Sarcoma UK
The bone & soft tissue
cancer charity

Guidance for Applicants: Improving Sarcoma Diagnosis 2022

Sarcoma UK is the national charity for all types of sarcoma. Our research programme funds high quality research to understand more about sarcoma, find new treatments and ultimately identify a cure for these cancers. Our research programme has been running since 2009 with over £4.2 million invested in over 60 projects to date.

Call details: Our Improving Sarcoma Diagnosis call invites applications focussing on any area of improving sarcoma diagnosis. This includes projects exploring routes to helping people with sarcoma be diagnosed faster, earlier or more accurately.

Research submitted for this call should focus on primary diagnosis of sarcoma; projects mainly exploring relapse or recurrence will be considered out of scope. Projects likely to have direct patient impact or clinical implementation within the next five years will be prioritized.

- **Small Grants, up to £50,000 in value**. These can be used to pump prime ideas for innovative, small studies, or fund additional research to a larger project already underway.
- **Large Grants, up to £150,000 in value**. These are to undertake a substantive piece of work; this type of application must support a member of staff as a directly incurred cost.

Call opens: March 2022

Call closes: 12pm, Thursday 14th July 2022.

Applications received after this deadline will not be accepted.

Please note that applicants will be invited to respond to their peer and lay review comments in late October and final decisions on awards are expected in December 2022.

Eligibility

Research submitted for this funding should be focussed on the primary diagnosis of sarcoma. Projects mainly considering relapse and/or recurrence will be considered out of scope.

Projects should be likely to have direct patient impact or clinical implementation within the next five years.

The host institution must be in the UK.

Applications will not be accepted:
- Where the primary intent is the purchase of equipment
- From commercial organisations

If you are unsure about the eligibility of your application, please contact Sarcoma UK's research team by emailing research@sarcoma.org.uk or by calling 020 7250 8271.

How to Apply

Applications must be made by the Principal Investigator and submitted by the deadline advertised. Applicants may seek clarification regarding this limitation from Sarcoma UK's research team.

All applications which fulfil the eligibility criteria will undergo external peer review and will be considered by our Grant Review Panel. We also incorporate a lay review of all applications into our funding process. Lay reviewers will receive the full text of your application but will be asked to review the Lay Summary and 'potential benefit to sarcoma patients' sections only. We will also be introducing lay reviewers onto our research funding panel, alongside our Grant Review Panel. Throughout the process, lay reviewers will not be assessing the quality of the science, but the relevance and potential impact of your proposal for people affected by sarcoma.

Feedback is provided to all applicants.

Final decisions on awards are expected in December 2022.

Resubmissions

For submissions of proposals across any Sarcoma UK grant rounds, we allow only one resubmission of a previously unsuccessful proposal, unless you have been **explicitly invited** to resubmit for a second time.

For all resubmissions we encourage a full explanation of the revisions made to the proposal from its previous iteration. Resubmissions will be checked as part of our triaging process; applications which do not meet the above requirements will not be accepted.

Impact of COVID-19

As a research funder, we would like to reassure the research community that we are acutely aware of the immediate and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on research activities. As part of this proposal, we welcome information outlining how COVID has impacted your or your team's research activities (for instance, increased clinical responsibilities, access to facilities, changes in personal circumstances) which may have affected the development of this proposal. Please note this is entirely optional and at your discretion. Please only disclose information that you are comfortable with being shared with our Grant Review Panel and external reviewers; any details which could identify other individuals will be redacted.

Please see the full statement on our website for more information.

PART ONE – Project Details

1. Project Title: Please list the full project title; when awarded this will be used in all correspondence and listed on our website.

2. Investigators: The Principal Investigator (PI) and the proposed project must be based in the UK at a Higher Education Institution (HEI), Research Institute or Clinical Institution.

