



Transformational Research Awards

Expression of Interest Stage - Guidance for Applicants

Introduction

Blood Cancer UK has recently launched a new [five-year strategy](#) that is focused on bringing forward the day when no one dies of blood cancer or its treatments.

Our strategy includes a commitment to significantly increase our research funding over the next five years. We will also continue to ensure we are making this increased investment in the areas where it can have the biggest impact for people affected by blood cancer.

In line with our strategy, we are excited to announce the launch of our new, annual Transformational Research Awards scheme.

Through these awards, we are aiming to support larger-scale research projects or programmes that have significant potential to be transformative for people with blood cancer. Each year, the scheme may be focused on specified areas of interest within the field of blood cancer that are in line with our strategic aims.

2024 awards

This year, we are inviting applications for high-quality, ambitious, and innovative research that aims to make substantial progress towards a transformational step change for people with any form of blood cancer.

We encourage applications that focus on progressing:

- The development, testing or clinical uptake of better and kinder treatments.
- The development, testing or implementation of novel diagnostics, imaging, or other technologies.
- Improvements to current clinical practice, disease management or quality of life for people living with blood cancer.

To be successful applicants will need to clearly define how the proposed research will accelerate progress towards the desired step change in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or care for people with blood cancer.



Grants will be awarded for up to five years and will typically be for a maximum of £1,000,000.

This year we have a maximum total Transformational Research Award budget of £3,000,000 and we are aiming to fund three awards.

One of the three awards has been made possible by a generous donation of ring-fenced funding from the [Matthew Wilson Multiple Myeloma Fund](#). This donation will fund the highest-ranked, fundable application that aims to make a transformational step change for people with multiple myeloma.

In partnership with Blood Cancer UK, Matthew Wilson established the Matthew Wilson Multiple Myeloma Fund (MWMMF) to improve patient outcomes and quality of life for people living with myeloma. Through its commitment to funding cutting-edge, impactful, and innovative research, the MWMMF is propelling us closer to a future where there is a cure for multiple myeloma.

Remit

- Grants will be awarded for **up to five years** and will typically be for a **maximum of £1,000,000**. However, we can consider applications that are over this funding threshold where there is strong justification for doing so. Any such requests must be discussed with the Blood Cancer UK Research team before submitting an application.
- This scheme is designed to support advanced pre-clinical translational research, clinical studies or trials, or the establishment of the evidence required for the uptake of improved treatments or technologies into the NHS.
- Applications for smaller-scale discovery science or translation projects should be submitted to our annual Project Grants scheme that is next opening in October 2024.

Timelines

Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) opens: **Thursday 7th March 2024**

Deadline for submission: **Thursday 18th April 2024**

Applicants notified of EOI outcomes: **June 2024**

Deadline for submission of invited **full applications**: **September 2024**

Applicants notified of outcomes: **December 2024**



Eligibility

This funding scheme is open to applicants from academic research organisations in the UK who are able to sign up to [Blood Cancer UK's Terms and Conditions](#).

Applicants should have some postdoctoral research experience, or equivalent, and be scientists, clinicians or healthcare professionals employed by a UK university, medical school, hospital, or other recognised academic research organisation.

Lead Applicants should usually have a permanent or long-term rolling contract, with their salary paid by the host organisation for the duration of the award.

Senior postdoctoral researchers who are leading a project can be the Main Applicant and include a request for their salary support but must also include a Co-applicant with tenure based at their host organisation or have a guarantee from their Head of Department that they will be provided with space and facilities for the duration of an award.

This scheme is not open to applicants employed by a commercial organisation.

Application process

All Expressions of Interest must be submitted via the Blood Cancer UK Grant Tracker grants management system.

Grant Tracker is used for submission, peer review, award, and monitoring of all grant applications. Please follow the instructions on our webpage '[Apply for Funding](#)' to complete and submit an application. The application can be stored and edited at any time prior to submission.

The application deadline is **3:00pm on the date advertised**. No applications will be accepted after the deadline. Applicants should allow enough time for submission of their applications before the deadline to ensure all the required approvals are obtained.



