



# Research Strategy

Incredible things happen when we work together!

(June 2022)

# Background

The Little Princess Trust has been funding research into cancers affecting children and young people since 2016.

We fund research that will lead to kinder, more targeted, less toxic and more effective treatments for all childhood cancers.

Much of our funding has been for projects through advertised rounds with the support and assistance of the Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group (CCLG).

Grants awarded to date through competitive open calls have typically ranged in value between £100,000 and £250,000, though we have also awarded some significant grants up to £1.4M and a small number of pilot grants.

We have no bias towards any specific cancer type, though we will only consider funding work which will lead to improvements in current practice and have a direct impact on the outcomes for children and young people with cancer.



## SINCE WE COMMENCED FUNDING RESE



We have funded **OVER 100** pioneering research projects



We support highly skilled experts to ensure scientific excellence

# Current challenges with research into children's cancers

- Too few researchers
- Lack of available funding
- Poor awareness
- Not enough industry support

Cancer remains the leading cause of death by disease in those aged 0-24, with around 12 children and young people being diagnosed every day. Two out of ten of those will not survive their disease. There are still some childhood cancers with a poor outlook, and many treatments can have long-lasting side effects. Further research is therefore vital, and the aim of The Little Princess Trust is for as many children as possible to be cured and to significantly reduce or eradicate the side-effects of treatment.

Sadly, there has been very little improvement in the treatment for some types of childhood cancers in decades. We are committed to looking at things differently in order to try and change that. We work with the most skilled experts in this area and encourage new ideas and innovation, whilst maintaining scientific excellence.

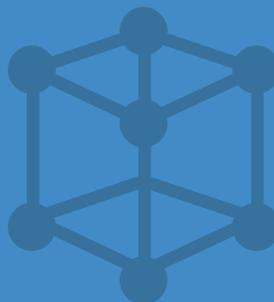
Often research into childhood cancers doesn't attract funding due to the lower incidence compared with adult cancers. We strongly believe that every child matters and each deserves the best chance of survival, regardless of their cancer type.

We engage with researchers and clinicians to understand the specific priorities in the field of childhood cancer research. This particular research community is incredibly dedicated to its work and we support the retention of this talent within research into childhood cancers.

## RESEARCH IN 2016...



We have committed  
**CIRCA. £20M**  
to research, leading  
to better treatments  
for childhood  
cancers



# Meet some of our Funded Researchers...



I would hope that in a decade everybody in the field will recognise The LPT as the people who cracked the Wilms tumour genome once and for all.

## **Dr Sam Behjati – Wellcome Sanger Institute**

**Understanding the genetic root of Wilms' tumour  
- £63,844 Project Grant completed July 2018**

The study uncovered a novel route by which cancers form in the first few weeks of life, whereby the cancer proliferates while the kidney is developing. As well as changing how we treat Wilms' tumour, the discovery opens up the possibility of one day screening for this and similar cancers.

“The discovery of the genetic root of Wilms' tumour signals a shift in our understanding of this particular cancer and childhood cancer more generally.” Said Dr Behjati. “Our findings represent a radical departure from how we think about Wilms' tumour because we never expected to find the root of cancer in normal-looking tissue. It may even pave the way for us to begin to think about preventing childhood cancer.”

**The Little Princess Trust Wilms' Tumour Knowledge Bank -  
£1,430,325.52 Project Grant commenced January 2020**

In addition to being a valuable resource for researchers and clinicians around the globe, the Knowledge Bank will help us improve treatment of children suffering from Wilms' by tailoring treatment intensity to individual children.



“ We are really grateful for the support of The Little Princess Trust to start this new and exciting project over the next 4 years. We will be teaming up with scientists from America and Sweden to do this important work. ”

## **Dr Ruman Rahman – Children’s Brain Tumour Research Centre, University of Nottingham**

**Neurosurgically-applied chemotherapy for childhood brain tumours using a biodegradable paste**

**- £676,229 Innovation Grant commenced April 2020**

Childhood brain cancers which occur in the back of the head are difficult to treat safely. The protective barrier around the brain means that high doses of chemotherapy and radiotherapy are required to penetrate this barrier and reach the tumour, causing devastating side effects such as speech loss and learning delays as well as damage to other healthy parts of the body.

