Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity

Research Strategy

**1. Objectives**

Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity provides and supports excellence in paediatric, obstetric and neonatal healthcare enhancing the treatment, care and wellbeing of children through the Royal Hospital for Children at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital Campus and other hospitals and community based services both nationally and internationally. In order to fulfil this mission one of our key objectives is to proactively engage in the advancement of the paediatric, obstetric and neonatal research support.

**2. Background**

Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity (formerly known as Yorkhill Children’s Charity and Yorkhill Children’s Foundation) was established in September 2001 as a successor to the Yorkhill Sick Kids Fund. Since its inception it has provided over £14 million of funding towards the Royal Hospital for Sick Children and the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow and related facilities within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC). As these facilities provide a national service for many specialties, sick children from all over Scotland and beyond benefit from Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity. GCHC is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC). <https://www.amrc.org.uk/position-statement-on-supporting-research-in-universities>

**3. Research Scheme**

The Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity Research Fund (GCHC Research Fund, formerly the Yorkhill Research Support Scheme) was launched in 2014 to implement the research grant process. The GCHC Research Fund Steering Committee (GCHC Research Fund SC) meets on a bi-annual basis to provide guidance on the process of paediatric research support in Scotland and beyond. Suitable applications are peer reviewed by internal and external reviewers before a final decision is made by an external panel of internationally renowned experts . The topics of research supported are in line with the vision and mission of Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity (GCHC) and tangible outcomes are favoured. Success stories are published in various media outlets with acknowledgement of GCHC support.

To date the majority of research projects funded by GCHC have supported individuals in partnership with academic institutions for one to three year projects. Many studies have led to high-impact professional publications. There has been direct benefit to both children and adults affected by a range of childhood conditions and many of the findings have influenced the strategic development of research funding by GCHC.

**4. GCHC’s Research Strategy**

GCHC aims to fund world-class research that benefits child health in its widest sense ranging from the developing foetus to the adult with a childhood-onset illness and the GCHC Research Fund will review any applications within these areas. All aspects of research will be considered including, but not exclusively, basic laboratory research investigating disease mechanisms, preclinical experimental studies and clinical research (including, but not limited to, novel treatments, supportive therapies, epidemiology, and psychological impact). Through the GCHC Research Fund, the charity will also consider participating in the funding of clinical trials.

As part of its strategy GCHC aims to encourage the dissemination of research both nationally and internationally to both professional and lay audiences. The charity is keen to ensure that results are applied to provide clinical benefit.

There will be two calls for submission each year and will be advertised on the GCHC Research Fund section of the GCHC website and disseminated amongst the paediatric research community throughout Scotland and further afield. Whilst the focus may change slightly year-on-year the charity will consider funding a range of grants which may include:

* Clinical fellowships (Call 1)
* PhD studentships (Call 1)
* Undergraduate Summer Scholarships (Call 1)
* Project Support Grants (Call 2)
* Small Project Grants (Call 2)

Applications in each annual round are subject to an internal and external peer review process. Whilst it is envisaged that the main stream of funding for research by GCHC will come from formal awards, the charity may from time-to-time decide to award further grants or consider applications out with this main funding. Such instances may occur when the charity receives funding specifically for this purpose. However, the application process for these one-off awards will still require a rigorous process of review as described above. We will also consider co-funding projects in partnership with other recognised funding bodies (such as the St Andrew’s Society of New York).

**5. Research Priorities**

GCHC will consider funding any application that falls within its Research Strategy as set out above. The evaluation process of each grant application will consider whether the proposed research fulfils a strategic aim of the charity. It is expected that all research funded by GCHC will have the potential to demonstrate benefit to children.

**6. Restrictions on research applications**

GCHC’s grant funding will be allocated to research teams attached to recognised academic or medical institutions.

GCHC is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC). We support the principle of using animals in research when it is necessary to advance understanding of health and disease and to develop new treatments. This research only takes place where there is no alternative available. All AMRC member charities support this principle, as outlined in this statement: <https://www.amrc.org.uk/position-statement-on-the-use-of-animals-in-research>

GCHC only funds research which complies with the law and supports the [principle of the 3Rs](http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/the-3rs); to refine, reduce and replace the use of animals in research. If animals are used then the numbers should be minimised. All work must be done in accordance with the UK Home Office guidelines (or equivalent) and all laboratories must hold valid certification. All research projects which are funded, or partially funded by GCHC must declare from the outset whether animals are to be used at any stage during the research. If a decision is made after the award of the grant to include animal research then GCHC must be informed as soon as possible.

