

Director of Research (Maternity Cover)

Candidate Information Pack June 2024





Welcome from **Nicola Roseman**

Thank you for your interest in joining the My Name's Doddie Foundation.

Our Foundation launched in 2017 after Doddie Weir OBE was diagnosed with Motor Neuron Disease (MND). From the outset, our vision has been clear: to create a world free of MND.

It's incredible to think of how much we have achieved in that relatively short space of time. What began as an idea formulated while sitting around Doddie's kitchen table has developed over the course of five years into a high-performing, resilient and trusted charitable organisation that continues to grow at pace.

Doddie's story has moved, inspired and galvanised people, and I'm so proud to be part of a charity that works tirelessly to raise awareness and funds in order to improve the lives of those affected by MND. We are now in the incredibly fortunate position to expand our team by recruiting a full-time Research Director as part of our ambitious plans to grow our research portfolio – and I couldn't be more thrilled by this development.

It is our aim to be a strong, evidence-based, and trusted voice for MND patients, their families, and the wider community through education, awareness-raising, campaigning, and advocacy activities. We are recruiting for a 12-month FTC maternity cover for our Director of Research, a key position in the organisation that leads our research activities.



Research lies at the heart of everything we do; it's what allows us to investigate potential cures, expedite new treatments and, fundamentally, work towards finding a cure for this disease. The Director of Research plays a key role in facilitating this by overseeing our research strategy and competitive funding schemes, leading our strategic partnerships and evaluating the impact of the research we fund.

Working with me and as part of the leadership team, you will help to ensure that all of the research we undertake and invest in is in line with our vision and ambition.

I'm looking for someone who is highly self-motivated, can work as part of a tight, closely knit team and shares the same passion we all have to improve the lives of those affected by MND. Over the last two years we have built a strong research strategy and grown our research programme. We understand the responsibility that we have towards our donors, fundraisers and those we aim to help. I would love to hear from you if you are interested in working with us to implement our ambitious research strategy. Thank you for the interest you have shown in the Foundation; I look forward to reading your application.

Nicola Roseman
CEO



Advertisement

Research Director, Location – UK (remote working) Salary – £Competitive

The My Name's Doddie Foundation has a single, clear vision: a world free of Motor Neuron Disease (MND). In the relentless pursuit of this goal, we are committed to funding research projects to accelerate the development of meaningful treatments, focusing on the projects that are most likely to impact people with MND positively.

The Director of Research is a key position in the organisation that leads our research activities, managing a small team as we invest in a prioritised and focused research portfolio. Working alongside the CEO and senior leadership team, you will be responsible for overseeing a research strategy that fits seamlessly with the Foundation's vision, ensuring we have the expertise and resources required to support our programme and initiatives.

As someone with experience working in a scientific research role, you will have the ability to interpret, analyse and utilise research findings and developments, with a deep understanding of the drug discovery and development landscape. You will be someone who constantly seeks out new research approaches, methodologies and funding models, ensuring that the Foundation remains at the forefront with its innovative practices. Knowledge of the research grants system is essential; we're looking for someone who can hit the ground running.

You will care about the impact of our work, developing an excellent understanding of the MND field and placing those living with MND at the heart of every decision you make, while ensuring all funded projects continue to meet our goals and financial requirements.

Strong communication skills are central to this role. The successful candidate will be comfortable demonstrating our expertise and position in the MND community and communicating developments, insights and critical milestones both internally and externally. Influencing and relationship building will come naturally to you, and you'll be the kind of person who can work with diverse personalities from a wide variety of professional backgrounds. Playing a key role in championing the Foundation, you will also lead the ambitions of the organisation. Your contribution will be integral to our success.

If you're proactive, organised and highly motivated to make a material difference for those living with MND, then we would love to hear from you. Come and be part of the cure – no job could be more rewarding.

Applications in the form of a tailored CV and covering letter, highlighting your skills and experience pertinent to the role, should arrive no later than **Sunday 14 July** to jess@myname5doddie.co.uk

If you have questions about the role, or to request a Candidate Information Pack, email the aforementioned address.



