TYAC Research Grant Scheme:

Palliative and end of life care project grants

Guidance for applicants
September 2023
TYAC palliative and end of life care project grants

Palliative and end of life care were key themes identified in the Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Priority Setting Partnership (2018). TYAC recognises that this is an important area of research, but funding opportunities specifically for palliative and end of life care research in TYA cancer are uncommon.

This grant is for projects which aim to improve palliative and/or end of life care for teenagers and young adults (aged 13-25) with cancer. Grants of up to £100,000* are available over a period of up to 36 months to support a defined research project. Funded projects will align with the objectives set out in TYAC’s research strategy:

“We aim to:

- Define and establish a comprehensive research strategy and portfolio
- Identify and fund research gaps to ensure the whole cancer experience is taken into account
- Strengthen national and international collaborations and partnerships within the cancer research community to drive improvements
- Encourage new types of partnerships and collaborative working to support the development of innovative ideas and novel approaches for TYA research
- Ensure patient involvement and experience is at the heart of our research
- Develop the next generation of TYA cancer researchers”

* We recognise that smaller, pilot projects to gather preliminary data are also important in this field and so would welcome smaller grant applications (lower budgets over a shorter time period) as alternatives to larger project grants too.

Proposed projects should address one of the following priorities for teenage and young adult cancer research published by the Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Priority Setting Partnership (TYA PSP) (please note these priorities are broad themes rather than specific research questions, giving plenty of scope for a wide range of research ideas). The number priorities are from the top ten. The bulleted priorities are from the further 20 questions identified as priorities by the TYA PSP. Projects addressing any of these priorities will be considered for this grant round.

5. What are the best ways of supporting a young person who has incurable cancer?
6. What are the most effective strategies to ensure that young people who are treated outside of a young person’s Principal Treatment Centre receive appropriate practical and emotional support? (with respect to palliative/end of life care for this grant round)
8. How can parents/carers/siblings/partners be best supported following the death of a young person with cancer?
   - What are the factors that should determine stopping treatment when the young person cannot be cured?
   - For young people with incurable cancer, what methods, techniques or strategies for communication can help them to talk with their family and friends about their situation?
   - For young people with incurable cancer, how should healthcare professionals communicate with them to improve quality of life and patient experience?
   - For young people with incurable cancer, how should patients/carers communicate with them to improve quality of life and experience?
What are the support needs of the family following the death of a young person with cancer?

All areas of research related to palliative and end of life care for young people with cancer will be considered.

The deadline for applications is 5pm, Wednesday 25 October 2023

Purpose of this guidance

This guidance explains what we’re looking for in an application to our TYAC palliative and end of life care project grants scheme and how to complete an application. If you have any questions, we’re here to help – please email the CCLG research team on research@cclg.org.uk.

About TYAC

TYAC is the UK’s professional association for those working in teenage and young adult cancer. Our strength lies in our knowledge and understanding that teenagers and young adults have different and specific needs to children and older adults, and require age-appropriate care. In 2018, TYAC became part of Children’s Cancer and Leukaemia Group, and published its first research strategy, recognizing that high-quality care for teenagers and young adults is grounded in appropriate research.

Children’s Cancer and Leukaemia Group (CCLG) is a leading national charity funding childhood cancer research, promoting early diagnosis, and supporting patients and families. We are the UK and Ireland’s professional association for those working in childhood cancer.

Our research strategy

A key objective of TYAC is to lead and fund world-class research dedicated to teenage and young adult cancer.

We recognise the need for a well-defined research agenda that bridges the gap between the children’s and adult oncology research worlds. TYAC is taking the lead on building a new focus on research that is dedicated to the very specific needs of teenage and young adult cancer treatment and care which will help change the future of teenage and young adult cancer care and improve outcomes for young people with cancer.

Read our research strategy >

Scheme guidelines

Eligibility

Who can apply?
You can apply for a TYAC palliative and end of life care project grant if you are a researcher based at a UK University, NHS Hospital or Research Institute. You must have an employment contract which
encompasses the duration of the proposed grant [we do not fund the salary costs of lead investigators].

**Remit**
You can apply for a grant to conduct any type of research in palliative and end of life care for teenagers and young adults with cancer. Your project should also address one of the research priorities identified by the Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Priority Setting Partnership [see above – either from the top 10, or from further 20 priorities which are relevant to palliative/end of life care].