The paste will be applied directly to the tumour site immediately after surgery, which bypasses this barrier and targets cancer cells which surgery cannot remove safely.



The focus is always on the patient. It's fantastic to make breakthroughs in the lab, but the focus has to be completely on the patient.

## Dr Kyle Matchett – Queen's University Belfast / Ulster University

**Repurposing mebendazole and albendazole as novel therapies in paediatric acute myeloid leukaemia - £86,458 Project Grant completed March 2019**

**Identifying molecular vulnerabilities in childhood acute myeloid leukaemia and developing more effective, kinder therapies - £420,362 Career Establishment Grant commenced October 2019**

Drug repurposing is attractive because the time from drug discovery to patient is much quicker than traditional drug discovery as the drugs are already approved. Around 800 drugs were screened which are already approved by the FDA and tested on cells at very low concentrations. The screen produced 38 hits for drugs which looked interesting and potentially effective for adult or childhood acute myeloid leukaemia or both. Twelve of these are already used for blood cancers today while 14 were completely novel for this use.

“We are working on a few of them and one of them is proving to be highly effective in childhood myeloid leukaemia in the lab. We hope to go for publication and clinical trials in possibly four or five years.” Said Dr Matchett.

# Our values and beliefs



Our research funding is driven by improving patient outcomes, identifying unmet need and answering unanswered questions; bringing better treatments to children and young people sooner.



We assist children and young people across the UK and beyond by providing them with real hair wigs throughout their cancer treatment.



We are committed to being an organisation which is high on impact and low on overhead.



We believe in effective partnership working – between clinicians, the research funding sector, scientists, patients/families and our supporter network is vital to all work undertaken by the charity.

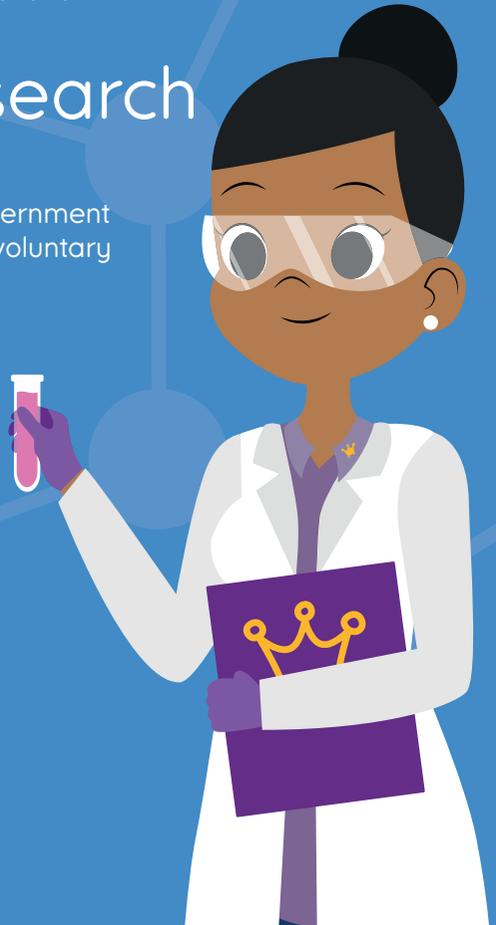


We encourage and champion innovation.

## Funding our research

The Little Princess Trust receives no government or statutory funding, so relies solely on voluntary funding from individual fundraisers and corporate supporters. The income of the charity serves both our wig provision service and our research funding.

We assist children and young people undergoing cancer treatments by providing them with good quality, real hair wigs and we fund and support vital research into childhood cancers to give them hope for the future.



# Research priorities

The Little Princess Trust funds world-class research into the diagnosis and treatment of all children and young people's cancers, specifically targeting better and kinder treatment protocols. 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 and early phase trials).

It is recognised that The Little Princess Trust is a relatively new funder of research, albeit with ambition to grow our research funding programme. We have identified a broad variety of research we will consider funding and no specific area is given greater priority over any other. However a clear and timely route to patient benefit is of utmost importance and we will always award competitively on the basis of the scientific quality of the proposed studies.

The Little Princess Trust acknowledges the importance of research into issues surrounding the psychosocial and late effects of cancer treatment. However, due to our broad remit on cancer type, it is beyond the resources of the charity to fund all areas of research. Therefore, we prioritise research which is likely to more immediately improve outcomes and survival.

