

Cerebra Grant Application Guidance



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About this guide

This guide is intended to provide applicants with details of Cerebra's funding and how to apply. It also sets out our expectations should your application be successful.



About us

Families where a child has a brain condition face challenges every day. Just to learn, play, make friends, enjoy and experience the world can feel difficult, even impossible. But we don't believe there is any challenge that can't be overcome.

Our *Vision* is that every family that includes a child with a brain condition will have the chance to discover a better life together.

By 'brain condition', we mean any neurodevelopmental condition that affects the developing brain, including those caused by illness, genetics or traumatic injury. Brain conditions include (but are not limited to) autism, ADHD, Down's syndrome, learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and developmental delay.

Our work across brain conditions, many of which occur together and/or share similar risk factors, behaviours and challenges, gives us a unique perspective within the charity research sector, one that we aim to utilise to achieve our goals. We support research aimed at:

- reducing the prevalence of disabling conditions that have their origin in pregnancy; and
- giving families access to the highest quality evidence based information and support so they can begin to tackle the challenges they face and make informed decisions about what is right for them.

Our priorities for 2019 to 2024

Having evaluated our previous research activity, our direct work with families and considered the findings of consultation exercises carried out by researchers in the childhood disability field, we want to focus more explicitly on supporting research to benefit the families of children with multiple and complex needs, rare or poorly understood conditions. We reflect this desire in our priorities for 2019 -2024, which are to support research in the following areas:



Identify women at risk of experiencing complications in pregnancy and preventing or minimising the impact of those complications on mother and baby.



Study early years support for families to avoid or minimise problems later on. Focusing on children's behaviour, the role of the family, appropriate support for families and understanding and overcoming the difficulties associated with multiple and profound difficulties.



Overcome barriers to legal entitlements to public services, in particular health and social care services.



Understand the different types, causes and effects of mental health problems for children and young people with multiple and complex needs or rare and poorly understood neurodevelopmental conditions.



Understand the different types, causes and effects of sleep problems in children with neurodevelopmental conditions and the actions that can help families get a better night's sleep.



Promote creative, inclusive and innovative design solutions through the growth and development of our Cerebra Innovation Centre.

Our funding streams

- We support research at universities in line with our charitable research priorities. We fund research for the public benefit that will improve the health and wellbeing of children with neurological conditions and their families. We do not seek to own the intellectual property arising from the research.
- We want to fund a small number of research programmes, typically for up to a 4-year period that address our priorities and help us achieve our goals. We particularly welcome co-ordinated collaborative bids, making use of skill sets across universities and work sectors.
- We typically fund between £45,000 and £120,000 per annum and are especially open to discussing funding alongside other funders that diversifies and/or increases the total funding available to the research programme.
- We will aim to allocate a minimum of £2,500,000 to this area of work over the life span of our strategy. For more information on our funding streams, refer to our [Research and Information Strategy 2019 – 2024](#).

Eligibility

We fund research at non profit academic institutions. Each of our funding streams has its own set of eligibility requirements, which will be outlined when funding opportunities become available in detail.

Principal Investigators (PI) should be able to demonstrate a track record of publishing world leading research. They will have full responsibility for managing the grant, both scientifically and financially, and be our point of contact. Co-applicants are expected to make a significant contribution to the proposed research, providing expertise or skills not otherwise available to the PI.

Applications from early-mid career researchers as lead applicants or co-investigators responsible for the delivery of the work are welcome but must be supported by a supervisor deemed an expert in their field.

Applicants should ensure that they have the necessary collaborations in place before submission. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, no more than one award will be made to any applicant in each funding round.



Allowable costs

Cerebra will provide assistance with funding costs directly incurred by applicants in conducting and completing the proposed project. Such costs will include:

- Salary for members of the project team.
- Consumables: Applicants may apply for funding to cover research consumables such as reagents and materials. Items of equipment may only be included in an application if specifically required for the project and do not exceed 25% of the total amount awarded. Quotes must be provided for any requested equipment with a value of £5,000 or more.
- Communication and publication costs.
- Other costs, including travel.

We do not fund major items of capital expenditure. We will not meet the full economic costs of the research, nor pay towards overheads that support general university infrastructure.

You must provide detailed information about the costs that you require funding for, with a breakdown of the amount requested and a written justification. All expenses must be reasonable and proportionate. You should also provide evidence confirming any funding or support received from elsewhere.



Grant duration

All research proposals are expected to conclude within the grant period set out in your proposal. If you expect your project will run for longer, you must make this clear in your application and set out clearly why it cannot conclude within this time.

Ethical approval

All research proposals involving investigations using healthy volunteers, patients or patient material will require ethical approval from the Local Research Ethics Committee. An awarded grant may not begin without evidence that ethical approval will be secured before any work is undertaken.

Use of animals

Cerebra endorses the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) position on the use of animals in research, as outlined in this [statement](#). We support the principle of using animals in research, when no other alternatives (carefully and fully considered) can be used to advance understanding and treatment of serious health conditions.

We do not take the decision to fund animal research lightly. Through our rigorous expert peer review process, we are committed to fund high quality animal research that will benefit the health and wellbeing of children with neurological conditions, only if it is well-designed, fully justified (all other possibilities have been considered), complies with the law and supports the principle of the 3Rs to refine, reduce and replace the use of animals in research.

