Information for applicants:
Cohort studies

PARKINSON'S[UK]
CHANGE ATTITUDES.
FIND A CURE.
JOIN US.

Parkinson's UK is the largest charitable funder of Parkinson's research in Europe. So far, we've invested more than £85million in ground-breaking research.

1. Purpose and scope
- Our cohort studies grants fund projects tackling important questions in Parkinson's research that can be answered through large-scale cohort studies.
- There is no maximum duration for cohort studies, but the proposal must include a review of progress every four years or at shorter intervals.
- There is no fixed maximum value for cohort study grants.
- We're keen to receive applications from researchers working across all fields of Parkinson's research.

2. Eligibility
- Grants are tenable at a UK university, NHS trust, statutory social care organisation or other research institution.
- Principal applicants should hold employment contracts with the host institution that extend beyond the period of the grant.
- Applicants may be new to Parkinson's research.
- Co-applicants and collaborators may be based at institutions outside the UK and / or at pharmaceutical or biotech companies.

3. Terms and conditions of grants
- Applicants should read Terms and conditions for research grants before completing an application.

4. Application procedure
- To obtain an application form, please email your request to researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk.
- Applications will be reviewed by the regular and advisory members of the Cohort Studies Council (CSC), lay and external peer reviewer's.
- Applications must be submitted at least **eight weeks** before the next meeting of the CSC.
- All applications must be made in English.
- One electronic copy plus appendices must be submitted to researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk. A hard copy is not required.
- Details of any collaboration should be included and a letter confirming agreement from each collaborator should be submitted.
- If the project includes work with patients please ensure a letter of written support is supplied from a clinical collaborator.
- Any relevant 'in press' articles should be attached as appendices.
- Unless the charity requires further information, no correspondence will be entered into until the results are notified. Applicants are requested not to initiate contact with the Research team during the review process.

5. Costing the application
- Applicants must justify the funds requested.
- Applicants must apply for funding in British pounds sterling.
- Applicants should seek the advice of their institution's Finance or Research Office on costing the application well in advance of the application deadline.

- In line with the Association of Medical Research Charities guidelines, Parkinson's UK will only reimburse direct research costs for awarded grants as per the application submitted. The charity will not fund directly allocated or indirect costs:
  - Allowable costs
    - **Directly incurred costs** are costs that would *only* be incurred if the project were to go ahead. They include salaries for staff dedicated to the project, consumables, animals, equipment, etc.
  - Non-allowable costs
    - **Directly allocated costs** are costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities and based on estimates (eg principal and co-applicant costs, estates costs).
    - **Indirect costs** are non-specific costs charged by host institutions across all projects that are based on estimates (eg HR and finance services, library costs).

