



# RBHC Research Fund

## Seed Grants Application Round

### Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals Charity

## 1 Introduction

In response to a request from Heart, Lung and Critical Care Clinical Group (HLCC CG) leadership, Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals Charity (RBHC) are launching the RBHC Research Fund. £4000,000 will be available to provide seed funding of up to **£40,000** to research projects led by colleagues employed by the Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT) for a **12-month period** starting in **January 2025**. Flexibility on starting dates will be given on case-by-case basis with an extension is needed for regulatory approvals. The purpose of this funding is to build research capacity by supporting applicants to produce data that will lead to substantial externally funded research projects. When fully funded, projects should strive to tackle heart and lung disease and to create lasting positive impact on the care and experience of patients and/or communities affected by these conditions.

This guidance has been produced to support applicants in developing their applications for the RBHC Research Fund Seed Grants Application Round. Queries about the application process can be forwarded to [grants@rbhcharity.org](mailto:grants@rbhcharity.org). Applications close at **23:59pm on 11th August 2024**, with the aim of awarding successful projects by end of September 2024.

We expect that circa 10-14 projects will be awarded funding in this application round, and the Charity is planning to release further application rounds, based on different priorities and themes, over the next three years.

## 2 Funding Priorities

Following consultation with colleagues at the Trust, this application round will focus on seed/pump priming funding for research projects. These initial projects will be pilot studies aimed at gathering evidence for larger grant application opportunities to major funders, such as British Heart Foundation, Asthma+ Lung UK, NIHR, MRC, among others.

While working in partnership with colleagues within the Trust is not a mandatory requirement for this application round, applications will be scored on partnership, and projects working across different areas of the Trust, as well as external partners, will receive funding priority.



## 3 Eligibility Criteria

### 3.1 Person specification

#### 3.1.1 Lead applicant

The lead applicant will lead the project if the application is successful. They will submit the application form and be the main point of contact with RBHC during the application and review process, project delivery and reporting stages.

For this round of funding, applications from all professions are welcomed. Lead applicants will be restricted to individuals who are employed by the Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT). This includes staff on Trust honorary contracts, provided the individual's role at the Trust includes delivering or supporting services to Trust patients (e.g. running clinics at one of the Trust's hospitals, delivering operational functions such as ICT). Individuals will not be eligible to apply if they have any other type of Trust contract outside of those mentioned above.

Multiple applications from the same lead applicant are eligible for submission, but only one grant award per lead applicant will be made in this application round.

#### 3.1.2 Collaborators

An application may include up to four collaborators. These individuals can be external to GSTT, if their expertise is needed for the success of the project, and you will need to explain why in the application. However, it is expected that a significant proportion of the award will be used to cover Trust-incurred costs.

Collaborators could support different projects submitted in the application round, but if more than one project receives an award, the collaborator will need line manager confirmation that there is capacity to be involved in multiple projects at the same time.

#### 3.1.3 Line Manager or Senior Colleague Approval

In your application you will be asked to provide contact information for a line manager or senior colleague who approves the project taking place. This person **must not** be a collaborator on your project, and should your application be successful they will be asked to co-sign the project grant.

If you are requesting PA allocation or time ring-fenced to deliver the project, this needs to be signed off by your line manager or the Deputy Manager Director, whoever is responsible for your job planning.



### 3.2 Project Specification – Grant Duration, Amount and Sponsorship

The RHBC Research Fund is an opportunity to receive funding for pilot projects to a maximum of £40,000 and that are to last no longer than one year. A detailed budget breakdown and justification of costs will be asked in the application form. To be eligible for funding, all projects must seek to develop medical knowledge or key biomedical sciences in relation to cardiology and/or respiratory healthcare.

This does not need to be achieved directly through this funding, but rather, projects **must** lead to a larger funding request to another funder. This will be asked for in the application form, and if a clear fundraising plan is not submitted, applications won't be considered.