About Us

My Name's Doddie Foundation was established by rugby legend Doddie Weir OBE, who was diagnosed with Motor Neuron Disease in 2017.

From the outset, Doddie has been driven to help fellow sufferers and seek ways to further research into this currently incurable disease. The number "5" is a special number for the Foundation. It features in the Foundation's name and is a reference to Doddie's playing number for his clubs, Melrose and Newcastle Falcons, and the jersey he wore when he earned his 61 caps for Scotland.

The organisation has grown significantly since its inception in 2017, having now committed over £11m into MND research. We remain focused on investing in the best research, supporting MND patients and their families and building a high-performing, resilient and trusted organisation.

The unmet need in MND and why research is vital

MND is a devastating disease that affects 1 in 300 in the UK, taking the life of one third within a year of diagnosis and half within two years. In MND, messages from the motor neurons gradually stop reaching the muscles, causing the muscles to weaken, stiffen and waste. MND can affect how a person walks, talks, eats, drinks and breathes. Some people also experience changes in their thinking and behaviour.

Despite the severe and debilitating nature of the disease, there are currently no effective treatments and no cure. However, there may be light at the end of the tunnel. With rapid progress being made through research into the understanding of the biology and genetics of MND and the factors responsible for its onset, heterogeneity and progression, there is a realistic hope that effective treatments will be found soon and, one day, a cure.

The My Name's Doddie Foundation is ideally placed to play a leading role in making this a reality. We have an ambitious research strategy in place which outlines our commitment to accelerating the development of new treatments for MND.

Our research plans

Last year, we published our 2023-2028 research strategy "Catalysing a Cure" which outlines our ambition to invest in a portfolio of translational research that will expedite the development of effective new treatments for MND. We established our competitive grant scheme and achieved full membership with the Association of Medical Research Charities. This year, we launched an exciting new programme, the Discovery Network which will see multidisciplinary teams collaborating to better understand MND and identify new therapeutic targets.

Over the next year, the Director of Research will play a key role in driving forward the research programme, overseeing the implementation of the Discovery Network and growing our research portfolio, whilst ensuring our research continues to deliver the impact we seek.



Our Vision

Our vision is underpinned by five main Strategic Pillars.

These are:

- Research
- Support
- Awareness
- Sustainability
- Love, Fun & Hope

We work by:

- Making the best decisions
- Leading by example
- Being good colleagues, team-mates and friends
- Finding solutions
- Adapting to change and delivering improvements
- Working well together

Read our [Strategic Plan](#) to learn more about our vision, and our [Impact Report](#) to find out about how what we do has helped people affected by MND.

For more information visit - myname5doddie.co.uk

Job Specification

Be part of the cure.

We are looking for a highly experienced and capable maternity cover for our Director of Research, with a strong track record of delivery and success to join our hugely ambitious, talented and growing team to help achieve our research goals.

Working closely with colleagues, the Director of Research will be responsible for driving the Foundation's research activities forward, ensuring all we do is entirely focused on our vision, delivers maximum impact, and has those living with MND at its heart.

Key responsibilities will include:

Research strategy and vision

- Monitoring progress against the Foundation's research strategy.
- Driving strategic excellence across our research portfolio.
- Drafting and implementing an annual research action plan in line with the research strategy, business requirements, opportunities and challenges.
- Evaluating the impact of the research we fund.
- Ensuring the Foundation has the expertise it needs to support its research programme.
- Ensuring the Foundation is at the forefront of new research approaches, methodologies and funding models.
- Exploiting the Foundation's commercial opportunities, where appropriate to do so.



Overseeing our research investment portfolio, programmes and initiatives

- Oversight and implementation of our competitive funding schemes, networks and collaborations.
- Oversight and accountability for legal, contracts, IP, commercial, processes, peer review, reporting, metrics and impact.
- Ensuring all funded projects continue to meet our goals and financial requirements.
- Developing an excellent understanding of the MND field and using scientific expertise and knowledge to guide decisions regarding research investments.