**7. GCHC’s research process and administration**

It is at the discretion of the GCHC Professional and Scientific Advisory Committee (PSAC) and the GCHC Board on the level of funding available, and subsequently awarded for the research strategy. The Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity Research Fund Steering Committee (GCHC Research Fund SC) exists to assist GCHC in these responsibilities. This committee comprises (where possible):

* Up to four GCHC representatives, including the Chief Executive, Head of Fundraising and Board representation
* Representatives from a range of disciplines covering children’s and women’s health
* A representative from NHSGGC Research and Development
* Members of the wider research community and HEIs in Scotland.

The role of the GCHC Research Fund Steering Committee (GCHC Research Fund SC) is to:

* Nominate members to consider applications for funding
* Seek peer review where appropriate
* Advise GCHC of grants awarded
* Monitor progress of projects during the term of funding

The full terms of reference are attached (Appendix A)

**8. Peer Review**

GCHC aims to fund high quality research and all applications will be subjected to rigorous peer review. All grant applications for amounts greater than £5,000 per annum will be subjected to external peer review as well as internal peer review from members of the GCHC Research Fund SC or qualified representatives of the academic staff. All applicants must suggest at least five external reviewers with their application. Prior to sending an application for external review, consent will be obtained from the applicant. Any comments from an external reviewer and those from the internal review can be made available to the applicant anonymously if requested.

All outcomes regarding funding decisions will be communicated to applicants in a timely fashion with the expected timeline for the decision outcome publicised on the GCHC Research Fund section of the GCHC website.

**9. GCHC funded research – eligible costs**

GCHC supports the view that the mission of charities is to fund medical research, not central overheads.

The GCHC Research Fund will fund directly incurred costs of all its research awards. However, as a charity, there is an expectation that the general running costs (e.g. indirect costs, estate costs, support services) will be provided by government (or government bodies), through funding to universities.

The costs are classified as follows:

* Directly Incurred Costs – actual costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project (e.g. staff salaries, equipment, materials, travel)
* Directly Allocated Costs – costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities and based on estimates (e.g. principal and co-investigator costs, estates and infrastructure costs of research facility)
* Indirect Costs – non-specific costs charged across all projects that are based on estimates (e.g. HR and finance services, library costs)

The GCHC Research Fund will fund directly incurred costs of a research project within the limits set and have the discretion to fund other costs where it helps to further the charitable mission of GCHC but it will not fund Directly Allocated or Indirect Costs.

**10. Funding from pharmaceutical companies**

GCHC work within the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) Code of Practice.

**11. Dissemination Strategy**

All grant recipients are expected to submit a report following the end of their project and summaries, and significant results will be published on the GCHC Research Fund section of the GCHC website and other GCHC publications.

Recipients are encouraged to take part in the Glasgow Paediatric Research Day to showcase the research projects funded by GCHC. This event occurs annually at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Teaching & Learning Centre.

Appendix A

Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity Research Fund Steering Committee

Terms of Reference

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| --- | --- |
| **Project Name:** | Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity Research Fund |
| **Version Number** | 8.0 |
| **Date last Updated** | 29/07/2021 |
| **Prepared by** | Martina Rodie |

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| **1.0 Purpose** |
| 1.1 The Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity Research Fund (GCHC Research Fund) Steering Committee will guide the process of allocation of research funding from charitable sources to eligible recipients who are involved in research that benefits children’s health in Scotland.1.2 The GCHC Research Fund Steering Committee will strive to achieve the optimum distribution of research grant funding amongst projects deemed to be of a high standard and with tangible outcomes (papers, grants, service provision) with the overarching aim of improving children’s health in Scotland. |
| **2.0 Remit** |
| 2.1 The GCHC Research Fund Steering Committee will provide advice and guidance on:* The application process
* The peer review process
* Dissemination practice (website, newsletters, announcements)
* AMRC accreditation of the scheme
* Future direction of the scheme
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| **3.0 Membership** |
| 3.1 The GCHC Research Fund Steering Committee comprises the list below

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| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role** |
| Professor Faisal Ahmed | Chair, University of Glasgow |
| Dr Martina Rodie | Clinical Lead, Office for Rare Conditions |
| Dr Jillian BryceMs Shannon Mullen | Management Group, University of GlasgowManagement Group, University of Glasgow |
| Ms Liz Dougan | Management Group, University of Glasgow |
| Mrs Kirsten Watson | Chief Executive, Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity |
| Mr Adam Kelly | Head of Trusts & Philanthropy, GCHC |
| Ms Alison Gardner | Accountant, GCHC |
| Mr Stuart O’Toole | Paediatric Surgery, NHSGGC  |
| Dr Robbie Lindsay | MVLS Institute, University of Glasgow |
| Professor John Reilly | Public Health, University of Strathclyde |
| Dr John Haughney | Associate Director, R&D, QEUH |
| Dr Helen McDevitt | Neonatology, NHSGGC |