Applicants will need to make clear on the application who will be the single sponsoring organisation for the project, either GSTT or an academic institution. Applicants should keep in mind that a further grant is expected to be sought after the delivery of the seed grant, and therefore the most appropriate sponsor should be selected with this in mind. We expect that most costs would be incurred by the sponsoring organisation. We will consider providing funds to other collaborating organisations on a case-by-case basis. Where agreed by the Charity, this collaboration will need to be managed by the sponsor as a sub-contract. Award funding will be made in October 2024 with projects envisaged to be starting in January 2025. This will give projects three months to receive all necessary regulatory and ethical approvals. Should projects require longer than this window, the project start date can be delayed, with the Charity's approval.

Projects involving animals are eligible for consideration. However, they must meet the criteria laid out in ' 7.1 Use of Animals in your project' below, and will be required to submit additional information to meet this requirement. Providing the use of animals meets these criteria this additional information will not be used to comparatively assess the projects.



## 4 Expenditure Eligibility

<b>Eligible Expenditure</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Restrictions</b>
Basic and translational research	
Research consumables directly attributable to the project	
Research equipment essential for the project	Only small items under £5,000
Ring-fenced time to deliver the research project	Budget allowing and with line manager approval
Publication fees	Exclusively for the findings of the funded project
Specialised research software licences	
Specialist computer equipment	up to £5,000
Conference attendance costs to present project findings at conferences or scientific meetings relevant to the grant	up to £1,000
Patient and public involvement (PPI) costs	
<b>Ineligible Expenditure</b>	
Clinical trials	
Salaries/PA time that are not directly associated with the delivery of the project	
Extensions of PhD projects, fellowships bridge-funding, or short-term fellowships	
Supplement to a fellowship or active research, Co-funding of projects that are part-funded by other funders.	
Equipment that is essential to core patient safety and/or care, and that should receive core funding from Trust departmental budgets, including medical equipment.	
Essential medical training course fees	
Subscription to professional membership bodies	

This list is not exhaustive. If you have any queries, please contact the Charity's Grants Team at [grants@rbhcharity.org](mailto:grants@rbhcharity.org).



## 5 Application Process

### 5.1 Making an application

This round of funding will be a single stage application, opening on the **28 May**, running until **23.59pm on 11 August**. To apply, you will need to fill out an application via google forms which can be found [here](#).

In order to make an application, google forms will ask you to sign into a google account. For this application we ask that you sign up for a google account using your Trust email address and **not** a personal email address. RBHC is committed to protecting your personal data and the use of a trust email acts as an extra protection in this effort.

The areas of information that will be required for in your application are as follows:

- Lead Applicant Details
- Line Manager or Senior Colleague Contact information
- Collaborator(s) Detail
- Research Proposal
  - o Project Title
  - o Lay Research Summary
  - o Background and Context
  - o Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement
  - o Research Question/Hypothesis
  - o Aims and Objective for *this Funding*
  - o Study Design for *this Funding*
  - o Equality, Diversity and Inclusion on Data Use and Patient Recruitment
  - o Future Funding Plans
  - o People and Partnerships
  - o Ethics & Research Governance
  - o Benefits to Patients
- Costs & Deliverability
  - o Project Budget and Milestones (Template provided)
  - o Delivery Risks and Contingency Plans
- Approvals and Project Sponsorship
- The Use of Animals
- RBH Charity Data Collection and Feedback
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Project budgets will need to be **approved by the sponsoring organisation** in the first instance. In support of your project's application, budgets can be reviewed by the HLCC CG research development team before submission to the Charity. Please note, the final date to submit your budget for review is Friday **5 July**. Please submit to [research.grants@rbht.nhs.uk](mailto:research.grants@rbht.nhs.uk).

A copy of the Budget and Milestones template can be downloaded [here](#).

