

## **Application development support grants**

### **Guidance for Applicants**

#### **Introduction**

Our vision is for everyone served by the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust (RFL) to have access to world-leading healthcare, delivered by a thriving workforce and driven by medical research that has a global impact. We support the 10,000 staff of the RFL and their 1.6 million patients across Barnet, Chase Farm, North Middlesex and Royal Free hospitals and more than 30 NHS services.

Through the services we provide, and the programmes and equipment we fund, we make a profound and immediate difference to patients' experiences of care. Our volunteering, support hub, and complementary therapy teams enhance the hospital journey for all patients – whether they live locally or come from further away to access the trust's specialist services.

Our support of the RFL workforce enables staff to perform at their very best. Spanning individual professional development and training through to organisation-wide interventions, our initiatives bolster employee resilience and mental health so staff can achieve the best outcomes for patients. We fund ground-breaking research with the potential to change people's lives, whether it's through our grants programme or delivering major capital funding appeals. We also support early career researchers through our PhD funding programme.

#### **Remit of the scheme**

This grant scheme is designed to support clinicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals to develop their research career. This scheme is also open to non-clinical staff. These grants will fund protected time for promising early career researchers at RFL, to develop an application to a funder and improve their research skills.

This scheme is open to staff employed by RFL.

#### **How do these grants work?**

Funding is available for up to £10,000. This is designed to act as a salary cost contribution for up to one day per week for up to six months, to buy out the applicant's time so they can spend one day per week developing an application. This time can also include training and development, networking and mentorship. The funding is not to support a research project.

Applicants will need a named research supervisor/mentor to support *them*.

Applicants must be released from their responsibilities for one day per week.

Applicants may also designate some of the funding towards research training.

Applicants will need a named research supervisor/mentor to help support them.

The projects should align with the trust's [research and development strategy](#).

## Application assessment

Applications will be assessed by the Royal Free Charity research review panel.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Research career plans – candidate, supervision and training
- Importance – the research need
- Potential impact for patients – potential significance for patients
- Feasibility – realistic objectives deliverable within the timescale

## Eligibility

Applicants must be employed by RFL. The scheme is open to doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals including healthcare scientists. This scheme is also open to non-clinical staff.

The applicant must be based at RFL for the duration of the grant. Should the applicant move to another organisation during the grant period, the grant will not be portable and the charity will end the award.

Your line manager must agree to support the application and to confirm that you will be released from your responsibilities and role for the entire time allocated to this project as specified in the application.

The research supervisor/mentor can be based outside of RFL but a strong justification must be provided.

## How to apply

Applications must be received by **4.00pm on Thursday 4 December 2025**.

Applications submitted after this time will not be accepted. Applications must be sent to [grants@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:grants@royalfreecharity.org). You must allow sufficient time to get the necessary approvals prior to submission.

Applications based at RFL, or with RFL costs, need to be checked by the trust research and development office and approved by the RFL research and

development director prior to submission. To do this, please send your application to Jasmine Walker, [jasmine.walker10@nhs.net](mailto:jasmine.walker10@nhs.net) **at least one week prior to the application deadline.**

If you have any queries about the application or anything related to this scheme, please email [grants@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:grants@royalfreecharity.org).

## Application form

### Section 1: Application details

#### Applicant

The person who the grant is for and who has overall responsibility for the management of the grant and the primary contact. The applicant will sign the award letter and ensure the grant terms and conditions are adhered to. The applicant will also be responsible for reporting to the charity.

#### Project title

The title should be descriptive while accurately reflecting the project.

#### Start date

The start date should be within a reasonable period of the notification of outcome. The date should be realistic to allow enough time for any necessary activities or approvals. The start date can be changed if your application is successful, within reason.

#### End date

Projects are for up to six months.

#### Location

Indicate the location of the project. Tick all that apply.

#### Total amount requested

This will be in GBP and will be up to £10,000.

### Section 2: Strategic alignment

You should outline how the application complements or aligns with the RFL [research and development strategy](#).

## Section 3: Training and career development

**Describe why you are applying for this funding and how this application fits with your research career aspirations and plans.**

You should outline the reasons why you are applying for this funding and how this fits with your research career plans. You should also describe why you wish to develop a career within this research area.

### **Research experience**

Describe your research experience to date. This can include any grants, taking part in a research study, involvement in drafting research manuscripts, attending research conferences and undertaking research.

### **Application development plan**

Describe how you will use the time allocated to develop a prospective research application to a funder.

Consider how you would best make use of the time allocated. You may wish to include a breakdown of the time you will spend on different activities, such as desk-based research, attending training and meetings, and time spent on writing an application.

You should include key milestones as well as a timeline.