Our project grants may support stand-alone projects, research that is part of a wider project or trial, or research that is likely to lead to a further, larger grant application.

**Host institution**
The grant can be held by any non-profit research centre of excellence [NHS hospital, university or research institute] within the UK that is able to provide the facilities required for the successful completion of the project.

**Funding**

**Award term**
The proposed research should be completed within 36 months of the award start date i.e. the maximum project duration is 36 months. We are able to be flexible about this if there is good justification.

**Award value**
The maximum award value for this grant round is £100,000. We recognise that smaller, pilot projects to gather preliminary data are also important in this field and so would welcome smaller grant applications [lower budgets over a shorter time period] as alternatives to larger project grants too.

**What can be funded?**
The funding from these grants can be used to support costs associated with carrying out the research project. We do not fund applicant [principal investigator] salaries. Costs of staff specific to the project, for example technicians or research assistants, can be applied for. Alternatively the grant may be used to support a PhD student.

Any major items of equipment are expected to be purchased within the first year of the award to support the grant for its duration. Any major equipment requested should therefore be included in the first year budget, but allowance can be made for some small items of equipment in subsequent years if fully justified.

Computers/laptops cannot be requested unless integral to a major piece of equipment or data analysis package.

Applications can be considered where funding or other resources such as staff time are required from other sources for the successful completion of the project. If this is the case then all relevant information must be included in the relevant section of the application. It is important that the arrangement does not compromise or put at risk either the project applied for or any other projects from which resources are being used.
More detail on what we will fund is included in the table below. If you are unsure or have any questions, please contact us on research@cclg.org.uk.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Salaries for grant staff</td>
<td>Researchers on fixed term contracts to work specifically on the funded project. This may include fellows, research assistants, data managers, technicians and nurses. Salary costs may be used to fund salary, the employer’s national insurance contribution, and an employer’s pension contribution which will not be higher than the rate used by the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) or NHS pension scheme. We do not pay salary costs of principal investigators. The full expected costs should be included in the submitted budget, including projected salary increments – additional funds will not be awarded during the course of the grant to make up for a shortfall in salary costs applied for.</td>
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| Costs associated with carrying out the research projects | • Laboratory expenses [if applicable]  
• Equipment purchase costs [where equipment is specific to the grant]  
• Equipment access costs  
• Other costs associated with undertaking the proposed research project  
• Where justified, personal computing costs for the lead applicant to work specifically on the grant [capped at £1,000]. Standard per-unit IT charges are not acceptable                                                                                     |
| Animal research costs           | • Animal purchase, transportation and maintenance costs, Home Office Project Licencsee and experimentation costs.  
• Animal handling training costs and facility licence costs are not eligible.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| PhD studentship expenses        | • We will only support fees at UK rates – any shortfall between this allowance and international fee rates should an international student be appointed must be covered by another source of funding by the institution.                                                                                                               |
| Patient involvement costs       | • For patient involvement representatives sitting on steering groups or advisory boards relating to the funded research, reasonable travel and subsistence costs may be funded, as well as fees or honoraria where appropriate.                                                                                                     |
| Dissemination costs             | • We support open access publication. If you can recover APC costs from your institution, you should access them through this route. If unavailable, we encourage you to include this within your application.  
• Costs relating to the dissemination of the research, including appropriate conference attendance.                                                                                                                                                                                          |

As a charity we do not fund indirect costs [sometimes called full economic costs] of research. These costs include things like computing and information support, central services, general maintenance and other infrastructure costs. We will not fund general estate costs, furniture, health and safety, utilities, standard phone/internet/IT costs, journal subscriptions or professional memberships, departmental support staff, insurance etc.
How we fund research

CCLG [as TYAC’s parent organisation] is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC). CCLG’s process of awarding new research grants is based on guidance from the AMRC. This provides CCLG with a consistent process for all competitive research applications. At the heart of this process is a rigorous system for peer review, ensuring that all new research funded by CCLG/TYAC has been subject to independent scrutiny by those with expertise (peers) in teenage and young adult oncology. It is the advice of independent experts about the scientific quality of research that informs decisions about which proposals are funded. The aim of this process is to draw from leading insight from across teenage and young adult oncology to help guide the most effective use of CCLG/TYAC’s resources to help maximise the impact of funding. This helps to enact TYAC’s research strategy to facilitate much needed change in the management of children with cancer, by developing better, kinder treatments.