## THE LITTLE PRINCESS TRUST WILL FUND RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT WILL:

Improve survival, treatment or patient care

Provide patients with kinder, less toxic treatments

Assist in transferring research progress from the lab to a clinical setting

Broaden and deepen knowledge of children and young people's cancers

**FOCUS ON IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

As this is our first published research strategy, we will use the outcomes of our research funding programme, and consultation with the research, clinical and parent/patient communities to refine our funding priorities in future years.

The Little Princess Trust also looks to fill 'gaps' in available research funding, supporting projects that meet our research priorities as described above, but which are not eligible for funding from other sources. We are keen that the outcomes of research we fund are applied to provide clinical benefit, therefore all Little Princess Trust funded research must be published and shared.

The Little Princess Trust also recognises the importance of collaboration in planning and undertaking research in childhood cancer. The relative rarity of many childhood cancers means that clinical trials are often international. Therefore, applications are welcomed from collaborative research proposals from institutions in the UK or Republic of Ireland working with overseas partners.

The Little Princess Trust also encourages the dissemination of research to both the wider scientific community and lay audiences. Grant recipients are encouraged to seek opportunities to share their work and publish wherever possible. Our unique position as both a funder of research and a charity working directly with families of children with cancer puts us in a strong position to facilitate information sharing to a wide community of stakeholders and supporters alike.



# How we fund research

We work in close partnership with CCLG and benefit from their networks and infrastructure to support our grant making activities. They occupy a unique position in the landscape of children's cancer charities and are well placed to act as a 'bridge' between research and patients, parents and families, promoting research to the scientific and clinical community and the general public.

We are establishing a more formal research function, in compliance with the standards of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC). Our current research spend has significantly increased, through a structured programme of activity.'

Typically, The Little Princess Trust will fund research through open calls for applications, advertised and jointly administered by CCLG. All scientific and peer reviews are carried out by the CCLG network and infrastructure, as well as a further internal review by our Research and Funding Sub-Committee. These rigorous reviews ensure strategic fit and scientific merit of all successful applications, whilst adhering to AMRC guidelines. The nature of grants we are able to offer will vary with our income, however we seek to support:

- Studentships, Fellowships and support staff
- Larger project grants
- Pilot projects which are likely to lead to larger pieces of research
- Clinical trials

The Little Princess Trust will only support projects that are specific to children and young people's cancers. However, any projects we fund may subsequently have a wider application, in other cancers or other conditions.

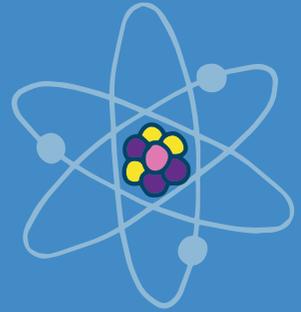
We also work closely with other funders of cancer research and are keen to forge funding partnerships with a shared end goal to provide maximum levels of funding to paediatric cancer research wherever possible.



Our grants will typically range between one year and four years in duration, though we have recently begun to support clinical trials, and we recognise that these can take place over a longer timeframe.

As a charity, and in compliance with the expectations of the Association of Medical Research Charities, we only fund the direct costs of research.

Applications to The Little Princess Trust are received via CCLG and will be reviewed by our combined Research Advisory Panel and, where appropriate, externally peer reviewed in line with our peer review guidance.



## Who we will fund

We will only fund research based at or led by higher education establishments and the NHS in the UK and Ireland. Where a collaborative project exists with an overseas partner, whether led by the UK or Irish side or not, any financial commitment by The Little Princess Trust must be managed through the UK or Irish institution.

We will accept applications led by clinical and non-clinical scientists, and other UK registered health professionals. All project proposals will be assessed on an equal footing.

## Awarded grants

The call for applications and terms and conditions for each grant round will define timescales for all grants, including payment intervals. All awarded grants will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the award criteria is being met.

## Reviewing our research strategy

Our research strategy is regularly reviewed and will be updated as required and at least every three years.



## Hair and Hope

The mission of The Little Princess Trust is to find cures for childhood cancers and to significantly reduce or eradicate the side-effects of treatment. We assist children undergoing cancer treatments by providing them with good quality, real hair wigs and we fund and support vital research into childhood cancers to give them hope for the future.



**amrc**  
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