Assessment of applications

EOIs for this scheme will be reviewed and shortlisted by our Clinical Trials Review Committee and a subset of our Research Funding Committee to ensure the assembled committee covers the breadth of applications we may receive into this scheme. The committee will also include people affected by blood cancer who are experts by experience.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full application and will receive additional guidance at that stage.

Assessment criteria used for shortlisting of EOIs will include:

- **Relevance:** How relevant and timely is this research for people affected by blood cancer? Is there a clear unmet need that is being addressed. Is it duplicative of previous or current research?
- **Proposed approach:** Is the research proposal clear and feasible with focused aims and objectives, underpinned by sufficient scientific reasoning? Is there an appropriate plan to reach these aims and objectives? Are the estimated costs reasonable at this stage?
- **Impact potential:** How likely is it that this research will accelerate progress towards the desired transformational step change in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or care for people affected by blood cancer? Is there a clear line of sight from the proposed project or programme to clinical uptake in the NHS or real-world impact for patients.
- **Expertise:** Does the research team have the track record and expertise required to achieve the aims of the proposed research?



Completing the Expression of Interest form

Please complete the form as fully and accurately as you can at this stage. Blood Cancer UK does understand that some details or plans are only preliminary at EOI stage and may be subject to change in a full application.

Please read the following guidance notes carefully as you complete the EOI form:

EOI form section	Guidance notes
Proposal Summary	
Title of Proposal	Please give the full title of your proposed research.
Duration (months)	Please note that the maximum grant duration for this scheme is 60 months.
Total Amount Requested (£)	This box auto populates from the costs provided in the 'Estimated Finances and Costs' section of this form. If updates have been made to that section, please ensure you revisit this page and press save to update this total.
Synopsis	The synopsis should be a scientific abstract of the proposed research. This should include the background, the key research question/s, aims and objectives, and brief details of the proposed methodology. Applicants should also briefly outline the transformational step change in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or care that could result from this research and how this research will accelerate progress towards the desired step change. Please note there is a word limit of 200 words for this section.
Host Institution	The name of the host institution where this award will be based. Please note - if you are invited to submit a full application and are then successful in securing funding, the Host Institution where the award will be held must be able to sign up to Blood Cancer UK's Terms and Conditions of award.
Proposed Start Date	Please note - awarded grants are expected to be activated by the grant holder within three months from the start date indicated on the Grant Award Letter. Applicants should allow enough time to recruit staff members and to gain any required approvals.
Is your proposal associated with a clinical trial?	Please indicate whether the application is associated with a clinical trial, if known at this stage. If so, state the names of the trial/s and the EudraCT/ISRCTN numbers. If the trial/s are supported by Blood Cancer UK, please also add the grant reference numbers.

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Scientific Proposal Details	
Research proposal	<p>Please provide an overview of your proposed research (1000 words).</p> <p>For all research types, please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– A clear description of the target population this project will focus on, the current standard of care for this population, and the specific unmet need you are aiming to address.– The background and rationale behind your proposal including an overview of how it builds on existing knowledge, from your work and others, and why now is the right time to undertake this research.– The specific research question/s aims and objectives for this project.– A summary of your plan of investigation and proposed methods.– An overview of how this project will help meet unmet need you have identified. <p>If your proposed research involves the use of animals, please also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– A brief overview of the planned experiments.– The specific species and model you plan to use.– Whether these animals are genetically modified.– The rationale behind your choice of model. <p>If your proposal includes a clinical study or trial, please also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– The proposed sponsor and CTU.– Your choice of design and justification of this choice, including the planned outcome measures, endpoints, and analysis plan.– The target population, the planned inclusion and exclusion criteria and the proposed recruitment plan and targets.– An overview of any planned associated research sample collection <p>Supporting data including figures, tables, and illustrations cannot be included in the text and should be submitted as supporting data in the 'Attachments' section and referenced in the application text boxes. You are permitted to submit up to 4 A4 pages of supporting data alongside this application.</p>