Our process for awarding new grants

CCLG/TYAC’s process for awarding new research grants is based on the steps recommended by the AMRC meaning that independent external peer review is steering the process.

- Grant round defined & advertised
- Internal Triage
- Peer review
- Research Advisory Group
- Charity Trustees
- Engagement & Dissemination

Assessment criteria

Applications will be judged on:

- Research need and scope
- Background evidence, preliminary data and hypothesis
- Design of proposed study
- Leadership & expertise of research team
- Justification of resources.

More information about what we are looking for in each category can be found below. These are the criteria that our peer reviewers and Research Advisory Group are asked to score applications against.

Research need and scope

- How important is the question being asked or the knowledge gap being addressed?
- Is this research situated in an area of relevant clinical need for TYA cancer?
- Does the application demonstrate an awareness and understanding of previous relevant literature/research in its area?
- To what extent might the proposed research add distinct value or provide an advance to what is already known in the field?
- Does the research have the potential [including through further research] to demonstrate benefit to TYA cancer patients [even if these only represent a small number of potential patients]?
- In what timescale would you estimate potential clinical impact [assuming success of the research]?
Background evidence, preliminary data and hypotheses
• Is there appropriate background evidence to support the proposed research? Is the form of this evidence appropriate for the type of study [e.g. literature review conducted in a suitably systematic format, development of hypothesis to support proposal, preliminary data from unpublished and published sources]
• Would it be appropriate for a research proposal of this type to include preliminary experimental data rather than just workflow/strategy? If so, is the preliminary data pertinent and of high technical quality? Where relevant, does it include appropriate models for the cancer to be studied?
• Do you regard the amount of background evidence and preliminary data supplied commensurate with the type of research and amount of funding requested?
• Overall, is the proposal’s hypothesis adequately supported by background information/ preliminary evidence

Design of proposed study
• Is the proposed research of high quality and likely to achieve the stated objectives?
• Is the design and methodology well defined? Are they appropriate for the level of study being proposed [e.g. pilot study, proof of principle, full project, clinical study]?
• Is this research within the applicants’ capabilities, and do you base your opinion on preliminary data, track record, or both?
• Is the research feasible within the timeframe and resources requested?
• What are the strengths and weaknesses of the research design as proposed? Please comment on risk/reward.
• Do you have any comments or suggestions for how the proposed research might be improved? If so, please indicate whether you see these as critical factors.
• Will the proposed research considerably impact fundamental understanding and/or translational oncology? Will demonstrable benefits to patients arise from this study, or follow-up projects?

Leadership & expertise of research team
• Are the applicants familiar with the methodologies outlined in their application?
• Are the applicants’ well qualified to undertake the proposed work on the basis of track record in the disease and/or expertise?
• Do you think there is appropriate expertise within the listed research team [applicants and collaborators] to deliver all elements of the proposed research study?
• Is the level of leadership and experience within the team suitable for the level of study being proposed?
• Does the research team have the necessary breadth and depth of expertise to deliver the planned work?
• If the lead applicant is inexperienced, do they have appropriate support [e.g. from their host institution or more senior colleagues]?

Justification of resources
• Are the resources required for this research, including staffing, clearly justified? Are they essential for the work proposed?
• Do you consider the amount of funding being requested appropriate for the level of study being proposed [e.g. pilot grant, proof of principle study, full project, clinical study]?
• Taking into account the expected benefits of the work proposed and the level of resources requested, does this application represent good value for money?
• Do the work plan and project management arrangements give confidence that the research will be
completed in the specified time frame?

**Timescales**

The closing date for applications is **5pm, Wednesday 25 October 2023**. We would expect final decisions to be made in January 2024 and so your proposed start date for the research should reflect this.

**The application process**

You’ll need to submit your application online using our grant management system, FlexiGrant via [https://cclg.flexigrant.com/](https://cclg.flexigrant.com/). The system is straightforward to use, but if you have any questions or problems using FlexiGrant, please contact us on [research@cclg.org.uk](mailto:research@cclg.org.uk).

