GOSH Charity Programme Grants
Scheme Guidance

About GOSH Charity
Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) Children’s Charity is the UK’s largest charity dedicated to funding paediatric health research. We are committed to accelerating child health research and transforming the lives of seriously ill children through research-led care. Under our new Research Strategy, we will invest £70m in research into rare or complex paediatric diseases over the next five years.

Programme Grants Overview
Our Programme Grant scheme aims to create a step change in an area of rare or complex paediatric disease. By providing long-term, high-value funding, we will allow our researchers to transform understanding within a research area and accelerate development of treatments, cures and interventions. These grants will bring together diverse expertise to work collaboratively on an interrelated set of projects, elevating research in their chosen area beyond the grant itself.

This is a new scheme to be delivered for the first time in 2024 under our new Research Strategy.

Remit
We are inviting applications for ambitious, long-term research programmes that will generate a significant shift in progress or understanding within an area of rare or complex paediatric disease. This scheme will support research across the spectrum of medical conditions affecting the foetus, neonates and children directly, as well as pregnancy disorders that affect the child. Programmes should focus on improving understanding of the disease or associated conditions, or improving the prevention, diagnosis, prognosis, or treatment of the disease.

Each programme should be composed of multiple complementary projects within an overarching research theme or disease area. Within programmes, projects could include:

- Research into disease mechanisms, aetiology, development, or epigenetics.
- Development or clinical testing of models, tools, techniques, therapies, or diagnostics.

Research Programmes should be composed of at least two interrelated projects that complement one another to generate a step change in progress or understanding within a specific area. Single large-scale projects such as late-stage clinical trials are not eligible for funding through this scheme.

Eligibility
To apply as a Principal Investigator for these grants, you must be an independent researcher, an expert in your field, and have proven leadership ability. Your salary must be covered elsewhere through to the end of the grant period, or a supporting letter must be provided by your organisation guaranteeing your continued employment throughout the duration of the grant.
For the 2024 Programme Grants, Principal Investigators must be employed by GOSH or GOS ICH, or have an honorary research contract and conduct their primary research activity at one of these organisations.

Co-applicants and collaborators may be at any career stage and affiliated with any organisation. We encourage applicant teams to include at least one Early Career Researcher as a named co-applicant, and to demonstrate collaboration across organisations and scientific disciplines.

**Funding Available**
A total of £5m is available for this scheme in 2024. From this, we expect to award 2-3 Programme Grants with a minimum value of £500k each. There is no maximum grant value, however if you wish to apply for a grant costing more than £2.5m we ask you to contact the grants team (grants@gosh.org) to discuss your application finances.

Programmes should be for a duration of up to five years.

**Eligible Costs**
These grants will cover the direct research costs associated with the research programme. Examples of eligible costs are:

- Salaries for research staff (including post-doctoral research associates, research assistants, research nurses, technicians, statisticians, technologists, methodologists, etc.)
- PhD stipends.
- Consumables costs.
- Equipment costs for items essential to the project. Note that single equipment items costing more than £10k should be discussed with the grants team prior to submission and match funding may be required. Where there is an option to borrow or share an existing equipment item this should always be pursued before proposing to purchase a new item.
- Animals costs.

The salary of the Principal Investigator is not eligible for funding through this scheme.

The examples provided above are not an exhaustive list and all costs requested should be fully justified within the application. If you are in any doubt of the eligibility of a proposed cost, please do contact the grants team at grants@gosh.org.

**Application Process**
Applications for this scheme will be in two stages: outline and full. Outline applications are assessed and shortlisted by the GOSH Charity Research Assessment Panel, and only shortlisted applicants are invited to submit a full application.

**Before You Apply**
Before you start writing an application, you **must** contact the GOSH and GOS ICH joint research office (Grants.Advice@gosh.nhs.uk) and the GOSH Charity Grant Funding Team (grants@gosh.org) to register your interest and receive advice.

Pre-application support will be available to all applicants to ensure confidence in the remit, aims and expectations of the scheme. The GOSH Charity Grant Funding Team will be holding
one-to-one sessions with all applicants upon request, and there will be a preparatory webinar with further guidance held on Friday 26 January at 12pm. Please sign up to attend at [this link](#). The webinar will also be recorded and made available to any applicants unable to attend. Please get in touch with the Grants Team, grants@gosh.org, to hear more.

### Outline Applications

The outline stage application form will open on Wednesday 17 January 2024 and close at 3pm on Wednesday 27 March 2024.

Applicants must submit their outline applications through the Charity's [Grants Management System](#). Signatories and co-applicants must be invited to participate in the application prior to submission. Once the application has been submitted, it will go to signatories for final sign-off. Please note that this sign-off must occur before the final deadline of Wednesday 27 March 2024, so ensure you leave plenty of time from submission ahead of the deadline.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their outline applications in May 2024.

### Full Applications

The full application form will open in mid-May 2024 and close at 3pm on Wednesday 3 July 2024. Only applicants whose outline applications have been shortlisted will be invited to apply for a full application, and the Charity Grant Funding Team will get in touch with those candidates directly to inform them on the application process.