Where the PI is on a fixed-term contract, their contract must extend at least one year beyond the lifetime of the project, or the host institution must demonstrate that it intends to award a permanent position at the end of the fixed term. In addition, a co-applicant with a permanent post at the host institution should be listed on the application. Please list all PI and Co-I titles, names and posts held. Please indicate how many hours per week (hpw) will be spent on the project for each PI / Co-I. If there are more than 3 investigators, please list this on a separate sheet and submit with your application.

3a. Administering Organisation: This should be the employing organisation of the PI. Please provide the name and the business address. Any award made is to the Administering Organisation who will sub-contract to other organisations as appropriate.

3b. Provide your contact details and postal address if it is different to that of the host organisation.

4. Start date and Duration: It is anticipated that awards will be announced in December 2022. Please give a realistic start date, factoring in ethical approval and staff recruitment. Give project duration in months.

5a. Total Grant requested: Please give total in £s (GBP). Indicate whether you are applying for a Small Grant (£50k max) or a Large Award (£150k max).

5b. if you are applying for a small grant. Please indicate if the proposed research is Pump Priming, Additional work on an already funded project or Other. If other, please state clearly what the work is.

5c. As a Medical Research charity, we do not pay fEC but wish to capture this information. As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), we pay directly incurred costs and our awarded projects are eligible for QR funding. We are an NIHR partner charity.

6. Additional funding available from the Sarah Burkeman Trust

Sarcoma UK is pleased to be working with the Sarah Burkeman Trust, a charitable foundation set up in memory of Sarah Burkeman, who sadly passed away from sarcoma. Sarah was a much-loved and highly talented documentary film-maker who was diagnosed with an undifferentiated uterine sarcoma in 2013. For more on Sarah's story, please visit our website.

The Sarah Burkeman Trust is able to offer £200,000 funding towards selected research projects submitted to Sarcoma UK's research 2022 funding calls.

Applications for this funding are welcome for translational research projects in the following areas in adjacencies to Sarah's own cancer journey:

- Gynaecological sarcomas
- Sarcomas that can particularly affect young people
- Poorly differentiated sarcomas
- Research focussed on early diagnosis
- Immunotherapy

If you wish to also be considered for this additional funding from the Sarah Burkeman Trust, please indicate this in the relevant section on your application form, with justification as to how your application is in scope for this funding. All applications made through Sarcoma UK's grant rounds will be subject to the same rigorous review process, administered by

Sarcoma UK. All such applications will be assessed and ranked alongside every other application Sarcoma UK receives for the round. Those deemed to be fundable will be shared with the Sarah Burkeman Trust, who will make the final decision on which projects to support with this funding, in partnership with their Scientific Advisory Panel.

7. If the research is sarcoma sub-type specific, please indicate. On the application form are the main sarcoma subtypes only; please enter the subtype in 'Other' if the subtype the research focusses on is not present.

7b. People affected by sarcoma: Please indicate if your project requires people affected by sarcoma to participate directly in the study (e.g. attending clinic, providing samples, as members of a patient involvement panel).

Please also give details of the nature of this participation. **Please note that responses for this question will be reviewed by people affected by sarcoma.**

8. Ethical approvals: please indicate if the project needs ethical approval for working with human subjects and give an indicative date of approval (this should be factored into your start date).
If already in place, please give the IRAS study number or include a copy of the approval letter with the application. If you haven't yet submitted an application, please share your planned submission date.

Any clinical trials or study funded by Sarcoma UK are eligible for inclusion on the NCRI Clinical Studies Group Portfolio. Please indicate this when completing your Ethical Approval submission.

9. Additional assessments/referrals
Dependant on the nature of your project, you may need to engage one of more of the following; please complete as appropriate:

9a. Has this application been reviewed for any Excess Treatment costs your Trust may need to claim? (For more information: https://www.nihr.ac.uk/researchers/collaborations-services-and-support-for-your-research/run-your-study/excess-treatment-costs.htm)

9b. Has this application had any input from the Research Design service? (For more information: https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research-design-service.htm)
If Yes, please state which Research Design Service.

9c. Has this project involved discussion with a Clinical Trials Unit? (For more information: https://www.ukcrc.org/research-infrastructure/clinical-trials-units/ukcrc-registered-ctus-website/)

If Yes, please state which Unit.