You should inform your host institution that you intend to apply, as they will be required to approve your application.

**Terms used in FlexiGrant**

- **Participants**: Other people you can invite to view/edit your application form. Participants include your Administration/Finance Officer, Head of Department, and Proposed Supervisor.
- **Lead applicant**: You - the person leading the research project and the individual whose work is funded by this grant.
- **Supervisor**: An individual with the skills, knowledge, ability and time to support your application and your subsequent research project.
- **Head of Department**: The Head of Department in your institution who will confirm that the research will be accommodated and administered in your institution and that you will be given the protected research time to carry out the project.
- **Administration/Finance Officer**: The individual in your institution (usually in the Research Finance Office or similar) who will help you complete your proposal budget, accept the grant if awarded, and confirms that costings are correct.

**Completing the application form**

On the ‘Participants’ tab of your application, you should invite:

- Your head of department
- The Administration/Finance Officer who will be responsible for administering any grant which may be awarded
- You may also invite co-applicants/co-investigators to review/help with your application.

The Head of Department and Admin/Finance Officer will be able to view your application. Both must complete a declaration as part of the application process, and you will be unable to submit your application until these have been completed. Please ensure you complete your application ahead of the deadline, to allow these Participants to complete their declarations prior to the submission deadline. Your institution will be able to advise further on the timescales needed for this to happen.

Once you have registered with FlexiGrant and started an application, you will need to complete the
online application form, which is split into the following sections:

**Contact details**
Contact details for the Lead Applicant should pre-populate from your Flexigrant profile and can be edited here. You should give your proposed research study a title. Complete the other sections including uploading contact details for your proposed supervisor. You will also need to upload a CV for yourself and your proposed supervisor, which should be compiled into a single document and uploaded as a pdf.

**Project details**
This section asks some basic questions about the nature of the research you are proposing, including the overall cost, proposed timetable, and the type of research.

**Other sources of funding**
This section asks about whether previous research relevant to this study has been funded (by CCLG/TYAC or elsewhere), whether you are submitting this application (or a related application) to another funder, and whether your project relies on other funding being obtained.

**Exploitation**
This section asks about potential development of intellectual property, and is a standard question we ask all applicants.

**External reviewers**
This section asks you to suggest potential peer reviewers for your research to help us identify suitable people to approach. You can also ask us not to send this to particular people, if there is good reason.

**Plain English summary**
This helps lay reviewers and readers [for example CCLG staff including our marketing team, patient/parent reviewers who may review your application for us] to understand your proposal. This is an important section of your application. Please see our guidance on writing an [appropriate lay summary.](https://example.com) It should NOT be a copy/paste of your scientific abstract but should specifically be written for this section, explaining the proposed research in lay terms, without excessive use of acronyms or scientific writing likely to be inaccessible to the average reader. We may screen/triage applications prior to peer review [e.g. for strategic fit with the grant round] based on this section, so if it is of poor quality and does not meet our guidance, your application may be rejected from consideration on this basis.

**Proposed research summary**
This section is where you should describe your proposed research study. You should ensure you describe the study as fully as possible, and refer to the above assessment criteria, as this is the main section our expert peer reviewers will use to understand and assess your project’s suitability for funding. You can only enter text, but can upload a file containing any figures or references. As this is a pilot grant, we’re also asking for you to tell us a little about any future plans for building on the outputs/outcomes of this pilot grant.

**Project budget**
You should download the budget template spreadsheet, complete this and upload the finished version. Your institution’s research finance department [or similar] should help you to complete this.
Collaborators
Collaborators are not compulsory for this round of grants. However, if the viability of the project is dependent on collaborators, you should complete this section.

Head of Department declaration
The Head of Department [whom you have invited to this application] will complete their declaration. Your application cannot be submitted until this is complete.

Financial/Administrative Officer declaration
The Financial/Administrative Officer in your host institution [whom you have invited to this application] will complete their declaration. Your application cannot be submitted until this is complete.

Once you have completed each section of your application, each section should appear as ‘Complete’ and change to a green colour. When all sections are ‘Complete’, the ‘Submit’ button will appear on the summary page. Once you are happy with your application, click this button to submit it to us.

Good luck with your application! If you have any questions, please contact us on research@cclg.org.uk.