Research advocacy and policy

- Understanding policy and its impact on MND research and influencing the design, implementation and monitoring of relevant policy and related initiatives as appropriate.
- Providing thought leadership, insight, content for Foundation materials, etc. to demonstrate our expertise and position in the MND community and to increase awareness and understanding of MND.
- Reviewing relevant published research and outlining the impact for the Foundation and the MND community.

Research Communications

- Overseeing a research communications strategy to ensure we engage our supporters with the research we fund as well as wider developments in the research landscape.
- Communicating research developments, insights, and critical milestones, both internally to the Foundation and external audiences.

Strategic partnerships and external relations

- Identifying and establishing strategic partnerships and relationships with organisations and critical decision-makers etc. implicated directly or indirectly in MND research and specifically our research plans.
- Representing the organisation at national and international research meetings as required. This will include the 35th International Symposium on ALS/MND in Vancouver from 6-9 December 2024.
- Participation in speaking engagements and steering groups and committees etc.
- Acting as spokesperson for the Foundation on all research matters.



Job Specification

Be part of the cure.

Team management and cross-functional activities

- Ensuring an appropriate team structure with the skills and drive to deliver on our ambitions research plans, providing ongoing coaching, feedback and support to build their capacity to further the mission of the organisation.
- Serve as part of the organisation's leadership team and contribute to the development and execution of strategic decisions.
- Providing clear direction and leadership to the team, acting as a coach and mentor, to ensure they are highly motivated, with performance and personal development plans in place.
- Developing team capacity and competency through training, on-the-job-development, effective performance management and external training where cost-effective.
- Work with the senior leadership team providing input on decision-making regarding operational activities that support the Foundation's aims linked to the research strategy.
- Ensuring that our research objectives are inextricably linked to communications and marketing, and income generation plans.
- Working with other team members in the Foundation to ensure their research requirements feed into the research programme.

Research budget

- Ensuring our expanding programme of Foundation-funded research delivers maximum impact and uses our funds in the most effective way.
- Managing the research budget and overseeing the financial aspects of all funded research projects.





Person Specification

Self-motivated, proactive, and able to work using your own initiative.

Skills and experience

- Experience of working in a scientific research role, with the ability to interpret, analyse and utilise research findings and developments.
- Proven track record of developing, managing and delivering research strategies.
- A degree/PhD in a science-related field.
- Experience in line management and the ability to develop individuals and build effective teams.
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse personalities, and the wide variety of professional backgrounds and experiences.
- Experience working with a variety of public, private, non-profit and grassroots organisational structures.
- Outstanding communication skills, with excellent written and oral skills and the ability to maintain relationships with a wide variety of individuals at all levels.
- Proven planning, programme and project management expertise.
- Ability to multi-task, meet deadlines and be persistent, and solve problems as they arise.

Knowledge

- Understanding of MND and other neurodegenerative disorders would be an advantage.
- Knowledge and understanding of academic institutes, UK funding systems, regulatory requirements and research pathways.
- Competent at using IT packages, including Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel.

Personal traits

- Highly motivated to make a material difference for those living with MND.
- Self-motivated, proactive and able to work using own initiative.
- Organised, with a proven ability to successfully manage a broad spectrum of tasks, deadlines and individuals.

This is a full time, home-based role, working in a team environment. Travel will be involved.

Conditions & Remuneration

Salary

£Competitive

Location

UK (remote working)

Timescales

Closing date for applications

Midnight Sunday 14 July

Interviews with My Name's 5

Doddie Foundation

Week commencing 5 August

How to Apply

To apply for the post, please send a tailored CV and covering letter to jess@myname5doddie.co.uk

Please note that the covering letter should be no more than two pages of A4 and should summarise your relevant skills and experience and motivations for applying for this role.

If you would like a confidential, informal discussion about the role then please email the above address.

