

GOSH Charity National Research 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 [Research Strategy](#), we will invest at least £70m in research into rare or complex paediatric diseases between 2023 and 2028.

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, the scheme enables researchers to transform understanding within a research area and accelerate development of treatments and interventions.

Programmes will bring together diverse expertise to work collaboratively on an interlinked set of work packages, designed to generate shared outcomes and advance research beyond the scope of individual projects, having impact beyond the lifetime of the grant. Each programme should represent a cohesive and connected structure of work packages that are scientifically and strategically interdependent and collectively drive progress within a defined research area.

This year, we are delighted to announce that the scheme will be open nationally to UK-based academic researchers working at UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

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 directly 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 interrelated and complementary work packages within an overarching research theme. These work packages must be scientifically connected and designed to inform and strengthen one another. Work packages within a programme may include, but are not limited to:

- Research into disease mechanisms, aetiology, development, or epigenetics.
- Translational or preclinical research into developing or testing of models, tools, techniques, therapies, or diagnostics.
- Methodological, computational, or data-driven approaches that underpin or connect different work packages within the programme.
- Research exploring patient pathways, clinical management, or models of care, where these are integrated with the programme's underlying scientific or translational goals.

Single large-scale projects, clinical trials, and programmes consisting entirely of sequential work packages are not eligible for funding through this scheme.

Eligibility

To apply as a Principal Investigator for these grants, you must be an independent researcher based at a UK Higher Education Institution, an expert in your field, and have proven leadership ability. Your salary must be covered 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.

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

Up to £10m is available for this scheme in 2026. From this, we expect to award 4-5 Programme Grants with a minimum value of £500,000 each. There is no maximum grant value, however if you'd like 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.). This excludes consultant programmed activities, the apprenticeship levy, costs for established Principal Investigators, or those with permanent salaries.
- PhD stipends and tuition fees.
- Consumables costs.
- Equipment costs for items essential to the project. Note that single equipment items costing more than £10,000 should be discussed with the grants team prior to submission and would generally be expected to be co-funded at 50% by the applicant's institution. 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.
- Animal costs.
- Travel and conference fees. We allow funding for attending relevant conferences up to £10,000 across the whole grant. Additionally, £5000 is available across the whole grant for organising a conference or workshop in a relevant rare disease area. Please note that plans for the conference/workshop must be aligned with the overall research proposal.
- Patient and public involvement, engagement and participation.

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 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

Pre-application support will be available to applicants to ensure confidence in the remit, aims and expectations of the scheme. There will be a preparatory webinar with further guidance held on Wednesday 10 December 2025 at 12pm. Please sign up to attend [here](#). The webinar will also be recorded and made available to any applicants unable to attend.

Applicants should ensure they have discussed their proposal with their organisation before submission to ensure it aligns with internal priorities and processes for triaging applications.

Outline Applications

The outline stage application form will open in early December 2025 and close at 3pm on Thursday 26 March 2026.

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 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 Thursday 26 March 2026, 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 2026.

Full Applications

The full application form will open in mid-May 2026 and close at 3pm on Wednesday 24 June 2026. 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.

The full application form will 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 24 June 2026, 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 July-September 2026, and the Charity team will provide more information on scheduling and requirements in May to June 2026.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their full applications in November 2026.

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. All applications are reviewed equally, regardless of the rare disease studied. Weighting is not added to funding decisions based on the number of patients impacted.

Applications will be assessed by three key groups: GOSH Charity's Research Assessment Panel, a Research Patient Insight 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)

The role of the [Research Assessment Panel](#) is to assess research funding applications for the Programme Grants scheme 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 14 members who are external to GOSH 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 2026. They will also make the final funding recommendations following review by the Research Patient Insight Panel and External Advisory Groups in October 2026.

Research Patient Insight 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 2026. Their scores will feed into the scientific review by RAP, who will make the final funding recommendation in October 2026. Feedback given by the Research Patient Insight Panel may dictate conditions of award, which applicants will need to act on to receive an award.

External Advisory Groups (EAGs)

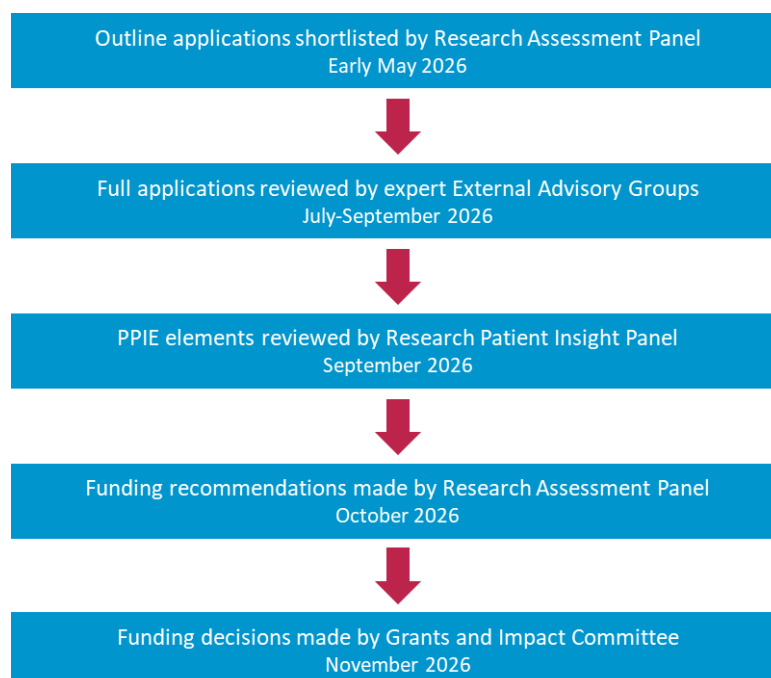
External Advisory Groups (EAGs) provide in-depth, live peer review for each full Programme Grant application. Each EAG is convened ad-hoc for each full application we review and consists of independent world-leading experts in the relevant scientific field. At least one RAP member is also included in the EAG.

EAG meetings will take place between July-September 2026, with each group assessing a single full application. Following these meetings, their scores and feedback will be submitted to RAP, who will make the final funding recommendation in October 2026.

Funding Outcomes

In November 2026, 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.



Partnerships

GOSH Charity is keen to explore partnership opportunities with other organisations for our National Research Programme Grants Scheme, to co-fund successful programmes that will transform the lives of seriously ill children. With £10 million already committed, collaboration offers the opportunity to increase the number and scale of awards and drive major advances in rare and complex paediatric disease. As the UK's largest dedicated funder of child health research, GOSH Charity offers access to a world-leading paediatric research ecosystem to combine resources, expertise and influence to maximise impact. We welcome partners with diverse research interests and offer flexible collaboration models and shared communications. Together, we can accelerate discoveries and improve outcomes for seriously ill children.

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.