9d. Does this study involve recruiting patients to a trial or a study? The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI), Sarcoma Clinical Studies Group (CSG) can provide input for applications and advise on recruitment to study, especially around any competing studies. (For more information: https://csg.ncri.org.uk/about-the-csgs/clinical-studies-groups/sarcoma/)

10. Animal work
As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities, Sarcoma UK supports their [statement](#) on animal research. We fully support measures which will replace, reduce or

refine the use of animals in research, in line with legislation on the 3Rs (for further guidance, please visit the NC3R's website https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/the-3rs)

Please state if any animal work is needed for your proposal. If yes, please provide details of the date of approval and the name of the Animal Licence holder for the project (this may be at an institutional level). Please state if the work is to be outsourced and where to (if known at application stage). Please state if the proposals require the use of animals from outside the UK.

Please provide details of the procedures involving animals that are to be used as part of this work. Please justify the use of animals in your research and whether there are any alternative experimental approaches for this work which do not require the use of animals. Please explain your choice of species or model as part of this work. Please provide details of and justify the number of animals to be used per experiment.

11. Other sources of funding: Sarcoma UK needs to know if the project is either supported or has been supported by another organisation. This will not affect the outcome of the funding decision. If you are under a confidentiality clause, please indicate yes and enter 'CONFIDENTIAL'.

   i.   If the preliminary work (or very similar) has been previously externally funded, please supply the project details, including the title, funder and value of award.
  ii.   If the project is being submitted elsewhere, please indicate where it is being submitted to and the anticipated outcome date.
 iii.   If the project has been submitted to another funder in the last 12 months, please indicate where it was submitted to and the outcome.
  iv.   If you already have partial external funding in place, please indicate this here and provide details of this funding.

12. Exploitation: Please state whether the project may have potential intellectual property (IP). List any IP which may be arising from the research (patents; questionnaires, copyrighted material etc.). Identify how your host organisation makes decisions and manages its IP registration (this may be signposting to the host organisation) and the name of your IP / Tech Transfer manager.

13. External reviewers: Sarcoma UK is a member of AMRC and funds only high-quality research. External expert peer review is vital to this process. We request you identify up to two reviewers who may be suitable. These should not be collaborators or researchers with whom you have published in the last five years.

14. Key words: Please provide a list of up to 5 key words that best summarise the project. These will be used internally to assist with finding peer reviewers.

15. Lay summary: Our supporter and donor community are very supportive of our research programme. Sarcoma UK's Grant Review Panel and Board of Trustees includes medical, scientific and lay representation.

As part of Sarcoma UK's research grant application review process, your lay summary will be reviewed and scored by people with personal experience of sarcoma. Your lay summary will form a fundamental part of our Lay Review assessment process, where applications are reviewed by people affected by sarcoma, who are not scientific experts. Lay Reviewers will primarily assess proposals on the relevance and importance of the proposed science to

people affected by sarcoma. Please ensure you write in plain English and that scientific concepts are explained for a non-expert audience.

Sarcoma UK's Board of Trustees, which includes medical, scientific and lay representation, will also see your lay summary.

Please ensure you write clearly and succinctly for a non-scientific audience, using non-technical language, and avoid acronyms and jargon. Further guidance on how to write a good lay summary is available from the NIHR [here](#).

Please give a plain English summary of the proposal. As a guideline, the summary should cover:
- Background and rationale: why you are doing the study
- What you plan to do
- How you will go about it – experimental plan and intended outcomes
- The potential impact of the study for people affected by sarcoma

A maximum of 300 words should be used.

16. Investigator contact details: Please give the PI's and Co-I's contact details. A template page is provided at the end of the application for additional Co-I's; please add at the end of Part One.

17. Collaborators: List any collaborators here. Please provide a project-specific supporting letter for each collaborator detailing what they contribute to the project. A template page is provided at the end of the application for additional Co-I's, please add at the end of Part One.