One-to-one sessions discussing the feedback from the assessment panel at shortlisting and next steps for the full application will be scheduled for all shortlisted applicants in late May to early June.

The full application form will also be submitted through the Charity's [Grants Management System](#). Signatories and co-applicants must be invited to participate in the application prior to submission. Once the application has then been submitted, it will go to signatories for final sign-off. Please note that this sign-off must occur before the final deadline of Wednesday 3 July 2024, so ensure you leave plenty of time from submission ahead of the deadline.

Following submission of your full application, it will be taken through a live peer review process in the form of an [External Advisory Group](#) meeting. Applicants will be required to attend a part of this meeting to present their research programme proposal and answer questions from the group. These meetings will take place in August 2024 and the Charity team will provide more information on scheduling and requirements in May to June 2024.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their full applications in October 2024.

### Assessment

GOSH Charity assesses research applications using three key criteria:

1. **Scientific quality.** GOSH Charity is committed to funding only the highest quality scientific research. For all applications, we consider whether proposals are underpinned by a good scientific rationale; whether the proposed approach, methodology and analyses are sound; and whether the research is competitive in the national and international landscapes. Applicant teams are also assessed on whether they have sufficient expertise to carry out the intended research.
2. **Patient benefit.** While we recognise that research programmes may involve early-stage research and so will not have direct impact on patients for some time, it is essential that the research will in time have a positive impact on children with rare or complex health conditions. Clinical need, PPIE activities, and opportunities for downstream development are all considered under this metric.

3. **Deliverability.** We need to ensure that all the research we fund can be successfully delivered. We expect Programme Grant applications to have clearly defined project plans, timelines and milestones with defined risks and plans for their mitigation. We consider whether the requested costs are appropriate and sufficient to deliver the research. Finally, we consider sustainability and whether applicants have clear plans for continuing to take the work through the research pipeline to clinical delivery following the end of Charity funding.

In order to be funded, applications will need to score sufficiently highly against each of these three criteria.

Applications will be assessed by three key groups: GOSH Charity's Research Assessment Panel, a Patient Benefit Panel, and an expert External Advisory Group. They each have a different role to play in the assessment process, as summarised below.

**Research Assessment Panel (RAP)**
This is a standing GOSH Charity assessment panel whose role is to assess research funding applications and provide recommendations on which proposals are of the highest scientific quality, with the greatest potential for patient benefit and alignment with the Charity's Research Strategy. It is made up of around 12 members who are external to GOSH, GOS ICH, and GOSH Charity, and whose research expertise covers a wide spread of clinical and paediatric health research areas.

RAP are responsible for shortlisting outline applications for the Programme Grants in May 2024. They will also make the final funding recommendations following review by the lay panel and External Advisory Groups in October 2024.

**Patient Benefit Panel**
GOSH Charity has a network of lay panel members whose role is to provide perspective based on lived experience of paediatric healthcare. They help the Charity ensure we fund research which has or will have the maximum benefit on patients with rare or complex health conditions, and that the research is suitably described for sharing with the public.

Lay panel members will assess specific parts of the full applications for the Programme Grants, namely the lay summaries and PPIE sections, in September 2024. Their scores will feed into the scientific review by RAP, who will make the final funding recommendation in October 2024. Feedback given by the Patient Benefit Panel may dictate conditions of award, which applicants will need to act on to receive an award.

**External Advisory Groups (EAGs)**
For other grant schemes, GOSH Charity carries out written independent peer review with external experts in the field for each application. EAGs allow us to carry out in-the-room peer review for each full Programme Grant application. These groups are convened ad-hoc for each full application we review, and consists of world experts in the scientific field that the application concerns. At least one RAP member is also included in the EAG.
EAGs will be held in August 2024 for each full application and their scores will be submitted to RAP, who will make the final funding recommendation in October 2024.

**Funding Outcomes**
In late October 2024, the funding recommendations made by RAP will be submitted to the Charity’s Grants and Impact Committee for final funding decisions. Applicants will be informed of their application outcome only after Grants and Impact Committee have made their funding decision.

A summary diagram of the assessment process can be seen below.

![Assessment Process Diagram]

**COVID-19 Statement**
As funders, we have signed a cross-funder statement coordinated by the Academy of Medical Sciences, on the COVID-19 institutional memory: how we as funders will look to fairly remember and recognise the impacts of COVID-19 on grant applicants’ work in the future.

As part of this statement, we would like to reassure our research community that we are aware of the immediate and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on research activities. Any disruptions to research activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be taken into consideration by our panels and committees when assessing an individual applicant’s record of outputs, research achievements, and career progression in future grant rounds.

You can read and download the full statement [here](#).

**Further Information**
Feedback will be made available for all unsuccessful applicants to this scheme.

If you have any questions about the scheme or your application, please contact the GOSH Charity Grants Team at [grants@gosh.org](mailto:grants@gosh.org).

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