

Equity and Wellbeing funding scheme remit & eligibility information



If you have any queries during the application process, please email us at grants_admin@breastcancernow.org

About us

We're the UK's largest breast cancer charity. And we're combining the power of science and support to change breast cancer, now.

We support around 350 of the brightest minds in breast cancer research. They're discovering how and why breast cancer develops, grows and spreads, and what we can do to save and improve lives affected by it.

To date, we've invested over £299 million in world-class breast cancer research, leading to discoveries that have already saved or improved thousands of lives across the world. And we're not stopping yet. Because for the next groundbreaking discovery, we're here.

Purpose and scope

The Equity and Wellbeing scheme supports scientific excellence and innovative research that explores what helps people manage the physical and emotional impacts of breast cancer. Research funded by this scheme will lead to everyone getting the best care and support. All proposals must align with our [strategy](#). It could include, but is not limited to:

- Public health research that aims to improve access to information, screening, and support, especially for underserved groups or areas of the UK with poorest outcomes
- Research into the physical and psychosocial/emotional impacts of a breast cancer diagnosis and treatment, and solutions to reduce these impacts
- Research that helps us understand more about genetic risk, and how we can give people the knowledge they need to make informed decisions
- Research that improves health data collection and makes better use of data to understand gaps in people's needs and help make the case for change
- Implementation research into the delivery of breast cancer services for all patients

This funding scheme focuses on inequities in breast cancer. It will support research that increases access and improves health by reducing variation in access and outcomes. This includes considering inequality and inequity in any of the research areas above. Other areas of research that this scheme will fund could include, but is not limited to:

- Research that uses data to understand more about, and call out, inequities in access, treatment and outcomes
- Development, testing and evaluation of initiatives to address inequity, including projects to improve awareness, diversity and participation in clinical trials
- Epidemiology research focused on breast cancer incidence and health outcomes across different communities and identifying areas of inequity
- The biological, genetic, or epigenetic causes and mechanisms of inequalities in the risks of breast cancer, and its development, spread, response to treatment and outcomes

- The development and use of research models that better reflect breast cancer in communities affected by inequalities

There may be some applications that could fit with either of our regular funding schemes. If the focus of your research is on understanding or addressing inequality or inequity, then you should apply to this scheme.

Health equity and inequalities, and wellbeing are defined as follows:

Health equity is “the absence of unfair, avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, or geographically or by other dimensions of inequality (e.g. sex, gender, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation).”¹ These unfair and avoidable differences are also known as **health inequalities**. Health inequalities arise because of the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age. These conditions influence our opportunities for good health, and how we think, feel and act, and this shapes our mental health, physical health and wellbeing.² Health equity is achieved when everyone can attain their full potential for health and wellbeing.

Wellbeing is not just the absence of ill health. It includes the way that people feel about themselves and their lives. In the absence of a singular definition, it is generally thought to be made up of things like the experience of positive emotions, people’s perceptions that the things they do in their lives are meaningful and worthwhile, and life satisfaction.³ Wellbeing is influenced by physical and mental health and in turn has an influence on the experience and outcomes of different health conditions.⁴

It is expected that all applications demonstrate close and extensive involvement of the group being researched in the design, delivery and dissemination of the research.

Furthermore:

- Grants are available to established researchers working in an institution in the UK or Ireland
- Collaborative applications from within the UK and Ireland are welcome, although the contracted grant (and associated funding arrangements) will be with the lead applicant's institution; named academic/clinical co-applicants and collaborators are permitted from outside the UK and Ireland
- The duration of grants may vary, though we expect most would last 3 to 4 years. Grants with shorter or longer durations will be considered but must be fully justified. If your grant would last more than 4 years, please contact the research team as early as possible before applying
- The value of grants may vary, and funds will cover staff salary, research expenses, and essential equipment. PhD studentship applications should not exceed £171,500. Project grant applications requesting more than £400,000 may be considered but please contact the research team as early as possible before applying

¹ https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-equity#tab=tab_1

² <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/what-are-healthcare-inequalities/>

³ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-england-additional-analyses/ethnicity-and-health-2011-2019-experimental-statistics/wellbeing-copy>

⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/295474/The_relationship_between_wellbeing_and_health.pdf

- Please bear in mind, your application's cost/value for money and the funds available for each round are factors that will be considered by the committee when making funding decisions
- We are keen to receive applications from researchers working across all fields of breast cancer
- Applications must clearly state how the research addresses public health, physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and inequities that are experienced in breast cancer
- Applications must either address under-represented groups or demonstrate inclusivity across the population

The grants could support:

- Project grants or PhD studentships within the scheme's scope of varying duration and cost
- Intervention development and pilot studies to generate preliminary data for, or test the feasibility of, a larger project or economic evaluation for clinical trials
- Non-salary costs to support researchers whose salary is supported elsewhere (such as NIHR Academic Clinical Fellows)

We will not support:

- Infrastructure, such as setting up or maintaining research units
- Service developments, unless they have wider generalizability. Note: the costs of any new service would not be funded
- Audits or surveys (although these elements may be part of an integrated research study)
- Market research
- Policy development that does not involve new data collection or analysis.
- Direct support (such as financial support) to those affected by breast cancer inequalities
- Grants to be used to part fund other projects or supplement existing grants, especially not PhD/MD training

Modifiable risk factors, such as diet, physical activity, alcohol consumption and obesity, are relevant for many diseases. We would only accept applications in these areas for breast cancer patient-specific interventions.

