

## **Alzheimer's Research UK conflict of interest policy**

### 1. General

Alzheimer's Research UK wishes to ensure that its grant review processes are as objective as possible and that any conflicts of interest are managed and minimised appropriately. Alzheimer's Research UK recognises that individuals involved in the evaluation and granting process may also be involved with a variety of organisations and projects, or may hold financial investments, that might create an actual, potential or perceivable conflict of interest.

The policy presented in this document applies to current and former employees and Trustees of Alzheimer's Research UK, as well as to all reviewers of either pre-award stage grant applications, or ongoing funded projects. The term 'reviewers' covers peer reviewers who are members of standing bodies such as the Grant Review Board (GRB) and Clinical Trials Advisory Panel (CTAP), peer reviewers who volunteer on an *ad hoc* basis to inform the review Boards and Panels, and members of the Lay Review Panel.

### 2. Determining the existence of a conflict of interest

A conflict of interest may exist if an individual:

- a) has a close personal, business or professional relationship with the lead applicant, co-applicant or collaborator;
- b) is a named lead applicant, co-applicant or collaborator;
- c) is at the same institution of a lead applicant or co-applicant;
- d) is a lead applicant of the same grant type;
- e) published a scientific paper with a named lead applicant, co-applicant or collaborator in the past three years, except in instances of large scientific consortia or resulting workshop publications;
- f) submitted a grant application or received a grant award from any organisation as a co-applicant or collaborator with the named lead applicant in the last three years;
- g) owns equity interests (if worth £10,000 or more, or more than 1% of the total issued capital) in enterprises with involvement in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, biotech or related areas, or in any other enterprise that may have a real or perceived interest in the work of Alzheimer's Research UK. Third party investments (e.g. ISAs) should be held exempt from this.
- h) believes they are conflicted in a manner not covered in a) – g).

### 3. Disclosure of a conflict of interest and recusal

The guidelines set above shall be used to determine the existence of a conflict. In relation to g), consultancies and other external appointments (paid and unpaid), together with details of any remuneration or other benefits arising from investments, shall be disclosed. Although Alzheimer's Research UK is able to ascertain obvious conflicts of interest, each individual bears the personal responsibility for determining if a conflict of interest exists. In this case, they shall notify the Research Team immediately. Following discussion with the Research Team, and if a conflict of interest is confirmed, they shall withdraw from reviewing the grant

application. The existence of a conflict of interest and the basis of its determination shall be recorded in Alzheimer's Research UK records.

4. Review of proposals by reviewers (peer or lay) who are external to standing bodies such as the GRB and CTAP.

External reviewers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to individual grant applications to the Research Team as soon as the existence of a conflict becomes apparent. If a conflict of interest has been identified as stipulated in section 2 of this document, the reviewer must withdraw from reviewing that grant application. That reviewer will not receive documents pertaining to the application.

Once the review process is initiated, a written declaration on any actual, potential or perceivable conflicts of interest must be provided on the review proforma provided by Alzheimer's Research UK. The declaration will be visible to the Research Team, GRB and CTAP members but not the applicants.

External reviewers are able to apply to Alzheimer's Research UK for funding by the normal processes. This excludes them from reviewing other applications of the same type.

5. Review of proposals at triage and at Board and Panel meetings

GRB and CTAP members are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to individual funding decisions to the Research Team before the meeting wherein they will be discussed, or during the triage process or meeting as soon as the existence of a conflict becomes apparent. If a member is concerned about a possible conflict of interest involving another member of the Panel or Board, then he or she should raise the matter with the Chair.

If a conflict of interest has been identified as stipulated in section 2 of this document, the member must withdraw from reviewing that grant application. That member will not receive documents pertaining to the application, learn the identity of its referees or receive its referees' reports. He or she must withdraw from the meeting when the application is assessed and he or she must not score. Details of the discussion of that application will be deleted from any papers the member receives.

GRB and CTAP members are able to apply to Alzheimer's Research UK for funding by the normal processes. This does not exclude them from scoring other applications of the same type at the meeting, but it excludes them from being designated panel members during triage and at the meeting.

If a member is approached by an applicant for advice on an application, he or she may provide advice, but must report this to the Chair and the Research Team. They may subsequently be asked by the Chair to absent themselves from a discussion of the application concerned.

Where the Chair of the Panel or Board is an applicant or co-applicant on a grant application, he or she must declare an interest and should not be involved in the discussion of that grant type. A vice Chair will chair the meeting to prevent any undue influence.

For any questions regarding the existence of a conflict please contact the Research Team at [research@alzheimersresearchuk.org](mailto:research@alzheimersresearchuk.org).