We expect all applicants to have developed their proposals in accordance to the above, providing all required details, including relevant approvals, procedures, severity, species/model, number of animals and all other relevant information.

Public involvement

At Cerebra, we work closely with families of children with brain conditions to find out where help is most needed and then work with to provide research-driven, high-quality advice and support.

We believe that **public involvement** is fundamental in designing and conducting good health and social care research. It enables members of the public with relevant experience to actively participate and contribute, making studies more applicable and results more likely to have a greater impact to children affected by brain conditions.

Involvement can include:

- Participation in the choice of research topics (commenting on research applications prior to their submission).
- Advising on practical aspects of the study (checking that the practical arrangements for participants are appropriate and that participation in the study is not overly burdensome, reviewing materials such as leaflets or questionnaires prior to use).
- Assisting in carrying out the research (as members of a project advisory group throughout the research process).
- Improving the communication of findings to participants and the wider public (helping in the drafting of a plain English summary of findings).
- Guiding the translation of the research findings, for example into altering clinical practice or guiding further research.
- Evaluating impact.

We expect all applications submitted to Cerebra to reflect this, although we recognise that the nature and extent of public involvement will vary depending on the context of each project.

Application process

Over the life span of this strategy, we will launch schemes to support the best research for families. Schemes will be openly advertised and bids invited through an open tender process. We will advertise funding opportunities on our website, through social media and any other channels trustees deem appropriate.

Your application form and supporting evidence must be submitted via email to georgiam@cerebra.org.uk by the closing date and time specified. All questions on the application form must be answered in full and any supporting evidence should be included.

The application process will commence as follows:

Internal triage

Initial sift of applications to determine those that meet the eligibility criteria. Applicants who are unsuccessful at this stage will be notified via email and in writing.

1st review

Independent review of applications meeting the eligibility criteria by our Research Advisory Committee. Response to feedback by applicants if required. Applicants who are unsuccessful at this stage will be notified via email and in writing.

2nd review

External peer review by a minimum of two independent scientific experts. Evaluation by members of our Research Support Network (people with lived family experience of childhood brain conditions - that could be as a parent, carer, sibling or as a young person directly affected), who will provide a lay review assessing the relevance and importance of the research to children with brain conditions.

Recommendations for funding

Cerebra's Research Advisory Committee will meet to consider all applications, peer and lay review scores and comments prior to providing ranking and recommendations that will inform funding decisions.

Final decisions

Cerebra trustees will make ultimate funding decisions, taking into consideration our Research Advisory Committee's recommendations. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their bids via email and in writing.

Plain English project summary

In section 2 of our application form, we require a plain English summary explaining your research. Although the summary should be written in lay terms, please make sure that it contains enough detail for a lay reviewer to make an informed decision about the project.

Some useful tips to consider while writing your summary:

- Avoid using jargon, abbreviations and technical terms wherever possible. If you have to use them provide a clear explanation.
- Keep sentences short and simple. Try not to use more than 20 words per sentence.
- Break up the text, for example by using bullet point lists
- Ask someone without a scientific background to read your draft and advise if anything is unclear.

Assessment of applications

Assessment of applications will be made against the following criteria:

- **Overall Quality**

The proposal has good overall quality and demonstrates a high standard of knowledge and understanding of relevant issues.

- **Relevance and Importance**

The proposal is relevant to our Research and Information Strategy and there are no potential conflicts with our remit and values. The proposal addresses important research questions, or gaps in knowledge.

- **Scientific Merit and Feasibility**

The proposal is accurate, with a sound methodology and has realistic budgets and timelines.

- **Impact**

The proposal sets out clear expectations for outcomes. There is clear evidence of a plan to disseminate research results to enable uptake by relevant end-users.

- **Value for Money**

The requested costs and support are adequately justified by the importance and scientific potential of the research

Acknowledgement of Cerebra funding

You will be required to acknowledge the support of Cerebra in facilitating your project, in all publications and media communications including press releases, presentations and training courses.

Reporting requirements

You will be required to submit a progress and expenditure report on at least a yearly basis. Details of when this is due will be set out during award activation. The final report must be submitted to us within 3 months of the end of your research project.

Evaluation

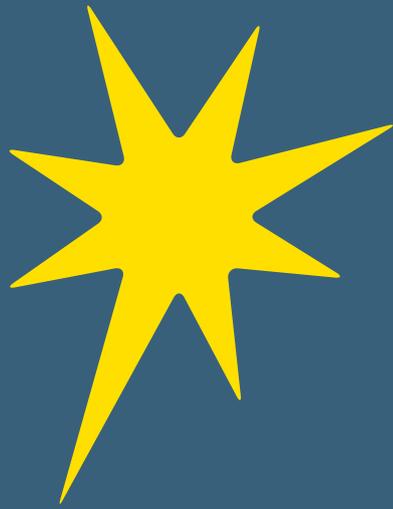
Successful applicants are expected to participate in any evaluation exercise carried out by Cerebra to assess the impact and value of the programme grants. You must be willing and able to participate in promotional events organised by us, such as presenting research outcomes at our conferences and speaking events, writing articles for our newsletters and other public activities.

Assistance with your application

If you require any assistance in completing your application, please contact us at georgiam@cerebra.org.uk and we will be pleased to assist with any queries around the application process.

Complaints

If you are unhappy about the way we have handled your application, we ask that you contact us in the first instance to discuss your concerns.



We're the charity dedicated to helping families with children with brain conditions discover a better life together.

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