Eligibility

Applicants should read our research [grant conditions and research policies](#) and [how to apply guidance](#) before completing their application and ensure the following:

- Lead applicants must be based at a recognised university, research institution, or NHS trust in the UK or Ireland which will be the nominated host institution
- Lead applicants must be independent researchers (i.e. line-managed rather than supervised, and your salary does not come from another researcher's grant)
- Lead applicants should hold employment (or honorary, if a clinical academic) contracts that extend beyond the period of the grant, which covers their salary
- Lead applicants cannot request costs for their salary
- Lead applicants with a fixed-term position may apply, but they must include a letter from their head of department to indicate that their salary will be covered by the host institution for the duration of the project

- We would generally expect a project to be led by a single lead applicant; however, you may include up to 1 joint lead applicant. You must provide an explanation in the application to justify the need for a joint lead applicant, as well as which aspects of the proposal they will be leading on and why they are appropriate to lead on that aspect of the project
- The lead applicant's organisation will be designated as the host institution for IP, contractual and financial purposes. This cannot be delegated to the joint lead applicant
- The joint lead applicant must meet all the lead applicant eligibility criteria
- If researchers require a visa to work in the UK, they may qualify for the accelerated Global Talent visa route. This is open for promising and talented individuals in specific sectors wishing to work in the UK
- We welcome applications from investigators who have conducted independent research in the field of breast cancer or are experienced researchers in a related field
- Applicants may be new to breast cancer research, but the proposed team must include people with relevant breast cancer expertise
- We are committed to supporting young investigators in breast cancer research and encourage applications from talented early career researchers
- Applicants may not apply for more than 1 grant in the same funding round as lead or joint lead applicant, but may apply as co-applicant or collaborator on more than 1 application
- Applicants may have spent time away from research (e.g. a career break, maternity leave, long-term sick leave). Our reviewers will allow for this when the application is considered
- Co-applicants and collaborators may be based at institutions outside the UK/Ireland and/or at pharmaceutical or biotech companies
- We will consider applications for research that will take place within the NHS. Should the research become part of a clinical trial, we will fund the research but will not act as a sponsor
- Group leaders based at the Breast Cancer Now Toby Robins Research Centre who are already funded by Breast Cancer Now may not apply as lead applicant, but may apply as co-applicant or collaborator
- Applications for PhD studentships are also welcome. Please see additional guidance below:
 - PhD grants are available to established researchers working in an institution in the UK or Ireland, and are designed to capture new and highly qualified science graduates into a career of breast cancer research
 - PhD studentships can last for 3- or 4-years full time, or the part time equivalent, and can cover student stipend, student fees, college fees (where applicable), research expenses and essential equipment
 - The total amount requested for PhD studentships must not exceed £171,500
 - Applicants should have a track record of identifying and maximising potential in others (e.g. through managing and mentoring their own staff and early career researchers, as primary supervisor of PhD students)
 - We will consider applications for students undertaking a part-time PhD to facilitate flexible working arrangements
 - The lead PhD supervisor will be required to provide the following information with the application:
 - Details of a second supervisor who will take the place should the lead applicant/supervisor be absent

- List of current and past students. Including names, positions, start date and funding body. For past students, how many achieved their degree
- Information about any planned sabbaticals and who will supervise the student in your absence
- Training environment, including details about the training offered specific to this project and general research training offered by the host institution
- Suitability of the project for the student
- Institution - including what the institution provides (in terms of supervision and assessment) and expects (such as attendance of lectures) from its PhD students

The following will not be accepted:

- Applications from commercial entities
- Research proposals into conditions other than breast cancer
- Applications for equipment only. We will accept requests for small pieces of equipment as part of your proposal, but you must include a clear justification for this request
- Applications which request funding for consumables or running costs only
- Applications from an individual who is not employed by an eligible institution
- Requests to cover salary costs of tenured lead applicants and/or co-applicants. We will allow costs to cover the salary of named post-doctorate researchers who are listed co-applicants on the application, as long as they don't have their salary covered by other sources and they are working directly on the project
- Project grant applications cannot include PhD studentship stipend costs or MD training costs; these should be PhD studentship applications
- Applications for methods or service development
- Projects part-funded with other fundersⁱ
- Applications from prospective PhD students themselves
- Applications from clinicians taking time out of programme to undertake a PhD
- Resubmissions of proposals that have been previously rejected in any of our funding schemes, without an invitation to resubmit in the outcome letter. However, applications which are significantly different in terms of objectives and scope, and that go beyond addressing the reviewers' concerns of the previous application, may be accepted at the discretion of the committee

If you are unsure about the eligibility and remit of your project, please contact the research team at grants_admin@breastcancernow.org before you submit your application. Once the deadline has passed there will be no opportunity to consider individual circumstances and applications not meeting the requirements will be rejected without peer review.

Applications must be made using our online **SmartSimple system**. For guidance on how to use the system and what needs to be included in your application, please see our document '[How to apply](#)'.

ⁱ We rarely consider part-funding research projects; however, we are open to hearing about larger collaborative proposals. You are welcome to [email us](#) to discuss further.