18. Declaration and institutional Approval: To ensure good governance the application must be approved within the host institution by both the PI's Head of Department / Division / School / Dean as appropriate. The form must also be signed by the Finance / Administrative officer on behalf of the organisation which will manage the award. Those signing must have the authority to sign on behalf of the organisation. We accept electronic signatures, or a scanned page.

PART TWO – The Proposed Research Study

Describe the research study in five pages, with an additional page for references and any power calculations, if needed.

Please use the following headings:
- **Title**
  Give the full title of your project
- **Hypothesis** (if different from Title)
  What is your scientific question?
- **Academic Abstract**
  The academic abstract for the project proposed
- **Purpose of the Research**
  Explain what this knowledge will bring to the field, why is it important?
- **Background/rationale**
  Please provide any relevant developments in this area which will put this research proposal into context.
- **Plan of investigation and methods to be employed**

Give a detailed plan of your aims and the work, methodologies, techniques etc. planned to deliver these aims. List key milestones with timelines, and identify key risks.

- **Pathway to impact for sarcoma patients**
  Please articulate how this research could lead to meaningful benefits for sarcoma patients. Please also explain how far this research is from clinical implementation and/or direct patient impact.
  This section will form a fundamental part of our Lay Review assessment process, where applications are reviewed by people affected by sarcoma, who are not scientific experts. Please ensure you write in plain English and that scientific concepts are explained for a non-expert audience.
- **Justification of resources**
  Justify your resources in terms of the project plan and achieving the proposal's objectives. (Please see allowed and disallowed costs.)
- **Plans for dissemination**
- Please detail where you would intend to share findings of the research.
- **References**
  List of references for the Research Plan

PART THREE – Details of Financial Support Requested

Sarcoma UK is an AMRC member charity. All our research is awarded through open, competitive calls and undergoes external peer and lay review.
Funded projects are eligible for quality-related research funding through the Charity Research Support Fund.

Sarcoma UK will only pay Directly Incurred costs (DIC). Applications for funding should be based on estimated expenditure and all figures should be entered in GBP (£ Sterling).

Allowed and disallowed costs

The following list is not considered exhaustive. Sarcoma UK may query and/or remove any costs that are deemed to be outside the funding remit. For any queries, please email us at research@sarcoma.org.uk.

Allowed costs include:
- Salary for those member(s) of staff carrying out the research and who will be employed on the grant. If you applying for a Large Grant, a DIC member of staff must be included. (Please note that this member of staff may not be a PhD student.)
- Consumables and materials directly attributable to the project.
- Animal costs (purchase, housing, husbandry, animal licence costs etc.)
- Equipment essential to the project (quotes must be obtained for items over £10k and included with the application)
- Software license(s) (if project specific)
- Up to £2000 in dissemination costs per project. For any costs associated with project dissemination, including: publication charges (see our Open Access Policy), poster printing, media production.
- Travel related to the research proposal such as participant expenses to travel to focus group meetings, interviews or assessments
- Access charges for shared equipment / facilities in "Other/Exceptional items"
- Consultancy costs included in "Other/Exceptional items"

Disallowed costs include:
- PI or Co-I salary
- Equipment maintenance and running costs
- Staff/student recruitment costs
- General laboratory equipment including PC's for researchers; we expect a basic level of laboratory equipment to be available
- Full economic costs; directly allocated and indirect costs
- General office expenses such as photocopying, printing, postage etc. An exception may be made for admin assistance and printing costs if the project is epidemiological/questionnaire based
- Excess Treatment Costs

PART FOUR – Investigators' CVs

Please provide a CV, which includes a list of research publications, for the PI and all collaborators. This should be a **maximum of two pages** per individual.

Please include any Collaborators' letters associated with the project.

Submission of Application

Please submit **one** Word document including an application form, CV's and any appendices, letters etc to research@sarcoma.org.uk by 12pm on **Thursday 14th July 2022.**

If you have not received an acknowledgement within three working days contact us on 020 7250 8271.