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<p>Downstream plan and potential impact of the proposal</p>	<p>The primary aim of this funding scheme is to accelerate progress towards a transformational step change in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or care that will improve the lives of people with blood cancer.</p> <p>To be successful applicants should use this section to clearly describe how the proposed work will achieve that aim.</p> <p>The ultimate transformational impact for patients can either be as a direct result of the proposed project, or following further downstream investment, but applicants are asked to clearly define:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the progress towards the identified transformational step change for people with blood cancer that will be made during the project itself.• the immediate next steps in terms of the follow-on research investment that would be required and whether that would be sought from Blood Cancer UK, other charities, UKRI, NIHR, industry or other sources.• the overall pathway to clinical uptake into the NHS or wider UK health system and real-world impact for patients, including an indication of the key regulatory requirements that will need to be met. <p>If applicable, please also describe how this research could impact people with blood cancer, other cancer types or other conditions, beyond the target population of this project or programme.</p> <p>Please note this section has a word limit of 500 words.</p>
<p>Current support for this research</p>	<p>If there is active research in your laboratory related to the topic of this application, please explain how this application fits with the broader research activity and confirm that this application is for a distinct research project and there is no overlap in the funding being requested.</p> <p>If your related research is currently being supported by another funding organisation, please provide the following details for <u>each</u> grant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Funder name.– Grant holder name(s).– Project title.– Total grant awarded (and how much you received).– Your role in the project.– Project start and end dates. <p>If you receive additional core funding or support from your host institution, briefly describe the resources provided.</p>



Plain English Proposal Details

This is the main section of the application that people affected by blood cancer from our Patient Voice Grant Advisory Network are asked to review, although we will make the rest of the application available to them too.

This entire section should be in plain English using non-technical language and avoiding unexplained acronyms and/or abbreviations. This section is intended for a lay audience, and it is important that the description of the proposed research is accessible.

They will provide feedback on:

- The relevance of the research to them as someone affected by blood cancer.
- The clarity of the plain English section of the application (and whether they can understand what the project aims to achieve).
- Whether patient and public involvement has been considered where relevant, and if they have any feedback or additional considerations to share about involving people affected by blood cancer.

For detailed guidance on writing for people affected by blood cancer, please see [this page](#) on our website.

Please note that the word limit for your response to each question is 200 words.

Plain English Title	Provide a full project title in non-technical language.
Plain English Summary	Please provide a summary of the proposed research for a non-specialist audience. This should be an abstract of the proposed research.
Background	Outline what the background is to this application. Is it a continuation of your existing or current research, or is it a new area?
Research need	Why is this research needed? How many people in the UK are affected by the condition(s) and what treatment options are currently available?
Research Questions and Aims/Objectives	What is/are the research question(s) being addressed and why? What are the aims and objectives? For clinical projects please include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who can take part in the research and how they will be recruited?• What will taking part in the research involve?• What are the benefits of taking part in this research?• What are the potential risks and side effects for people taking part?
Impact and Benefits	What is the potential impact of this research to people affected by blood cancer? If successful, when will the benefits of your research reach patients? How will you keep people (both

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	participants and the wider public) informed about research progress and the final results? Does your research have the potential to have a broader impact and relevance to all or other blood cancers, in addition to the specific disease being studied?
Patient and Public Involvement	<p>Have you already involved people affected by blood cancer in shaping your research proposal? What are your plans to engage or involve people affected by blood cancer, members of the public or non-academic communities in your research?</p> <p>We strongly encourage the engagement and involvement of people affected by blood cancer in your proposal or research project.</p> <p>Please note that PPI does not refer to the recruitment of patients or members of the public as participants in the trial or study.</p> <p>For further guidance please visit this page on our website, where you can find more information</p>
References	
References	<p>Include references for the research outlined in this application.</p> <p>You are permitted a maximum of 3 pages and 10 Mb attachment size. You can upload .doc, docx, pdf, jpg, jpeg, png, tiff, attachments.</p>
Main Applicant	
Main Applicant Details	<p>Please provide details for the proposed Main Applicant or Principal Investigator (PI) of the research award.</p> <p>The Main Applicant must be based at the host institution for the grant and has overall responsibility for the delivery and reporting of the grant and ensuring that the terms and conditions of the award are met.</p> <p>Main Applicants should usually hold an academic or research post and have a salary, or a guarantee of a salary from the host institution for the duration of the award period.</p> <p>For new Blood Cancer UK Grant Tracker users, details on how to register can be found on this page of our website.</p> <p>The details provided in this section are those we have stored for you. To amend them, please save and close this application and visit the 'Manage My Details' section.</p>