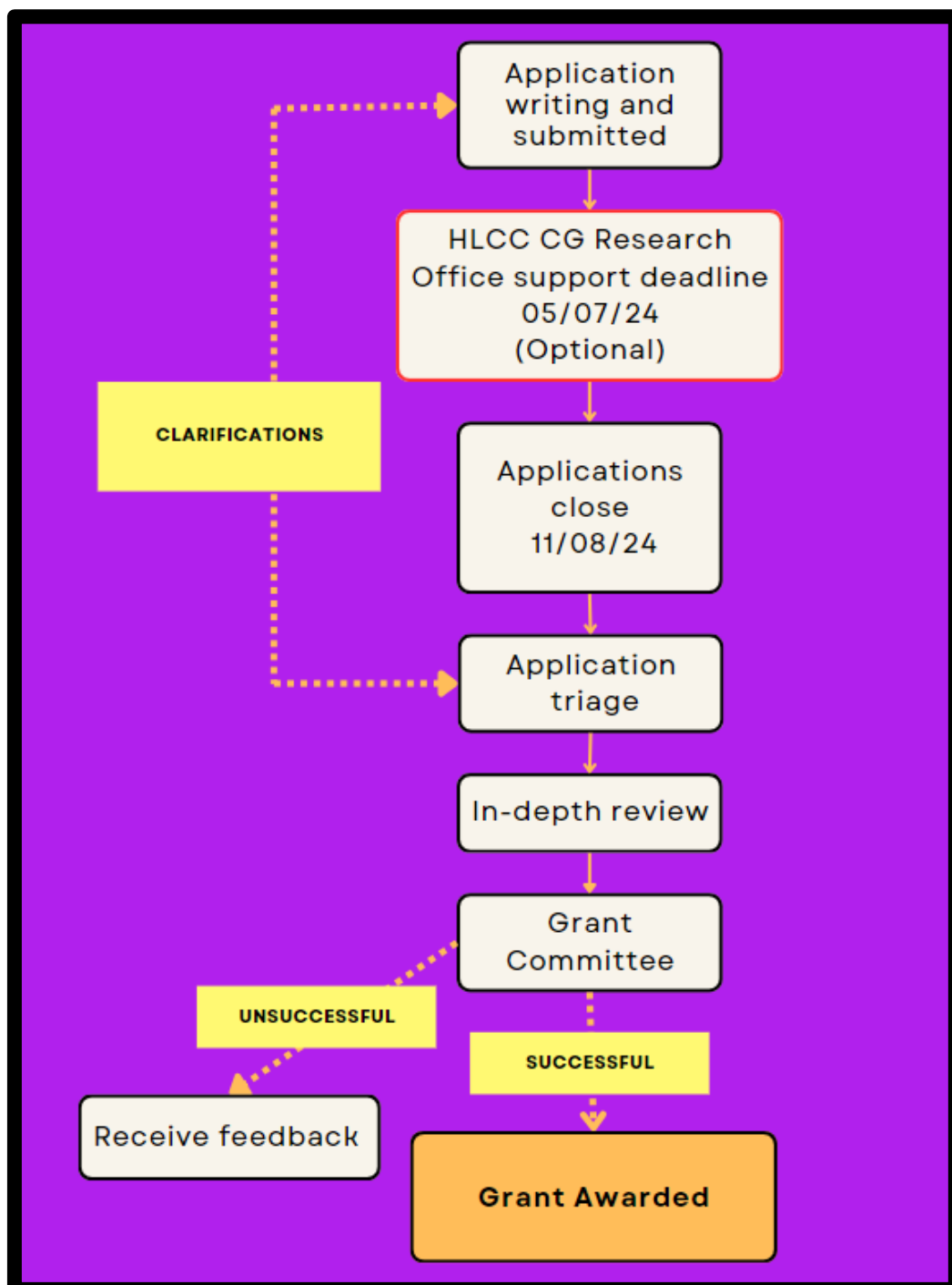
And a copy of the full application, for reference only, [here](#)



Please be aware, applications **must be made via google forms** for data storage purposes. Downloaded and filled out copies of this application form **will not be accepted**.

During the application window you will be able to ask questions directly to the RBHC Grants team (Grants@rbhcharity.org) until the 22 July. These questions will be amalgamated into a FAQ document that we will update regularly and can be found on the RBH intranet.

