

NIHR Parkinson's Disease Translational Research Collaboration (PD-TRC) Pump Priming Funding Call 2026

The PD-TRC Pump Priming Call aims to support projects that progress national capacity and capability for translational, early phase and experimental medicine studies in Parkinson's disease (PD) and related atypical parkinsonian syndromes, particularly in multiple system atrophy (MSA), progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP) and corticobasal degeneration (CBD), as well as prodromal PD/REM-Sleep behavioural disorder (RBD). Projects put forward for this call must involve genuine multi-centre collaboration in both their development and delivery.

Projects will be funded using contributions from the PD-TRC's BRC Member contributions and our charity partners; Parkinson's UK, Cure Parkinson's, the MSA Trust, and the PSP Association.

Scheme Overview

- Awards may be funded up to a maximum of £35K per project
- Funds must be spent by 31/12/2027
- Applications must clearly demonstrate meaningful involvement of multiple TRC sites and describe how the respective project will generate benefits for the wider PD-TRC, rather than just for the applicants and their centres
- Only those applications that clearly demonstrate how the respective projects will help achieve the PD-TRC objectives and KPIs will be considered for funding
- Project aims, a clear vision, and key milestones for delivery should be outlined within the application form
- Applications should include appropriate plans for implementing PPIE as a key aspect of the research activity
- All proposals must include a clear plan for applying for further funding

1. Call Remit

- Proposals should:
 - Clearly demonstrate alignment with the PD-TRC objectives and KPIs by noting these in the application form. The TRC objectives can be found as an appendix to this guidance document.
 - Be deliverable within 12 months. Funds must be spent by 31/12/2027
 - Aim for a collective benefit to the wider PD-TRC
 - Articulate how resources could support subsequent multi-centre, scalable, national studies
 - Include strong Early-Career Researcher (ECR) involvement. Applications led or co-led by ECRs are welcome and encouraged but should demonstrate how the ECRs will be supported by more senior PIs.
 - Demonstrate assembly of a critical mass of expertise via a working group or related structure
 - Demonstrate a clear vision and aims, including milestones focusing on major progress points necessary to achieve success
 - Include appropriate plans for implementing PPIE as a key part of the research activity. If you would like to use the PD-TRC PPI group for any activity, please note this within the application form
 - Have a credible case and plan for obtaining subsequent external competitive funding
 - Consider plans for industry and/or other external partner engagement and collaboration, where appropriate
- Please consider including atypical parkinsonism (PSP and MSA) in your proposal
- It is envisaged that pump priming will be crucial to support projects from the inception stage to a point where they are:
 - Competitive to apply for substantial external, peer-reviewed research funding through the

- development of high-quality collaborative research proposals
 - Strongly positioned to present mature collaboration opportunities to industry partners
 - Able to develop formal protocols and apply for ethical approval for clinical trials
- A small number of larger, well-coordinated applications (approximately one or two per workstream) are preferable to a larger number of small funding requests.
- Applications should be coordinated within each workstream. Applications can be led by one or both of the workstream leads, but this is not mandatory.
- Project proposals must align with the objectives of the TRC scientific workstreams (WS1-3).
- Funds must not be used to:
 - Supplement projects that already have funding from another source
 - Support workshops or events unless these directly contribute to the development of grant applications or other research outputs that will leverage further funding
 - Support projects run by a single institution or those conceived and developed independently of the PD-TRC's collaborative framework

2. Applicant Eligibility Criteria

- Lead applicants (other than ECRs) must be existing members of a PD-TRC workstream.
- The inclusion of an ECR as lead or co-lead is highly desirable. ECRs do not need to be current PD-TRC members.
- Applications should involve **at least** three participating TRC Sites, with involvement from all TRC centres encouraged wherever possible. A full list of TRC centres can be found here: [Parkinson's Disease Translational Research Collaboration | NIHR](#)
- You may also involve additional sites that are not part of the TRC.
- Applications should align with one or more of the following scientific workstreams:
 - **Clinical Cohorts:** This workstream will establish, harmonise and coordinate access to a UK-wide network of "trial-ready" clinical cohorts.
 - **Stratification and Outcome Measures:** This workstream will develop, validate and implement robust stratification tools and sensitive outcome measures for use in early-phase PD trials.
 - **Experimental Therapies:** This workstream will coordinate and accelerate the delivery of early-phase experimental therapies.