A Gantt chart or simple diagram can be included if desired.

### **Research supervision/mentorship**

Outline the support that will be provided by your research supervisor/mentor. You should include details such as frequency of meetings and specific areas where support will be provided.

Give details of any other sources of support, such as colleagues you can approach for guidance with specific areas.

### **Training and development plan**

Identify any relevant courses you require and explain why these are needed.

You should mention any training support your host institution will provide and how this will be delivered, as well as any facilities you will have access to.

Include any conferences, shadowing, and other relevant items in this section. Give a brief justification for how these items will contribute to your development and development of a prospective application.

## Section 4: Project details

This section relates to the research project you will develop an application for over the course of the funding period. Applicants are not expected to have a fully-formed research project at this stage. However, applicants should be able to explain their future research project with sufficient detail for the panel to make an informed judgement on the potential importance of the work. Applicants should articulate the clinical importance of this specific research topic and the current knowledge gaps. Applicants should have started to define the research questions they want to address and have a broad understanding of the methods they could utilise.

This section should be completed in scientific/technical language.

### Research area

Provide a short summary of your planned area of research. This should briefly summarise the background and the importance of the topic, and the broad research techniques you would employ.

### Why is this research needed?

Describe the challenge you're seeking to address through research, the current state of knowledge and the work leading up to this application, if any. You should include why the research is needed referencing any gaps in knowledge and how your future research might contribute to addressing such gaps.

Describe what the impact may be from a future research project. In addition to the potential patient benefit, this can also include academic impact, such as advancing knowledge and understanding. You should also include any wider benefit, such as to RFL or potentially the NHS, if applicable.

### Research approach

Outline how you would approach your research topic and the main methodological approaches. You should explain how these methodological approaches might help you answer your research question. Statistical methods should be included if these are already known, and you may also reference relevant supporting data.

The research approach described does not need to be detailed but enough information should be presented to help the panel make an informed decision.

Applicants are encouraged to outline any significant risks to delivering the research, and what steps will be put in place to help mitigate or resolve them.

You may include figures, such as graphs, charts or diagrams, if desired.

### References

Include the references to the research outlined in this application. Full author citations must be included so they are easily accessible.

## Section 5: Plain English section

This section should be completed in plain English using non-technical language avoiding scientific and technical jargon and abbreviations (unless they have been explained). This section should be accessible by non-experts and the public. We may ask you to re-write parts of this section if it is not. Furthermore, if your application is successful, our fundraising and communications teams may use some or all of the lay section, both to get a better understanding of the research and in communicating the research to others, such as our supporters and donors.

NIHR have developed an [informative guide](#) on how to write plain English lay summaries:

### Plain English title

Describe your project in a one sentence summary that sums up the project.

### Plain English summary

The summary should include the clinical challenge you're seeking to address through research and a broad outline of the project you hope to develop, and its possible impact.

Please do not include any confidential information as this abstract may be published on the Royal Free Charity's website. You should refer to the guides above on plain English summaries.

### Patient and public involvement and engagement

Patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) in research helps ensure that research is focused on outcomes that are important to patients and people with lived experience. It also makes the research more relevant by helping to identify and prioritise wider research questions that researchers may not have considered.

Involvement in research is defined as research being carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them. Involvement does not refer to the recruitment of patients or the public in a clinical trial.

More information is available in NIHR's [briefing notes](#) for researchers who are new to PPIE or have limited experience.

If appropriate and given the diverse communities served by RFL, applications should demonstrate consideration of diversity and inclusion that are relevant to the research aims. You should take into account whether characteristics such as sex,

gender, age and ethnicity are relevant. If diversity is not considered, the outcomes of the research may have limited applicability.

## Section 6: Additional support

**Provide details of any support provided by the host institution (RFL), special purpose fund or any other sources to support this project.**

Provide details of any additional support, financial and non-financial, for this application. It can include support from RFL or other sources. If you have access to a special purpose fund that is contributing to this application, please include the details.

**What collaborations are in place, if any, to support this project?**

This can include providing specific expertise, materials, access to patients or specialised equipment. If collaborations are in place, provide details of the collaborator(s).

**If you are successful with this application, which funder(s) and grant funding scheme(s) are you going to develop an application for?**

Please include grant scheme name, funder, and other details such as grant round dates and funding amounts if known. Please include all schemes you are considering.

## Section 7: Further information

### Environmental sustainability

Describe how you have considered the environmental impact of this grant and the measures, if any, in place to reduce the impact on the environment. This can include alignment with RFL's relevant policies. You should also consider:

- The impact of travelling to meetings and whether this is essential
- How will you reduce consumable and plastic wastage? Examples include using glass instead of plastic and recycling instead of using disposal single use items
- How will research team members contribute to sustainability?

