

Alzheimer's Research UK Position Statement for Researchers – Jan 2021 Update

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. Over the course of the pandemic, and the various national and regional lockdowns and social distancing measures, Alzheimer's Research UK has been carefully monitoring impact on our fundraising. Our financial year runs through to the end of March, and as a result of the pandemic we are now forecasting a 35% reduction in the total income we had originally planned for this year, and around a 14% reduction in our total income compared to our last financial year.

These forecasted reductions have resulted in us making some difficult decisions around delaying or cancelling planned research programmes and other important charitable activities. However, thanks to the backing of thousands of supporters, fundraisers and partners, we have been able to show some resilience to the situation, safeguard our research portfolio and maintain momentum with crucial studies, activities and services. Given the pandemic has impacted all corners of society, in particular families affected by dementia, we are humbled by people's generosity and commitment to Alzheimer's Research UK's mission this year.

Update on Grant Schemes

When we paused our response-mode programme earlier in 2020, we put dozens of application reviews on hold, including those from prospective Fellows. We know that Early Career Researchers have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and that many face funding gaps. We have monitored our financial situation closely and we are pleased that we have been able to bring the review of those submitted Fellowship applications forward to January 2021. We are working closely with their host institutions to secure their support and we will be announcing funding decisions in the first quarter of 2021.

Further to this:

- A Grant Review Board meeting is scheduled for June 2021. At this meeting, we will proceed with the review of all remaining applications that were submitted in 2020, along with the applications submitted to our most recent call in partnership with Race Against Dementia.
- All applicants who submitted in 2020 will be given the opportunity to provide an update to their original application ahead of the meeting. Further guidance around the timelines for this update will be made available shortly.
- 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. Considering the various national and regional lockdowns, and the distancing measures that are still in place, 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, or for any other enquiries, please do seek further advice from a member of the team.
- 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 until April 2021. Grant-holders may, if they wish, continue to use the grant to top up government support. In the case that a researcher whose salary is paid through an ARUK grant is furloughed, ARUK must be notified as soon as possible.

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 latest government advice, our office is open but we are operating at reduced capacity in order to adhere with the COVID-secure workplace guidelines. Please note that the majority of staff remain working remotely at this time. Like many other charities, where elements of our work have had to be paused or restricted, a number of employees have been on furlough leave.

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.

4 January 2021