3. Finances and Costs

- Projects will be funded using contributions from the PD-TRC's BRC Member contributions and our charity partners; Parkinson's UK, Cure Parkinson's, the MSA Trust, and the PSP Association.
- The scheme permits applications for awards of up to **£35,000**. Financial support requested should be clearly itemised and be specific to the project's needs.
- We will aim to distribute funding evenly across Workstreams 1–3 (allocating approximately £35,000 to each workstream) but this will depend on the scientific quality of the submitted proposal and other relevant criteria (see section 1: Remit).
- Costs for equipment are capped at £5,000, as per the BRC contract, and must be clearly justified.
- Funding will only be available for directly incurred costs, no overhead (indirect) costs are permitted. These awards will not fund HEI FEC (indirect or estates costs).
- Capital costs will not be covered by this scheme.
- NIHR Sheffield BRC (Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS FT) is the host institution of the PD-TRC and will be responsible for transferring funding to the respective institutions.
- Funding will be made available via a signed agreement between Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS FT and the host University/Trust of the recipient.
- Funds can only be transferred to recipients that have signed the NIHR PD-TRC Collaboration Agreement.
- Funds will only be transferred based on actual expenditure. Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS FT must be invoiced quarterly in arrears with a transaction listing provided as evidence of actual spend.

4. Application Process

- Applications will initially be reviewed by the PD-TRC Manager against the scheme's eligibility criteria.
- All applications meeting the criteria will be reviewed and shortlisted by non-conflicted PD-TRC leads, non-conflicted workstream leads, and at least one PPIEP contributor. This will take place virtually using pre-

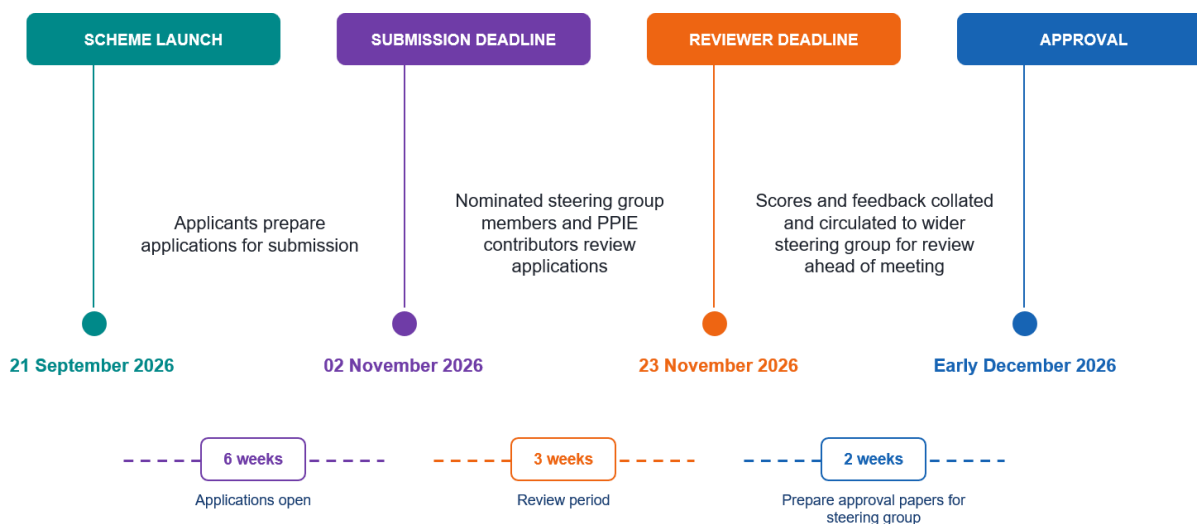
- approved assessment forms which are to be returned to the PD-TRC Manager upon completion.
- Shortlisted proposals (typically those scoring as Green, see below) will be presented at a Steering Committee meeting by one designated non-conflicted Steering Committee member who will be supported by a second designated non-conflicted Steering Committee member. Designated members will receive copies of the assessment forms ahead of the meeting.
 - If a reviewer has a conflict of interest with an application under review, they should not review the application. Members are asked to notify the PD-TRC Manager if they have a conflict of interest or are in any doubt as to whether they should review an application. If a Steering Group member has a conflict of interest with an application under review, they will be asked to leave the meeting for the entirety of the discussion.
 - A conflict of interest is considered to exist where a reviewer:
 - is directly involved in the work the application proposes to carry out
 - is in the same workstream
 - works in the same geographical centre/organisation as the lead applicant
 - is involved in the supervision of any ECR co-applicants
 - is working on a current active grant with the lead applicant
 - All non-conflicted Steering Group members in attendance (excluding funder representatives) will then be requested to score applications and agree which proposals meet the criteria and threshold for funding.
 - Scoring: Applications will be scored out of a maximum of 6 using a traffic light system. Green (5-6, excellent, with no major concerns), Amber (3-4, good, with some concerns), Red (1-2, poor, with serious concerns). For applications scoring 4 or lower, the Steering Group will decide whether there is sufficient scope for the applicants to revise/resubmit the application.
 - All applications will also be reviewed by at least one member of the UK PD-CSG PPI Group. PPIEP reviewers are only expected to score and comment on the PPIEP elements of the application. Reviewers may also provide feedback on other sections of the application if they wish to do so.
 - Conditional Awards: Applicants may be asked to address reviewer comments before funding approval. This may include responses to PPIEP comments.