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Main Applicant's CV	
Main applicant's CV	<p>These pre-populated details are those we have stored for you. Please ensure that they are accurate. To amend them, save and close the application and visit the 'Manage My Details' section.</p> <p>For the EOI stage we are asking you to select the 10 publications you feel are most relevant to this application.</p> <p>To add publications to your top 10 list:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1, Import them into the 'My Research Outputs' section of your Grant Tracker account as normal2. To add the first publication click the green plus sign next to the wording 'add publication'. <p>You will be shown a dropdown list of all the publications in the 'My Research Outputs' section of your Grant Tracker account</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Select the first publication you wish to include from the dropdown list by clicking on it4. To add the next publication click the green plus sign again and select again from the dropdown list5. If you add the wrong publication, please click the red minus sign to the right of that publication in the list to remove it <p>The Research Grants shown in this section of the form can be updated in Update CV section within Manage My Details on your account. This application form will automatically show all grants that are present in your Grant Tracker CV.</p>
Additional applicants	
Additional applicant details	<p>Please use this text box to list the names of any co-applicants, co-investigators, or collaborators.</p> <p>A co-applicant is an investigator who will contribute equal time and intellectual input to the project as the Main Applicant, and who will have equal status on the grant.</p> <p>A co-investigator is an investigator who will provide significant intellectual input, as well as overseeing some aspects of the experimental work.</p> <p>A collaborator is an investigator who may provide reagents, advice, or access to research materials, but who will not be directly involved in the day-to-day work.</p> <p>When completing the box, for each name, please clearly indicate the organisation they work for and what their role within the project or programme would be if funded. As a minimum, please clearly state if they are either a co-applicant, co-investigator or collaborator but please briefly describe their</p>

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	<p>specific role on this project in more detail if known at this stage.</p> <p>Where possible your proposed team should involve at least one individual that has experience of driving translational and clinical research through to NHS uptake and/or real-world patient benefit. Please indicate these individuals within your answer to this question or note that this role is filled by the lead applicant.</p> <p>Individuals listed in this box will not be asked to confirm their participation at the outline stage, but this will be required as part of a full submission.</p>
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Estimated Finance and Costs

Please note that the maximum budget available for this grant type will typically be £1,000,000. Any requests for larger amounts must be discussed with Blood Cancer UK before submitting an application.

For this first stage of the application process, please provide an approximate figure for the total amount you are likely to request for the duration of the grant for each budget line listed below. The following information on eligible and ineligible costs is given for guidance of what will be accepted in a full stage proposal to help you prepare your estimated budget.

After completing this page, or if any figures are updated, please ensure you re-visit the 'Proposal Summary' page and click Save to update the total amount requested.

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities, Blood Cancer UK will only fund the directly incurred costs and not the full economic costs of the research. We will not fund directly allocated costs or indirect costs.

Eligible Costs

Directly-incurred costs – these are costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project, are charged as the cash value actually spent and are supported by an audit record. They include:

- Research or clinical staff salaries for individuals where these fall under the definition above
- Equipment specific to the needs of the research
- Recurrent costs such as consumables and other costs directly attributable to the project
- Animals costs specific to the project

Staff members: Transformational Research Awards can support full-time or part-time staff members where their salaries meet the definition of directly incurred costs. Salaries are expected to be costed by the host organisation’s research office according to an applicable pay model. Full time PhD students are not eligible to be members of staff on these awards.

Equipment: We assume that there is a basic level of laboratory equipment available for the research, but applicants can request equipment essential for delivery of this project (including



computing and software). At full application stage individual items of equipment greater than £10,000 must include a written quote.

Animals: Include all costs related to the use of animals including costs for purchase, maintenance, and experimental procedures.

Recurrent costs: In this section, please include details of all other directly incurred costs for this project including consumables, research costs, clinical study/trial costs, travel costs and patient and public involvement.

