a total value of £2 million, a recommendation for funding will be made to the Cure Parkinson's Trustees.

Cure Parkinson's requires projects to contract in GBP. Please contact the Cure Parkinson's research team for further information on this (see contact details at the end of this document).

Feedback to applicants

Limited feedback will be provided for the expressions of interest that are not invited to submit a full application.

All applicants that submit a full application will be notified of the outcome, whether successful or unsuccessful, by the panel Chair and/or a suitable senior Cure Parkinson's representative on the Chair's behalf in May 2026. For successful applicants, this is following ultimate approval by Cure Parkinson's Trustees.

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

If the panel suggest amendments to a project, Cure Parkinson's 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 Cure Parkinson's is to foster appropriate collaborations between different research groups to accelerate progress to a cure.

Commercial applications

Applications from, or in-collaboration with, commercial entities are required to submit a commercial entity form as part of their 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 panel may seek a commercial review from selected member(s) of the panel, Cure Parkinson's staff, Cure Parkinson's Trustees and/or their advisers under conditions of confidentiality to:

- i. Better understand the situation of the applicant, the reasons for applying to Cure Parkinson's, 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. Advise on justifiable levels of costs claimed in any application; and/or
- iii. Enable assessment of whether the outcome of the research, if successful, may be made available for the benefit of people with Parkinson's.

Eligibility

This funding call is open to academia and/or industry applicants, either solely or in partnership. 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. Early career researchers may be listed as co-investigator – Cure Parkinson's encourages the inclusion of researchers who span career stages.

Eligible and Ineligible Costs

Cure Parkinson's only funds direct costs to the research project and does not support indirect costs, investigator travel, publication costs or overheads (ongoing operating expenses of the host organisation e.g. lab space, equipment, existing staff time).

Submitting 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.

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

1. our [Research Strategy](#) to ensure that the project falls within our funding scope and understand how we provide funding.
2. this document (Cure Parkinson's Guidance for Applicants) in full.
3. our [Grant Contract](#) which sets out Cure Parkinson's terms and conditions to be applied in the event that the application is successful.

Expressions of interest, drug CVs (one per agent) and commercial entity forms (if applicable) should be emailed to research@cureparkinsons.org.uk by 11.59pm (GMT) Monday 24 November 2025.

The expression of interest form, along with the drug CV and commercial entity form, can be accessed on the website. Please note, if choosing to submit a Gantt chart as part of the expression of interest, Cure Parkinson's envisage projects to begin in September 2026 (subject to contracting) and Gantt charts should reflect this.

Additional documents that can be included at this stage but are not mandatory and should be provided in their own format:

1. Principal investigator/Co-investigator CVs
2. Budget breakdown

3. Any supplementary documents to support the application (for example, preliminary data, clinical trial protocol, publications)

Following internal review of expressions of interest, applicants invited to full submission will be contacted on an individual basis and provided with the necessary documents.

Deadlines for applications

Expression of interest deadline is **Monday 24 November 2025 at 11.59pm (GMT)**. Invitations to full submission will be sent out by Friday 5 December 2025. The deadline for full applications is **11.59pm (GMT) Monday 26 January 2026**.

Content of applications

The application forms are broken down into specific sections. Please note and abide by the word count limits in certain sections. As discussed above, additional information can be included as supplementary documents to support the application.

Projects should be milestone-driven with clear deliverables.

In the full 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.

The use of CROs is permitted, however a full justification is recommended. This should include information about why the work cannot be carried out by an academic institution along with a full breakdown of costs. It is also recommended to identify possible CROs to use prior to application.

Any confidential information should be highlighted within the application and, if necessary, applicants should contact the Cure Parkinson's Research Team prior to submission if there are any concerns with sharing this information. Please note, all members of the independent panel are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement prior to access of confidential applications. Access to confidential information by external expert reviewers will be handled on an individual basis and will be agreed by the applicant at full application submission and prior to sharing.

Non-scientific summary

Full applications 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 the 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;
- 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 the review panel, Cure Parkinson's Trustees and/or applicants

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

For successful applicants

Cure Parkinson's 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 Cure Parkinson's if any funding for the project has been, or is being, 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 Cure Parkinson's demonstrating due progress against the milestones set out in the application for funding. The report will also include a summary of progress, suitable for lay persons, for sharing by Cure Parkinson's with donors supporting the project or the general public. Reports will be discussed internally and Cure Parkinson's may make further queries in areas of uncertainty or lack of clarity.

Payments are typically made by Cure Parkinson's in arrears, conditional upon the due receipt of six monthly 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, continued funding may be withheld, and a full investigation carried out.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Our mission is to identify and accelerate the development of disease-modifying therapies for Parkinson's disease. Therefore, Cure Parkinson's aim to support a rigorous research agenda that reflects a wide and diverse range of perspectives, conducted across varied populations. Diversity may refer to characteristics including, but not limited to, race, religion, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic circumstance, geographic background, ability and disability, and age. Parkinson's is a complex condition and differences between individuals may be important in progression of the condition.

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, you must do so responsibly and in accordance with relevant legal and ethical standards where these exist or 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 Cure Parkinson's funding scope. If researchers have any questions regarding our funding remit, application process or subsequent work with successful applicants, please get in touch with the research team via the contact details below.

Facilitation and assistance

Cure Parkinson's has considerable knowledge and understanding of Parkinson's 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

Cure Parkinson's 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 Cure Parkinson's

Potential applicants can contact Cure Parkinson's Research Team regarding any enquiries by emailing research@cureparkinsons.org.uk or by calling us on +44 (0)20 7487 3892.