5. Reporting

- Each project will be expected to provide:
 - A short interim report 6 months after receipt of funds
 - A final report upon completion of the project, detailing how funds have been used and the outcomes of the project, including any further funding leveraged. This will be due 2 months after awards have ended.
 - Ad hoc updates regarding the progress of the study where appropriate

6. Timelines

Below are the expected timelines for this call and are subject to change. Any changes will be shared in writing with all TRC members. Awards are expected to be issued by 31/12/2027.



Appendix – NIHR PD-TRC Objectives and KPIs

Objectives and KPIs	Objective Detail	Relevant Workstream(s)
Year 1 KPI 1	To have mapped and compared protocols, data dictionaries and architecture etc, to see where there is overlap and where the key differences are between cohorts	Workstream 1
Year 1 KPI 2	To have mapped existing expertise and datasets within members with regard to clinical, genetic, digital, imaging etc	Workstream 2
Year 1 KPI 3	To have completed a horizon scan for methodologies/biomarkers in development which may become suitable for disease stratification in the future	Workstream 2
Year 1 KPI 4	To have mapped existing drug development efforts to understand experimental medicine/early phase clinical trials pipeline (both repurposed and novel) (including data-driven approaches) which would benefit from access to stratified patient cohorts in future early phase clinical trials	Workstream 3
Year 1 KPI 5	To have mapped existing training provision across members and partner organisations	Workstream 4
Year 1 KPI 6	To embed ECRs across all PD-TRC workstreams, ensuring they are being supported by senior members to co-develop or lead the development of projects and pump-priming applications	Workstream 4
Year 1 KPI 7	To have identified additional ECRs in PD research within members and partner organisations as a first step towards creating a vibrant PD-TRC ECR cohort	Workstream 4
Year 2 KPI 1	To have developed standard mechanisms for data access and sharing	Workstream 1
Year 2 KPI 2	To have initiated at least two research projects supported by the PD-TRC pump-priming scheme or other funding mechanisms, and related to the WS1 SMART objectives, e.g. projects on deep phenotyping, mechanistic stratification, etc	Workstream 1
Year 2 KPI 3	To have created a shared resource inventory accessible to PD-TRC members which will summarize accessible clinical, digital, molecular and other datasets facilitating the biologically informed subgrouping of participants	Workstream 2
Year 2 KPI 4	To have initiated at least two funded research projects focussing on stratification and outcome measures supported by the PD-TRC pump-priming scheme or other funding mechanisms and related to WS2 SMART objectives	Workstream 2
Year 2 KPI 5	To have developed and implemented a strategy together with the NIHR Business Development Team which will allow the PD-TRC to define the TRC's offer for prospective industry collaborators	Workstream 3
Year 2 KPI 6	To have established at least three innovative early phase clinical trials	Workstream 3
Year 2 KPI 7	To have developed a collaboration with other similar ECR support programmes, e.g. ACORD Fellows	Workstream 4
Year 2 KPI 8	To have supported PD-TRC pump-primed pilot projects (or other funding bid) co-led by ECRs (if they meet the scientific quality standard) and ensured their successful launch	Workstream 4
Year 2 KPI 9	To have held at least one National workshop focussing on the research training needs of ECRs with interest in PD experimental medicine studies	Workstream 4