*Please note that if two applications are judged to be equal by the research review panel, further weight will be given to the answer to this question.*

### Compliance information

If any part of the grant intended to pay a third-party, please provide details. Please note this refers to a third-party delivering a service or supplies that requires a specific contract between RFL or UCL and the third-party for this project. We are not referring to a third-party supplier of general consumables or general supplies.

If anyone named on this application is conflicted with the third-party, please provide details. Please also provide details of any potential conflict of interest (Col) with any RFL/UCL member of staff connected with the third-party. Conflicts include outside employment contracts (including pharmaceutical companies), shareholdings, directorships, advisory roles, gifts and hospitality. The list is indicative and you should refer to the relevant trust or UCL Col webpage for further details.

If any patient identifiable data being used in any part of this project or moved to any third-party, anonymised or otherwise, please provide details. You should explain what assurances are in place in relation to the retention of the data.

If you have answered 'yes' to any of the above questions, please confirm you have read the relevant conflicts of interest policy. For RFL applications: [Trust's conflict of interest policy](#) and for UCL applications: [UCL's conflicts of interest policy](#)

If you answered yes to any question in this section, please confirm that the conflict of interest relevant to the application has been registered on the [trust](#) or [UCL](#) platform. For RFL applications you must attach the trust Declaration of Interest Notice approval e-mail when submitting your application. For UCL applications, you must attach UCL's e-mail confirming that the conflict has been approved or it has been determined there is no conflict.

Please also confirm that a contract exists between any third-party supplier and either the trust or UCL, and has been approved by the relevant contracts department and signed by an authorised signatory. If this can only be progressed after the grant is awarded, confirmation will be required at a later date. RFC will not make payments to a third-party without confirmation that the contract has been approved.

The trust/UCL is ultimately responsible for fulfilment of the contractual agreement. If needed, please insert clause below into any contract:

"The Royal Free Charity is acting as the recipient of these funds. The Royal Free Charity holds no liability, and it is the RFL/UCL (delete as appropriate) that is ultimately responsible for the fulfilment of the contract and holds all liability. This includes delivery and financial contractual obligations."

## Section 8: Applicant details

### Applicant

List your present and last employment position. Include any further positions that you think are relevant to the application.

Provide the details of any completed qualification(s) and education, and where relevant, the details of any qualifications or training you are currently undertaking.

List any professional bodies that you are a member of, such as royal colleges, societies and professional organisations.



If applicable, list all your current grants and any other closed grants that you think are relevant to the application.

If applicable, list your most important research publications that are relevant to the application and any others you think would aid your application.

Provide details of any prizes, awards or achievements that would be relevant to your application including details of what the award was for.

## **Line manager**

Provide the details of your line manager.

## **Research supervisor/mentor**

Provide details of your research supervisor/mentor.

The research supervisor/mentor will support the applicant during the award and provide guidance on the research project. In addition to providing research support, the supervisor/mentor should have an understanding of the relevant clinical and research sector the application is based on.

## **Supporting statement**

The supervisor/mentor should provide a supporting statement providing details of their commitment to supporting the applicant to undertake the research project, how they will supervise the applicant and assess progress.

The supervisor's research CV should also be attached when submitting the application.

## **Section 9: Finances**

### **Finance costs**

You must include the salary cost contribution for up to 0.2 FTE (1 day per week), for a maximum of six months.

You can include costs for research training and this cost should be included and itemised.

### **Justification of costs**

If you are only requesting salary costs, you do not need to complete this section.

Provide a detailed justification for the costs requested in this application, clearly outlining how these relate to the objectives and proposed timescales. The justification should be sufficiently detailed to allow the panel and charity to have an informed opinion on the need of the costs requested.

### **Additional funding and support**

If this application is associated with any additional funding from another funder or other source, provide details including whether the funding has been granted or an application has been submitted. You should also outline how the matched funding complements this application.

## Section 10: Attachments

You must attach the research supervisor's CV.

The following must also be attached to this application only if they are relevant:

- Other letters of support, such as host institution (RFL)

## Section 11: Approvals

Typed or electronic signatures are acceptable.

You must secure approval and signatures of your line manager, research supervisor/mentor and RFL Director of Research and Innovation.

## Section 12: Submitting your application

You must ensure you have all the necessary approvals and sign-offs before you submit your application. The completed application including approvals and sign-offs must be submitted by **4.00pm on Thursday 4 December 2025**. Any applications received after 4.00pm will not be accepted.

Applications must be sent to [grants@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:grants@royalfreecharity.org). You will receive confirmation of receipt of your application.