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- **Travel costs:** Travel for conferences to present research outputs directly from the award is an allowable cost for the staff member(s) employed on the grant. Costs include standard travel, accommodation, and conference fees. Blood Cancer UK grant holders are expected to acknowledge Blood Cancer UK in all presentations and/or posters. The maximum allowance for travel to conferences is up to £3,750 per eligible post over five years. Travel costs for conferences must be a separate budget line in the recurrent costs section.
- **Patient and Public Involvement costs:** Any costs related to the involvement activities planned during your project including reimbursement of expenses and/or involvement payments you have, or will, offer to people involved in your research.

Ineligible Costs

Directly-allocated costs – these are the costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities. They are charged to projects on the basis of estimates rather than actual costs and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis such as:

- Investigators: the time spent by Principal Investigators, Co-Applicants and Co-Investigators
- Estates
- Shared resources, such as administrative and clerical staff and equipment.

Indirect costs – necessary for underpinning research but cannot be allocated to individual projects, such as:

- Computing and information support
- Central services
- General maintenance and other infrastructure costs.

General Ineligible Costs

- Costs relating to staff recruitment and relocation costs
- Apprenticeship levy
- Personal license fees and a Home Office licence
- Funding to provide maintenance and/or insurance of equipment
- Office stationery costs unless required for the project and justified accordingly
- Indemnity insurance
- Training courses (including Home Office animal licence courses)
- Publication costs

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Salaries	Please enter the approximate amount you will request as support for salaries if invited to submit a full application to this round.
Equipment	Please enter the approximate amount you will request as support for equipment if invited to submit a full application to this round.
Animals	Please enter the approximate amount you will request as support for animal-related costs if invited to submit a full application to this round.
Recurrent Costs	Please enter the approximate amount you will request as support for recurrent costs if invited to submit a full application to this round.
Estimated Total Costs	The system automatically provides a total for the costs requested from the approximate amounts entered above.
Justification for support requested	Please also provide a short justification for the support requested and to cover to each of the budget lines, in the text box given. Please note there is a word limit of 500 words for this section.
Signatories Please add the details of the signatories required to sign-off the EOI. Once the EOI has been submitted, the signatories will be asked to approve the application online.	
Head of Research Office	Please complete.
Department Head	Please complete.
Classifications	
Major Disease Area	Please select each classification relevant to your application from the available list.
Focus	Please select the primary classification relevant to your application from the available list.
Common Scientific Outline (CSO)	Please select up to four classifications relevant to your application from the list available in the online application form in Grant Tracker. For further information on the Common Scientific Outline (CSO) classification system please refer to the International Cancer Research Partnership (ICRP) website which groups cancer research grants into six broad areas of scientific interest to allow for better comparison across funders.
Attachment Summary	
Attachments	Please note that only text can be added to the Proposal Summary and plain English sections of the application form. However, files can be attached to the application. Some file types you attach will be embedded at the end of the application file itself including JPEG, GIF, & .doc. Some file types will be saved in a separate zipped file and referenced in the application form on the 'Attachments' page including .docX, .xls, .xlsx, PNG, PDF. In all cases the embedded or attached files will be visible to the committee assessing the EOI form.



Submitting your application

You have now completed the application form. Please save and close if you need to work on the application at a later date.

To submit your application, please click 'Validate'. This validation step will highlight any missing information in the application form. Once any missing information has been added, and validation of the form completed, then visit the 'Proposal Summary' page, and check the total amount requested is accurate/updated and click 'Save' and 'Close'. If you are sure you are happy with the application form, then click 'Submit'.

Once you have submitted your application, an automated email will be sent firstly to your institutional signatory if your proposed host institution requires this.

It is only upon your institutional signatory's approval that the application is finally submitted to Blood Cancer UK so please ensure there is time to complete this step before the deadline.

By submitting the application, the host organisation confirms that they can accept the terms and conditions and that space and facilities will be provided for the duration of an award.

This approval step must be completed by the deadline. You will receive an automated email containing an acknowledgement that we have received your application.

Get in touch

If you need assistance at any point during the application process, please do get in touch with the Blood Cancer UK Research Office at research@bloodcancer.org.uk and one of the team will be more than happy to assist you.