



RESEARCH FUNDING STRATEGY

1. Our history and unique role

The Dunhill Medical Trust ("the Trust") not only funds some of the very best of the UK's academic and clinical research into understanding the mechanisms of ageing and treating age-related diseases and frailty; we also support community-based organisations which are working to enhance the lives of those who find they need extra support in later life. In working with these two communities, we are uniquely placed to bring them together to inform and influence the collective understanding of "what works".

The Trust has evolved over the years to become the nationally recognised charity that it is today but its ethos, networks and expertise remain influenced by the legacy (from which The Dunhill Medical Trust originated) of Herbert Dunhill whose wish was to further medical knowledge and research, in the light of his own experience of the effects of chronic ill health (in his case, tuberculosis). Since its formal establishment with the Charity Commission as The Dunhill Medical Trust in 1986, the Trust has supported a wide range of medical research in various universities and clinical research settings throughout the UK and in 1999, in the light of the demographic shift towards an increasingly ageing population, the Trustees agreed that the main priority for support should be research and other activities and developments related to older people and ageing.

In 2015, the incoming Government's "Key Issues for UK Parliament" underlined this need. *"Vastly improved life expectancy, one of the great triumphs of the last century, looks set to be one of great challenges of this one. Between 2015 and 2020, over a period when the general population is expected to rise 3%, the numbers aged over 65 are expected to increase by 12% (1.1 million); the numbers aged over 85 by 18% (300,000); and the number of centenarians by 40% (7,000)."* At the

Related information

Deriving its income from its endowment, the Trust does not receive or seek funds from any external body and complies fully with the [Joint Protocol of Cancer Research and Universities UK on Tobacco Industry Funding to Universities \(2004\)](#). For the purposes of the protocol, the following does NOT constitute tobacco industry funding:

- legacies from tobacco industry investments (provided these are sold on immediately);
- funding from a trust or foundation no longer having any connection with the tobacco industry, even though it may bear a name that (for historical reasons) has tobacco industry associations.

Dunhill Medical Trust, we have long believed that the challenges arising from an increasingly ageing population are amongst the greatest we need to address.

2. Our aims and objectives

We are committed to applying our knowledge, experience and financial resources to achieving the following aims in respect of the research theme of our organisational strategy:

- Inspiring and enabling academic researchers (from across the disciplinary range) and health and social care professionals to apply their knowledge and skills to understanding the mechanisms of ageing, treating disease and frailty and identifying and developing new and effective ways to improve the lives of older people.
- Enabling community-based organisations to develop innovative, evidence-based and best practice ways of delivering care and support for older people through convening and supporting for a between researchers and practitioners to inform and influence the collective understanding of “what works”.

3. What types of research will the Trust support?

The Trust is keen to support high quality research projects which are, perhaps, smaller than can be managed by the Research Councils or fall outside their priority themes but are important to understanding the mechanisms of ageing, treating disease and frailty and identifying and developing new and effective ways to improve the lives of older people. We are also committed to funding research into treating diseases and conditions which disproportionately affect older people but are less well-funded. As such, we will consider:

- bioscience underpinning the mechanisms of ageing, providing there is a clear statement of how the research will be used for the benefit of older people within a reasonable time frame;
- research relating to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of health services and social care delivery for older people;
- research relating to improving technology and the built environment, to meet the needs of an ageing population;
- behavioural research;
- clinical and applied research;

[Our Grant-making Policy, which sets out our principles for the assessment of applications and the criteria for evaluation \(including peer review\), is available on our website.](#)

- health services research;
- public health research;
- research carried out on a multidisciplinary basis;
- pilot and proof-of-concept studies that can provide sufficient evidence for larger studies which can attract support from major funding bodies;
- activities that will expand the research capacity in the above areas;
- research related to modifiable risk factors for well-being and health: for example, environmental factors, diet, stress, exercise, social participation, recreation etc.

Applicants will be expected to:

- set out their Pathway to Impact, providing a clear demonstration of what the research is expected to achieve within a reasonable time frame, in terms of patient benefit/improving the health and well-being of older people.
- Show how the project will support the development of research careers to increase and sustain capacity in the Trust's priority areas of interest.

4. Who will the Trust fund to carry out research?

Research grants may be awarded to any recognised university department, NHS hospital or other recognised research centre within the UK with the appropriate capacity, research record and governance arrangements to ensure that the research will be able to be carried out in an appropriate manner.

The Trust has no specific geographical link and will consider supporting applications anywhere within the UK. While the Trust aims to ensure equitable access to grants across the UK, applications will be considered on merit alone.

The Trust will support research carried out by:

- clinicians from all health professions (including allied health professionals) with the relevant qualifications and experience to undertake the research;
- academics with the relevant qualifications and experience to undertake the research;
- clinicians and researchers in training and/or registered to study for a higher qualification and who are supervised by

Our current range of open grant schemes, with associated advice and guidelines, the deadlines for application and funding available are available on our website.

appropriately qualified clinicians/academics.

All applicants for research grants must be able to demonstrate that they are based in a supportive and appropriately equipped research environment with a suitable skill mix in the research team.

Lead applicants for whom this is a first grant as Principal Investigator will not be precluded, indeed, the Trust wishes to encourage the development of research capacity by providing opportunities for career development. We would, however, expect to see a more experienced researcher as a Co-Investigator with a clear plan for mentoring and support.

5. How will the Trust support its research aims?

- Our research focus is broad and multi-disciplinary and prioritises work that has the potential to translate into practical action within a reasonable period of time.
- Our attitude to risk backs well-designed research which is imaginative, novel and acknowledges that the complexity of the issues involved often need a multi-disciplinary approach if it is to have real and positive impact on the lives of older people.
- We keep our portfolio of research grants and funding mechanisms under review so as to identify gaps in under-supported, but important, areas.
- We support the career development of those committed to enhancing our understanding of the mechanisms of ageing and treating and preventing disease and frailty.
- Our application procedures are developed to help applicants demonstrate how their proposals reflect our objectives and our assessment procedures are delivered to the highest standards of quality and best practice.
- We continue to attract a new generation of researchers by providing research fellowships and other awards. We will consider partnerships with others who share our vision and can help us to increase and broaden the support we can provide.

The Trust will provide:

- Research project grants for a maximum of 3 years for amounts within the range £25k to £300k to include salaries, consumables, small dedicated pieces of equipment and other eligible costs (which are detailed on the application section of our website),

but will not pay the Full Economic Costs (fECs) of research or research sponsorship costs. We will also provide funding to support activities associated with the Pathways to Impact plan set out in the application.

- Research Fellowships and Research Training Fellowships aimed at expanding research capacity in the designated priority areas.

We will consider funding partnerships with others who share our vision and can help us to increase and broaden the support we can provide.