Short Term Objective 1 (1-2 years)	Undertake additional stakeholder mapping to ensure the PD-TRC will be well positioned with national and international existing and emerging initiatives	TRC - Wide
Short Term Objective 2 (1-2 years)	Finalise engagement/onboarding of multidisciplinary partners (academic, NHS, industry, and PPIE stakeholders) to ensure national representation	TRC - Wide
Short Term Objective 3 (1-2 years)	Undertake initial scoping exercise of existing resources and subsequently catalogue and harmonise inclusion/exclusion criteria and data/sample collection protocols across existing trial-ready cohorts, to create a shared resource inventory accessible to PD-TRC members which will be hosted at the sites of the WS leads and updated 6 monthly by WS1 (clinical cohorts) and WS2 (outcome measures)	Workstreams 1 and 2
Short Term Objective 4 (1-2 years)	Launch a PD-TRC pump-priming call to facilitate 1–2 pilot projects related to key PD-TRC objectives. The pump-priming call will be used to help support the delivery of workstream activities/KPIs	TRC - Wide
Short Term Objective 5 (1-2 years)	Develop PD-TRC capacity-building plan, including ECR mentoring, training modules, and secondments	Workstream 4
Short Term Objective 6 (1-2 years)	Embed real-time PPIE input into study design, governance, and dissemination to ensure research relevance and acceptability. This will be achieved by enlarging the already existing UK-PD-CSG PPIE group from currently 5 to 10 members to account for the additional PD-TRC related commitments and widen the remit to include input into PD-TRC related activities with enhanced representation from under-served communities	TRC - Wide
Short Term Objective 7 (1-2 years)	Develop an industry engagement offer with the NIHR Business Development Team to outline what the PD-TRC will offer to industry and how industry can engage	TRC - Wide
Medium Term Objective 1 (2-5 years)	To have demonstrably accelerated the translation of promising therapeutic targets into early-phase trials and delivered, or be actively in the delivery of, at least three interventional studies	Workstream 3
Medium Term Objective 2 (2-5 years)	To have supported national coordination of PD research assets, and established a sustainable framework for cross-sector collaboration that directly addresses the needs of PwP.	TRC - Wide
Medium Term Objective 3 (2-5 years)	Develop collaborative funding applications, building on the success of Y1/Y2 PD-TRC activities and addressing key priorities identified by the PD-TRC Steering Group.	TRC - Wide
Medium Term Objective 4 (2-5 years)	To have delivered the research projects supported by the PD-TRC pump-priming scheme and continue to leverage further funding to translate the initial projects pump-funded by the PD-TRC (as well as other projects) into sustained, externally funded experimental medicine research.	TRC - Wide
Medium Term Objective 5 (2-5 years)	To develop and continue to deliver an innovative experimental medicine portfolio.	Workstream 3
Medium Term Objective 6 (2-5 years)	To be delivering against the PD-TRC Capacity Building plan noted from the short-term goal.	Workstream 4
Medium Term Objective 7 (2-5 years)	To have enabled ECR placements at other participating PD-TRC sites and other ECR-focussed activities to address their specific training needs as future leaders of PD experimental medicine studies	Workstream 4
Medium Term Objective 8 (2-5 years)	To have expanded collaborations with both larger pharma companies and SMEs via delivery of the industry engagement strategy. For example, through: Collaboration to co-design and co-deliver at scale across the PD-TRC member sites	TRC - Wide

	• Providing access to trial-ready cohorts with robust outcome measures • Support (including, where required, co-leadership) for funding applications (especially for SMEs) • Facilitation of PPIE review	
Medium Term Objective 9 (2-5 years)	Collaborate with PPIE members to co-develop and start delivering the PPIE strategic delivery plan with particular focus on research inclusion.	TRC - Wide