Application guidance for researchers applying for a Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity's Project Grant

Background
Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust treats thousands of children, young people and families every year. It is the research conducted by staff from all specialties that helps improve the lives of children and families that we look after. We are fortunate that Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity generously donates a significant amount of funding every year to support research and innovation within the Trust.

Year on year researchers have benefited greatly from the donations made by the public. The research supported by the charity ranges from clinical research to laboratory research that will ultimately translate into new treatments for our patients (bench to bedside).

Will my project be eligible for a Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity Project Grant?
Those applying for the project grant call will need to demonstrate that their work will:

- benefit Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust
- provide scientific progress
- help improve the lives of the children, young people and families that we care for
- lead to a defined research output including applications to national funding bodies

Are there are specific priority areas of funding?
We are inviting applications to address research questions that align to the 6 themes of the South Yorkshire Children and Young People's Health Research (ScYPHeR) initiative. These are:
- **Rare Disease**
- **Child Health Technologies**
- **Health Inequalities**
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing**
- **Child Welfare and Safeguarding**
- **Co-production and Voice of the Child**

Research should also align with the NHS10 Year Health Plan and the 3 strategic shifts, moving care from:

- **hospital to community**

- **sickness to prevention**

- **analogue to digital**

Applications from new and early career researchers are particularly encouraged.

*Although we have provided highlighted areas for research application to focus on this does not rule out the submission of applications outside these areas. However, applications aligning to the highlight areas above will be funded over non-highlight areas where applications are of equal quality.

Do I need to be an employee of Sheffield Children's to apply?
Where appropriate we expect all applicants to demonstrate how they will actively bring together a balance of clinical and scientific expertise, to encourage translational research which will benefit patients. Collaborations are encouraged and applicants should ensure that they are able to practically deliver their study – this is often through involvement of staff in the Trust, however there is no requirement for applicants to be employees of the Trust.

What importance is placed on sustainability?
Research support from the charity can be used to 'pump-prime' research that will ultimately provide information that will lead to more extensive research supported through national funding. The application form includes a section that asks applicants to state how their study will lead to future studies that could be considered for national funding. Applicants should include details of funding bodies that they may wish to apply to in the future, future collaborations and any potential for studies to be conducted at multiple NHS sites.

Are novice researchers able to apply?
Applications are particularly encouraged by new and early career researchers. However, applicants who are new to research (within 2 years) or are in the early stages of their research career will need to demonstrate that they have suitable mentorship. Mentors will be required to demonstrate their commitment to research through a credible research track record or through completion of an MD or PhD.

Which documents do I need to submit?
A valid application requires submission of the following completed documents:
- the application protocol, using the Trust's CTIMP or Non-CTIMP protocol template depending upon the nature of the proposal
- Gantt chart
- project costing spreadsheet
- peer review form
- up to date CV of the lead applicant
- Sponsorship request form (if you wish SCH to sponsor the project)

Additionally, all applications must have authorisation from the lead applicant's institutional finance department and the department associate director/applicant's line manager prior to submission. Applications which include new equipment to be purchased or used as part of the application must have a completed Medical Equipment Management Group (MEMG) form accompanying the application.

How do I submit my application?

Please email your application and supporting documents to scn-tr.research.governance@nhs.net by the deadline.

Can I send my documents before I have my final submission ready?
Applicants are encouraged to contact the Research Governance team in the Research & Innovation Care Group as early as possible to express an interest and to seek advice on how to submit a high-quality application. It is useful to submit documents at an early stage and prior to the submission deadline so they can be reviewed by the Research Governance team and suggestions for improvement can be made before the submission deadline. The final documents submitted up until the deadline will always be used and any previous working versions discarded.

I don't think all the sections of the application form are relevant, am I able to adapt the form?
It is best to try to answer all the sections and relate each question to your application as best you can. The application template has been carefully designed to encourage applicants to answer questions the reviewers may ask. The application also forms the basis of the project's protocol for regulatory and governance submission.

Is there a word count in the application form?
Yes, each section of the application form has a designated word count shown at the end of each section header. **It is imperative that you stay within these word limits.** During the application validation process the research team will remove any additional text that exceeds section word limits and this text will not be seen by reviewers of the application.

Do I need statistical review?
It is common for researchers to question whether statistical analysis is necessary, particularly if the project is qualitative or a pilot study. Even for qualitative studies the peer reviewers and the Scientific Advisory Committee like to see that a measurable outcome has been carefully considered. For pilot studies it is an ideal opportunity to justify the target recruitment's statistical potential in informing a larger study. The R&D team can provide details of independent statisticians who may be able to help. It is important to contact a statistician at an early stage in the application process and to cost their support into the study budget.

What research costs are eligible for support?
All study costs must be fully justified. Each application will be strongly assessed for its value for money and potential for future impact. Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity will support the following research costs:

- Staff – salary costs will be considered for research support staff, scientific support staff and administration. Salary support for academic and medical staff will also be considered.

- Equipment/consumables – applications for equipment should include the cost of calibration, servicing, maintenance and other associated costs and should be

supported by an application to the Trust Medical Equipment Management Group (MEMG).