6. Development and review procedure
- Applicants are advised to discuss their planned project at the Parkinson's Portfolio Development Group (PDG) prior to submitting an application. To receive details about the PDG, please contact the research team at researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk.
- Following discussion of the proposal at the PDG, applicants are encouraged to further develop their project with Public and Patient Involvement.
- Applications will be sent out for review by lay grant review members, CSC panel members and external reviewers.
- For applications where the CSC, lay and external review scores are above a triage threshold, applicants will be invited to present a 20-minute presentation at the Cohort Study's Council meeting on their application whilst addressing lay and peer reviewer comments.
- Applications which do not reach the triage scoring threshold based on the CSC, lay and external peer review will be rejected at this point and the reason for rejection, along with a summary of the reviewer's comments, will be fed back to the applicants. No further discussion with Parkinson's UK staff or with members of the CSC is allowed.
- Applicants invited to present at the CSC meeting will receive all reviews and the right to reply prior to the CSC meeting.
- Applications will then be discussed by the CSC in full session (Regular Members and Advisory Members).
- The CSC Member's, lay and external peer reviewer's recommendations for funding will be submitted to the charity's Chief Executive for approval.
- Applications will be judged by CSC Members and external peer reviewers against the following criteria:
  - potential impact of the research for people affected by Parkinson's
  - quality of the researcher and team
  - scientific quality of the proposal
  - wider research benefits of the proposal through potential of data and bio-sample sharing
  - value for money
  - budget and infrastructure
  - future support for the study and the participating individuals
- A good Plain English Summary is essential for evaluation by Lay Grant Reviewers (please see p5) who will judge applications against the following criteria:
  - if the proposed research involves human participants, whether they think people would be likely to take part
  - the demonstration of Patient and Public Involvement in shaping the research
  - the importance of the research for people affected by Parkinson's and the individuals participating in the study
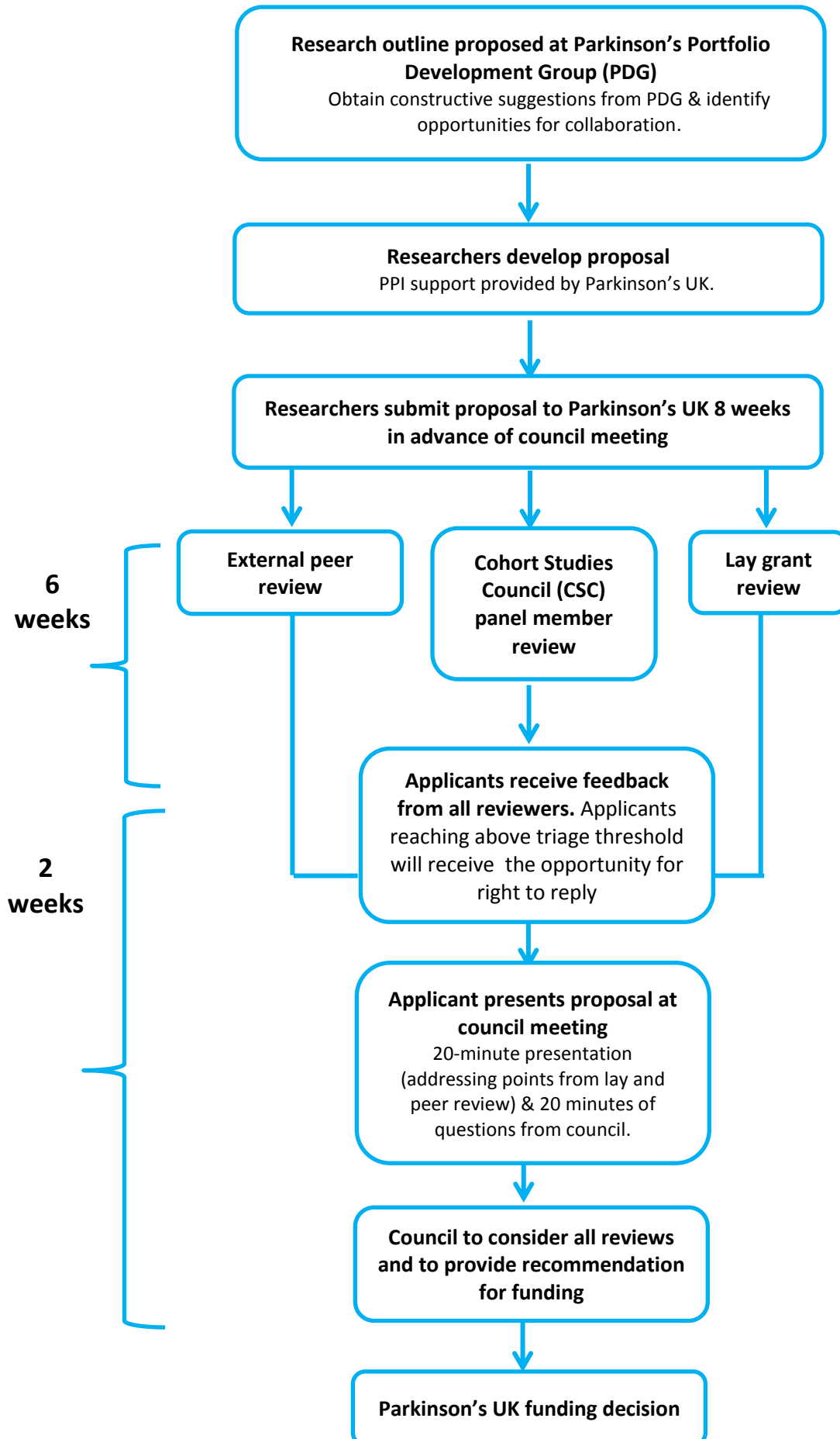
If you have further questions about making an application, please contact the Research team.

Call: 020 7963 9350 or 020 7932 1332
Email: researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk
Visit: http://www.parkinsons.org.uk/researchgrants

Review process for cohort study applications

Research outline proposed at Parkinson's Portfolio Development Group (PDG)
Obtain constructive suggestions from PDG & identify opportunities for collaboration.

