

Alzheimer's Research UK Covid-19 Position Statement for Researchers

An update on our Financial situation

The ongoing 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. Last financial year (April 2020-March 2021) we saw around a 35% reduction in the total income we had originally planned for the year, which resulted in us making some difficult decisions around delaying or cancelling planned research programmes and other important charitable activities, in order to protect our existing research commitments.

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, particularly throughout this challenging time.

The ARUK Covid-19 Response

Over the course of the pandemic, we have listened carefully to our Research Community in order to understand the challenges faced by scientists across all career stages. In particular, we know that Early Career Researchers have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and that many face funding gaps and have very real concerns about their futures in research. We recognise the critical importance that Early Career Researchers play in driving forward dementia research, and we are committed to retaining and supporting these emerging future leaders.

When we paused our response-mode programme in March 2020, we put dozens of application reviews on hold, including those from prospective Fellows. After close monitoring of our financial situation and by working directly with host institutions to secure their support, we were able to prioritise submitted Fellowship applications, and bring forward their review to January 2021. Following our Grant Review Board meeting in January, we are excited to announce the funding of six new Fellowship awards. You can read more about the research that we have funded [here](#).

Although we are unfortunately not in a position to consider costed extensions across our full research portfolio, we are committed to supporting those Grant-holders whose research has been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, in particular our PhD students. Due to the disruptions caused by the various national and regional lockdowns, and the ineligibility of students for the furlough scheme, we are aware that many PhD students will have had their studies and research severely disrupted. To mitigate these disruptions, we have worked directly with final-year PhD students and their supervisors to provide 6-month costed funding extensions. To date, we have prioritised all ARUK-funded PhD students with a grant end date in 2020/2021, and we will continue to consider these extensions annually on a case-by-case basis.

A forward look to 2021

We would like to reassure the dementia research community that we are acutely aware of the challenges that the Covid-19 situation continues to present. We recognise that there is still a huge amount of uncertainty as we begin to 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 Covid-19, and the support of the dementia research community will be critical in these discussions. We will continue to use our voice in the political space to advocate for dementia researchers, especially for those who are at the earlier stages of their career.

As we move into our next financial year, and as we begin to see the gradual easing of government restrictions once again, we will continue to closely monitor the impact of the reopening of society on our fundraising operations. We are delighted to confirm that as of April 2021, we are able to begin the gradual reopening of our grant schemes for application, with an initial focus on prioritising those schemes focused on supporting Early Career Researchers. 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 will continue to work with our Grant-holders to support those whose research has been severely disrupted as a result of Covid-19. For more information regarding the support and flexibility that we can offer, please check out our [ARUK Covid-19 Response FAQ document](#), or get in touch with us at research@alzheimersresearchuk.org.

Finally, we would like to once again thank our brilliant and dedicated research community for the ways in which you have continued to make breakthroughs possible over the course of the past year. We are continually inspired by your resilience and your commitment to our mission.

The ARUK Research Team