

Alzheimer's Research UK Position Statement for Researchers

The current pandemic has led to serious financial implications for many sectors, including the charitable sector. Sadly, Alzheimer's Research UK is not immune to this as we rely on voluntary donations to fund research. In the first few months of this crisis we have seen our income drop significantly, not least because our opportunities for fundraising are currently limited and around 50% of our employees are on furlough leave.

As an organisation we have been very carefully considering our financial position and the level of research that we are able to commit to over the coming months. With such an uncertain and volatile economic climate, we believe it is vital to ensure the continued funding of our current grants and to maintain existing infrastructure. In order to protect these commitments, we have therefore made the incredibly difficult decision to postpone the funding of any new research, including our grant schemes.

This means that:

- The Grant Review Board meetings that were scheduled for June 2020 and January 2021 have been cancelled.
- The next Grant Review Board meeting is scheduled for June 2021.
- All applicants with a proposal currently under review will be given the option to defer their application to the June 2021 Grant Review Board meeting. Those who wish to defer will be given the opportunity to provide an update to their original application ahead of the meeting.
- Any disruptions to research funding activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be taken into consideration by our Board to make appropriate adjustments when assessing your record of outputs, research achievements, and career progression.

We will continue to carefully monitor our financial position over the coming months, and we will aim to open new rounds for funding as soon as it is possible to do so. For the most up to date information regarding new funding calls and deadlines, please keep checking our [Grant Scheme](#) webpages where we will communicate any updates as quickly as possible.

We would like to reassure the dementia research community that we are acutely aware of the challenges that the COVID-19 situation presents. Clearly there is a huge amount of uncertainty around how we might emerge from this pandemic, but what is clear is that the need for dementia research will only be heightened. We are working with other medical research charities and the government to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19, and the support of the dementia research community will be critical in these discussions.

Information for grant holders

We would like to take this opportunity to remind all of our grant holders that we will continue to be flexible across our grant schemes, to help support our scientists and minimise the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the pioneering dementia research that is being conducted across the UK and internationally. We recognise that in these uncertain times there may need to be significant changes to the way in which projects are carried out due to restrictions on travel, work, recruitment etc. Even as research institutions start to re-open and scientists begin a phased return to the labs, we recognize that further delays to projects

may be inevitable as we all adapt to this new way of working. We would like to reassure you that you have our full support should you need to request any of the following measures:

- We will support requests for no-cost extensions.
- We will continue to be flexible with budget virements to ensure that any underspend can be fully utilised to cover unexpected additional costs caused by the COVID-19 situation. For major budget rearrangements, please do seek further advice from a member of the team.
- We will consider requests to temporarily suspend grants for a period of up to three months in the first instance. This may be applied in cases where all grant activity/spend has been temporarily halted due to the COVID-19 situation.
- If you are a newly-funded grant holder, we can offer the option to delay the grant start date for a period of up to six months.
- Please note, all requests must be sent to us in writing at research@alzheimersresearchuk.org

If your salary or stipend is paid for by an Alzheimer's Research UK grant:

If a researcher whose salary is paid through an Alzheimer's Research UK grant is ill, we will defer to the policy of the employing organisation.

In the event that a researcher whose salary is paid through an Alzheimer's Research UK grant is in self-isolation due to government advice, we expect them to be able to work from home even if the activities undertaken change.

In the event that a researcher whose salary is paid through an Alzheimer's Research UK grant is unable to continue the research outlined in their application as a result of government-imposed restrictions relating to the coronavirus, we expect universities to access the Coronavirus Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme that has been made available by the government. Grant-holders may, if they wish, continue to use the grant to top up government support, however, please be aware that we will ultimately be unable to offer costed salary extensions. In the case that a researcher whose salary is paid through an ARUK grant is furloughed, ARUK must be notified as soon as possible.

If you are a clinical academic that is seconded back to the NHS to support the front-line coronavirus response, we will continue to pay your salary, however we would anticipate these costs to ultimately be recoverable from the NHS.

Alzheimer's Research UK funded meetings/conferences

If you are due to receive Alzheimer's Research UK support towards a meeting/conference that now needs to be postponed due to the government-induced restrictions regarding COVID-19, we will honour these payments provided your event is rescheduled within 12 months of the original date, and the programme remains essentially the same. If this is not possible, or for any other queries, please do get in touch with the team for further advice.

The Alzheimer's Research UK Office

In response to the recent government advice, our office is in the first phases of re-opening in adherence with the COVID-Secure workplace guidelines, however please note that the majority of staff remain working remotely at this time. Like many other charities, ARUK has made use of the Government's scheme to furlough staff in an attempt to mitigate the impact of the crisis on our operations. The Research team remains fully contactable by email and phone and will continue to provide support to grant holders and prospective applicants. If you have any queries at all, please do get in touch at research@alzheimersresearchuk.org and we will get back to you as quickly as possible.

9 July 2020