↓

Researchers develop proposal
PPI support provided by Parkinson's UK.

↓

Researchers submit proposal to Parkinson's UK 8 weeks in advance of council meeting

6 weeks

External peer review

Cohort Studies Council (CSC) panel member review

Lay grant review

↓

Applicants receive feedback from all reviewers. Applicants reaching above triage threshold will receive the opportunity for right to reply

2 weeks

↓

Applicant presents proposal at council meeting
20-minute presentation (addressing points from lay and peer review) & 20 minutes of questions from council.

↓

Council to consider all reviews and to provide recommendation for funding

↓

Parkinson's UK funding decision

Writing a research grant application

We only fund the best quality research so that every penny donated towards research will benefit people with Parkinson's.

We receive a high volume of applications in each grant round, so it's vital that you make your application stand out from the crowd.

Below are some tips and pitfalls to avoid when writing your grant application to give yourself the best chance of success.

Make a good first impression
- Read the 'Information for applicants' document for the appropriate grant scheme.
- Read the Parkinson's UK research grant terms and conditions – make sure your requests are allowable by Parkinson's UK.
- Give all the information required in the correct format - Arial typescript, size 11pt.
- Ask at least one independent person to proofread your application – reviewers dislike typographical and grammatical errors.
- Ensure figures make sense and are correctly referenced in the text. Attach figures as an appendix to avoid formatting issues within the research proposal.
- Make sure everything in your research proposal is correctly referenced.
- Even if your ideas are excellent, a badly presented application may make reviewers wonder if this is an indication of how the research will be conducted.

Write a good lay abstract and plain English summary
- Our Lay Grant Reviewers bring the unique and valuable perspective of people affected by Parkinson's into the funding decisions made by Parkinson's UK. It ensures that their needs and interests are reflected in our research.
- Researchers may not have personal experience of Parkinson's and therefore may not consider some of the issues that are highlighted by people affected by the condition. This is why the input of Lay Grant Reviewers is so important. Applicants are similarly encouraged to seek the views of people affected by Parkinson's as part of their submission process.
- Lay Grant Reviewers may have considerable personal experience but little specialised scientific knowledge, so it is important that you think carefully about your lay reader when writing both your lay abstract and plain English summary.
    - Avoid using jargon, abbreviations and technical terms wherever possible – if you have to use them provide a clear explanation.
    - Include a good glossary.
    - Avoid complicated English or uncommon words.
    - Avoid elaborate explanations of 'what is Parkinson's'. They are very likely to know a lot about this and want to know about the particular research project.
    - Be realistic about any likely benefits which could arise from the research for people with Parkinson's and their carers and give realistic timescales.
    - Use active not passive phrases, for example say 'we will do it' rather than 'it will be done by us'.
    - Keep sentences short - try not to use more than 15 to 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.
    - If your study involves participants ensure you have included details of what will be involved for them and how they will be supported.
- You can find more tips on writing a good plain English summary on the Make it Clear campaign website.

Clearly demonstrate how your research relates to Parkinson's

- Parkinson's UK only supports research into Parkinson's. We want to fund research that has the greatest chance of improving the lives of people with Parkinson's.
- Applications at the 'pure science' stage must clearly demonstrate how their research relates to Parkinson's and how it could provide valuable insights for future research.
- Peer and Lay reviewers have a lot of knowledge of Parkinson's and will usually have considered many applications over the years. They expect applicants to demonstrate a good understanding of Parkinson's. Applicants whose expertise and publications record primarily relates to another field should seek to collaborate with relevant experts in Parkinson's and people affected by Parkinson's where necessary.
- Parkinson's UK will consider applications which may provide insights into a number of neurodegenerative conditions, but again you will need to show the particular relevance to Parkinson's.

Ensure your research proposal is clear and logical

- Make sure your hypotheses are clear and firm and are reflected clearly in the methodology.
- Show how the various experiments and stages of proposed research relate to each other.
- Give clear information on what the outcome measures will be.
- Identify and address any potential challenges or pitfalls – what will you do if your first proposed experiment doesn't result in the outcome you expected? Or if you have challenges with recruitment or retention of participants?
- Provide sufficient detail on the experiments and how they will be carried out to show your understanding of what you're doing.
- Give realistic sample sizes and power calculations based on evidence.
- Clearly describe the future clinical benefits and timescales of practical improvements that could result from the research.
- Ensure your application includes details of how the results of your research will be made available to others.