## 5.2 Assessment and Decision Making





Upon the closure of the application window on 11 August, applications will be checked for eligibility, and applicants will be contacted if key information is missing from their applications. Applicants will have **one week** to provide this information. If this information is not provided within this timeframe, the application may be considered ineligible for funding at the discretion of the Charity.

Applications will then be anonymised and reviewed/scored by members of the Grants Committee. The Grants Committee will then meet in September. The committee consists of representatives of clinicians and researchers specialised in respiratory medicine and cardiology, as well as patients/family members representatives. Committee members who have a conflict of interest with a specific project will exclude themselves from both discussions and voting relating to this proposal.

The Grants Committee will award grants, prioritising the highest scoring projects, until either the full £400,000 is allocated or every project that meets the RBHC Research Fund's minimum requirements has received funding.

### 5.3 Assessment scoring

The assessment of your project will focus on the criteria below:

- **Lay summary:** how well the project is described, including overall aims and objectives and how it will benefit heart and lung patient, in plain English.
- **Need and benefit for patients:** expected research outcomes aim to enhance our understanding of health and illness and/or have the potential to lead to improved lives for heart and lung patients.
- **Research quality/ feasibility:** preliminary or published data that supports the research question or hypothesis and expected research outcomes. The proposed approaches are realistic, well developed and likely to achieve the aims.
- **Future funding plan:** the proposal includes appropriate plans and commitment to use the expected research outcomes in the future, including dissemination plans, and how they will lead to further funding.
- **People credentials:** the applicants and wider team have the necessary experience, skills and knowledge to undertake the proposed research, relative to career stage and career path.
- **Finance/ value for money:** budgets are accurate, costs are realistic and provide good value for money. All costs are justified.
- **Deliverability (timing and risks):** All project milestones are accounted for, and risks for the project delivery have been considered and mitigated for.
- **Partnership:** Higher scores will be given to teams delivering the project composed by staff members from different departments/clinical groups within the Trust.
- **Patient and Public Engagement, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** level of patient involvement on project planning, development, design and dissemination of outcomes. Different demographics and protected characteristics (including gender, age, ethnicity, etc) will be taken into account in terms of research samples/ data and patient recruitment used/planned for



the project, so the research results are reflective of the wider population demographics.

In addition to the above scored criteria, the above eligibility criteria (Section 3) will be applied to all applications.

## 6 Post assessment period

### 6.1 Successful Grants

Should your project be successful in obtaining funding, RBHC will provide you with a grant agreement. The funding of your project is not considered confirmed until you have signed and returned the associated agreement. The agreement will also need to be signed by your line manager and the account manager at the sponsoring organisation.

Grant agreements will be for a period of 12 months from January 2025, unless a later start date is required. While this is an absolute cap on the length of projects, necessary variations on the date of commencement may be considered on a case-by-case basis at the award stage.

### 6.2 Reporting

The dates of this funding will be limited to a single year from the point of the commencement of the grant. Over the life of this project we will require two formal reports, an interim report at six months and an end of project report set at one month after the end of the funding period.

RBHC also reserves the right to request information and informal updates on an ad hoc basis, including after the end of grant report, to analyse the long-term impact of the grant. We will endeavour to make these requests as light touch as possible, but may be necessary for our fundraising efforts, in support of further research and the wider Trust.

### 6.3 Feedback and unsuccessful bids

RBHC will endeavour to provide feedback to all unsuccessful projects automatically. However, dependent on the volume of these projects we may only be able to provide this upon request. Successful applications will also be eligible for feedback upon request, although these will not be prioritised during the post-award set up period.

Should your project be unsuccessful, you will not be barred from resubmitting the proposal in a future round of funding. However, this will be dependent on the project





fitting any potential themes of this future funding round and we would request that you consider our feedback before doing so.

Further rounds of the RBHC Research Fund are planned to follow this application round. At this stage no themes for further funding have been decided upon.

## 7 General guidance to applicants

### 7.1 Use of Animals in your project

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities, RBHC is committed to upholding the [principles of the 3Rs](#) (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) where animals are to be involved in research that we fund.