3.2 Shannon Mullen, Co-ordinator, will take minutes and coordinate meetings* 1. The chair will be Professor Faisal Ahmed (University of Glasgow)

3.4 Dr Martina Rodie will act as Manager/Director.  |
| **4.0 Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity Research Fund Procedures** |
| **4.1 Decision Making**4.1.1 Decisions will be made by consensus at Steering Committee meetings or by e-mail voting between meetings. A majority decision will stand. Tacit voting will be implemented. 4.1.2 A quorum of members is required with the minimum number being 8 plus the Chair**4.2 Minutes and Agendas** Minutes will be taken and distributed by Shannon Mullen, Co-ordinator. Agendas will be compiled by Shannon Mullen and Martina Rodie in consultation with the Chair. Agendas and minutes will be distributed one week prior to the meeting. Minutes will be distributed within one week of the meeting.**4.3 Absences** A member can appoint a deputy if planning to be absent. If a member is absent for three consecutive meetings the management group will review their membership. **4.4 Term of Membership**2 years, renewable for one more year. Exiting members should nominate a replacement. Members who have stepped down should wait for at least 3 years before re-joining. **4.5 Conflict of Interest Policy**Members must adhere to the Conflict of Interest Policy of the Committee and each member must complete a CoI Declaration Form (Register of Interests) annually. |
| **5.0 Meetings** |
| 5.1 The GCHC Research Fund Steering Committee will meet twice a year for one hour at a regular time.  |
| **6.0 Resources** |  |
| 6.1 GCHC Research Fund Website: <https://www.glasgowchildrenshospitalcharity.org/about-us/our-research> |

GCHC/GCHC Research Fund - Policy on the use of animals in research

1. Glasgow Children’s Hospital Charity (is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities) and will only fund research involving live animals when this is essential to the outcome of the research, there is no reasonable alternative method of obtaining the data, and when pain and distress to animals is minimised. <https://www.amrc.org.uk/position-statement-on-the-use-of-animals-in-research>
2. The use of animals must be fully justified in all applications for research grants.
3. The Charity recognises that experiments on living animals are an essential part of research to improve the understanding and treatment of human and animal disease. The Charity requires, however, that all experiments should be carried out with due concern for the welfare of the animals, and using the minimum number necessary to provide clear data in well-designed experiments.
4. All research projects funded by the Charity which involve the use of protected animals in regulated procedures under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 must have a Home Office project licence, and each individual working on experiments using animals must have a personal licence. The institution must also have an establishment licence.
5. The Charity supports the AMRC statement on the use of animals in research. All applicants and grant holders must have regard to animal welfare and advances in the refinement, replacement and reduction of animal use, implement the principles in the cross funder guidance ‘[Responsibility in the Use of Animals in Biosciences Research](http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/the-3rs)’.
6. The Charity will not fund research applications which do not comply with this policy.

GCHC/GCHC Research Fund – Code of conduct

*Code of conduct for scientific advisors, external referees, applicants and charity and support scheme staff*

1. Details of research applications and related correspondence, Steering Committee meetings papers, and the identity of external referees are strictly confidential and must be kept secure and not disseminated to or discussed with others outside the review process.
2. Committee members and external referees can expect that their comments will be treated in confidence by Research Fund staff. Applicants can expect that Research Fund staff will not disclose details of their applications to those outside the review process.
3. When we inform applicants of the outcome of their applications, we provide anonymous versions of referees' comments, and may also summarise the conclusion reached by the External Panel or Steering Committee. Information that might identify the comments of individual Panel or Committee members or referees is never revealed.
4. It is our policy to let external referees know the final outcome of applications they have reviewed after we have communicated decisions to applicants. Referees agree to treat all details of applications and their outcomes as confidential.
5. Steering Committee and external panel members are required to complete a conflict of interest declaration when they become a member of the committee or panel, and annually thereafter, in which they must declare any interests which may potentially cause a conflict in the course of fulfilling their duties and responsibilities as a committee member. No Committee member with a conflict of interest with a particular application may participate in the review of that application. As a result, members who have an application under consideration will not receive any of the reviewers’ comments on that application and shall absent themselves from the room when that application is up for review. In cases where the potential for conflict is uncertain, the Chair of the Steering Committee shall judge whether the individual should be excluded from the discussions.
6. Applicants should not, under any circumstances, directly approach members of the Steering Committee in connection with their (or another's) research application.
7. Committee members should refuse any requests for information or feedback from applicants on how a particular judgement was reached.