- Matched funding – applications to national funding bodies may require applicants to demonstrate evidence of matched funding and may be considered by TCHC. Projects that are part funded by national charities or the commercial sector may be eligible for NIHR portfolio adoption. This should be discussed with a member of the Research Governance team prior to submission.

- Dissemination should be excluded as there is a separate dissemination fund which researchers should apply to as and when they require it.

Is there a maximum amount of funding that can be requested?
Yes, this call is open for applications in the region of £10,000-£50,000. All applications will be assessed on their value of money relative to the potential impact the studies could have and any high value projects will need to have significant justification for the amount of funding requested from the charity.

Does my project have any safety or ethical issues?
Safety assessment and ethical considerations are relevant to all projects where NHS patients, healthy volunteers, staff, their tissue or data are intended to be used. Addressing these issues at the application stage is important for the reviewers and pre-empts the regulatory questions which will be asked during the later governance stages of the project. As an example, a small-scale questionnaire may have factors such as potential inconvenience of extra visits and emotional distress which need to be considered.

Importance of impact, outcomes and dissemination of research findings
It is important you portray within your application exactly how your research project might benefit patients. It is highly advantageous if you are able to use this initial funding to later develop your project on a larger scale, particularly one reflective of NIHR objectives. This section helps the reviewers and Scientific Advisory Committee to see exactly how your research may benefit patients in the short term, provide a platform for a larger study or for sharing of knowledge which could provide potential benefit for patient care in the longer term.

I can't think of any reviewers to carry out peer review
The best way to identify potential peer reviewers is to discuss your research proposal with colleagues who have been involved in research, as these are the people best able to recommend who would be most suitable to review your project in your individual specialised area. If you are still struggling to identify suitable peer reviewers, you may contact the Research Governance team who will be able to advise you of staff members working in your specialty who might be able to help with peer review contacts.

Suggested peer reviewers must be independent to you. They should not be Sheffield Children's Hospital staff members, and you should not have collaborated ot published with them in the last 3 years.

Does submitting my project to this funding call prevent me applying to other funding calls for the same project?

This particular funding call does not exclude applicants who are also applying elsewhere, although you should check with the other potential funders whether this is part of their exclusion criteria when they are shortlisting applications. It would be appreciated if you could update the Research Governance team at your earliest opportunity if there are any developments with alternate funders, so that your application can be removed from the selection process before people take time to assess your application.

Is my project research or a service evaluation?

Research is a project which is designed to derive generalisable new knowledge. If you are in doubt as to whether your project is audit, service evaluation or research please send a copy of your protocol to the Research Governance team who can advise you on how the project should be categorised. This funding call is specifically for research projects, if it is determined that a proposal for a service evaluation or clinical audit has been submitted then it will be removed from the funding round prior to review.

What happens when I submit my application?

The Research Governance team will review and validate your application when we receive it. An application is considered valid if all the supporting documents have been attached and completed, complying with word limits. We write to applicants within 2 weeks following the application deadline if the application is not valid and explain the reason for this, giving opportunity to rectify within a short timescale if it is something small that needs to be changed. Once validated, we will request peer reviewers to provide a written review of your application and you will be granted the opportunity to respond to the reviews prior to your application being reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Committee.

Can I submit documents after the submission deadline?

We do not usually accept late applications or additional documents after the submission deadline. However, if during the validation process we request additional information from you, this information will be accepted as part of your application. Also, if during the course of the application review process there is additional information or a significant amendment to the project plan that you wish to highlight to the team reviewing your application (for example a reduction in the amount of funding required) we can make this information available to the Scientific Advisory Committee.

Will I have an opportunity to respond to the reviewer comments before the Scientific Advisory Committee meeting?

Yes, applicants will be asked for a rebuttal to the peer reviewers' comments prior to the Scientific Advisory Committee meeting. Once the research team is in receipt of completed peer reviews you will be sent anonymised reviewer comments and given a two-week period to respond to the reviewers' comments. <u>You will be restricted to two sides of A4, with normal margins and Arial font size 10 in which to write your rebuttal.</u> In addition, one figure with a short caption may be provided in an additional one-page appendix. Any text and figures exceeding these page limits will be deleted prior to the review by the committee.

How will my application be assessed?

Your application will be assigned a lead reviewer who will be a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the charity. Where the number of committee members exceeds the number of applications, then a second member of the Scientific Advisory Committee may also be assigned to your application. Your application, scientific peer reviews, rebuttal and any other relevant documentation will be considered at the Committee meeting.

How will I know if my application has been shortlisted for funding?

The Research Governance team will write to you in the weeks following the Scientific Advisory Committee meeting to inform you of the result of your application for funding.

What if my application is not funded?

If your application was not successful, we will write to you giving you as much feedback as we can, including your anonymised peer reviews, which will hopefully enable you to seek alternative funding and take your idea forward. Unless specifically advised not to, you **may re-apply** to Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity research funding shcemes in the future with your unsuccessful or other projects.

What happens after my project is funded?

After receiving confirmation of your award, you will need to sign and return one copy of the terms & conditions and contact the Research Governance team who will provide support with the regulatory approvals and ongoing management criteria which are relevant to your project. Sheffield Childrens' NHS Foundation Trust will normally agree to act as the Research Governance sponsor, but this should be discussed with the Research Governance team.