Applications should include an appropriately detailed and justified experimental plan, with statistical analyses and preliminary data to support the proposed research when possible. This includes incorporation of the [principles of the 3Rs](#) (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) where animals are to be involved. **In particular, the Grants Committee members are asked to consider and comment on whether:**

- the research question can be addressed without the use of animals
- the species is justified
- the experimental design is appropriate
- the number of animals requested are appropriate

Please refer to the [NC3Rs APPIVE](#) guidelines and responsibility in the use of [animals in bioscience research](#) for further guidance.

Please be aware that GSTT does not sponsor projects that involve animal research. These projects will require a separate sponsoring organisation.

### 7.2 Lay description of your project

Lay summaries are descriptions of your work written in plain English. These are important as they explain your research to people outside of your field of expertise. This includes lay members of our Grants Committee (including patients and their family members or carers) who help to decide which project applications are awarded funding.

Your writing should be simple and direct. Keep sentences short and to the point. Avoid technical or scientific terms (where possible, where not define them in simple language). Don't use acronyms or jargon and try not to use normalisations – 'utilisation' could be better written as 'using'. Essentially, try to write as you would speak.

A good lay summary will include:

- A lay title
- Brief background or context to your research, including a description of the unmet need(s) that your research will address
- The aim of your project



- How you'll do your research
- The impact of your project on patients

Further guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Research here:  
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/plain-english-summaries/27363>

### 7.3 Commercial and Intellectual Property

The Charity requires that the sponsoring organisation will use all reasonable endeavours to protect and exploit the Intellectual Property arising from work done pursuant to a Grant and has in place strategies and procedures for the identification, protection and management of Intellectual Property, full details of which have been provided to the Charity and with which the sponsoring organisation must comply.

The rights to Intellectual Property generated during the course of the grant belong to the sponsoring organisation, who will ensure, at its own cost, full protection of such Intellectual Property where appropriate.

The sponsoring organisation shall notify the Charity in writing (which may be in one of the reports referred to above), providing details of the steps which the sponsoring organisation will take to protect the Intellectual Property and shall keep the Charity regularly updated on the progress of such protection.

### 7.4 Further considerations for applicants

- Ensure that your project addresses a problem that is concise, defined and measurable and explain how your project will be more effective than current practices or approaches.
- Ensure you can fully describe the evidence underpinning the problem.
- Ensure you have identified and can describe the most appropriate methodology for delivery and include a robust evaluation plan.
- Ensure you have a plan for disseminating results.
- Ensure you have a fundraising plan for the project going forward.
- Application budgets must be prepared/approved by the project's sponsoring organisation.
- All applications budgets from the HLCC CG must be reviewed and approved by the research development team before submission to the Charity. Please note, the final date to submit your budget for review to the HLCC CG Research Team is Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July. Please submit to [research.grants@rbht.nhs.uk](mailto:research.grants@rbht.nhs.uk).
- Discuss your proposal with senior members of your department, as appropriate.
- If your project utilises ring-fenced research time, you will be required to confirm you have received permission to use your time in this manner.



Thank you for taking the time to read this guidance document for the RBHC Research Fund – Seed Grants Application Round. We look forward to receiving your application. If you have any questions, please attend one of our scheduled webinars and drop-in sessions (as below), and refer to the FAQ document at the RBH intranet page, which will be regularly updated during the grant application window. If you have any further questions, please get in touch with the Grants team ([grants@rbhcharity.org](mailto:grants@rbhcharity.org)).

## 7.5 RBHC Research Fund Schedule

- **28 May:** Fund opens
- **4 June (1-2pm):** Online webinar – register [here](#)
- **6 June:** Info stall at RBH
- **11 June:** Info stall at HH
- **11 June (12-1pm):** Presentation at staff forum
- **18 June (12-12:30pm):** Online webinar – register [here](#)
- **28 June:** Presentation at Cardiovascular CAG meeting
- **5 July:** HLCC CG Research Office support deadline (optional)
- **18 July:** Presentation at Sister/Charge/Practice Educator meeting
- **22 July:** Deadline for acceptance of questions
- **11 August:** Deadline for applications
- **Week of 30 September:** Grants awarded