

Job description

Senior Research Officer

Reporting to: Head of Research

Salary: £35,166 starting per annum plus £2000 London weighting if applicable (home address within M25 perimeter/regardless of how often travel is required into the office)

We offer a competitive package and are open to discussing compensation based on experience

Contributory pension scheme and benefits package.

Location: London/Hybrid
Given the collaborative and operational nature of the role, the postholder should be based within commuting distance of our London office and attend at least one day per week. Occasional travel across the UK for meetings, networking and events will also be required.

Enrolment Type: Permanent

Holiday entitlement: 27 days, plus three discretionary days between Christmas and New Year and statutory holidays.

Terms and conditions: Full time, 35 hours a week

The post holder may be required to work some evenings and weekends. Time off in Lieu will be given in line with the charity's policy.

About Bowel Cancer UK

Bowel Cancer UK is the UK's leading bowel cancer charity. We're determined to save lives and improve the quality of life of everyone affected by bowel cancer. We support and fund targeted research, provide expert information and support to patients and their families, educate the

public and professionals about the disease and campaign for early diagnosis and access to best treatment and care.

We currently have around 95 staff based in England, Wales Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Thanks to the generosity of our community, we're in a privileged position to be able to deliver our ambitious new strategy, [On a Mission](#). There are huge challenges facing bowel cancer patients across the UK and our community needs us now more than ever. We're building a strong and united team to bring us closer to a world where nobody dies of bowel cancer.

Job summary

The Senior Research Officer leads the delivery of our grant funding processes, manages active grants, and acts as the Research Team's lead for Patient and Public Involvement. The role requires prior experience of grants administration and the confidence to work with autonomy - taking ownership of defined responsibilities, maintaining high standards, and contributing to how we improve our processes.

This is a hands-on position with no officer or assistant support. The postholder will deliver end-to-end grants management, from processing applications and maintaining records to coordinating committee logistics.

As part of a small, specialist team, the Senior Research Officer will also have scope to contribute to the development of the research programme, working closely with the Head of Research to manage the funding call delivery and the Scientific Advisory Board framework.

Main responsibilities

1. Grant funding processes

- Lead the delivery of the annual grant funding round, ensuring processes are rigorous, transparent and consistently applied in line with Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) requirements. Maintain high standards in peer review coordination and applicant communication, and proactively identify opportunities for improvement from round to round
- Develop and maintain call documentation, including guidance notes, relevant webpages, and all funding call communications - within the strategic framework set by the Head of Research
- Manage the full application process - from pre-submission conversations with applicants through to administrative checks, reviewer coordination, and outcome communications, maintaining accurate records and managing conflicts of interest throughout
- Ensure applicants receive detailed, constructive feedback on their outcomes

- Provide operational management of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) and Lay Review Panel (LRP), including preparing papers and agendas, drafting minutes, coordinating membership and following up on actions
- Respond to research enquiries through the research inbox and other channels
- Proactively identify opportunities to improve grant funding processes and systems, including our grant management system Flexi-Grant, and develop networks across the sector to stay current with developments in research funding
- Ensure compliance with data protection regulations and relevant governance requirements in line with charity policy

2. Active portfolio management

- Maintain oversight of all live grants, developing a strong understanding of each funded project and building effective working relationships with grant holders
- Review annual reports in line with directorate standards and escalate issues where appropriate
- Monitor grant expenditure and invoices in collaboration with the Finance Team, ensuring timely and accurate payments
- Maintain active relationships with researchers and awareness of project developments, particularly publications and other outputs, and ensure the wider team is informed to support communications and impact tracking
- Maintain accurate and comprehensive records across the grant lifecycle, ensuring operational guidelines and procedures remain current and consistently applied

3. Patient and Public Involvement (PPI)

- Act as the Research Team's lead for PPI in research funding, overseeing the day-to-day delivery of patient involvement activities and contributing to the ongoing development of our approach
- Draw on learning from the Charities Research Involvement Group CRIG, PPI training, and wider sector best practice to strengthen and embed meaningful patient involvement across the grant funding cycle
- Act as the primary contact for Research Network members, facilitating involvement opportunities and supporting constructive relationships between researchers and patient advocates
- Gather and respond to feedback from researchers and patient advocates, using insights to refine and improve the programme
- Develop and enhance the Research Network member journey, with a focus on retention, engagement and clear, purposeful communication
- Lead recruitment and onboarding of new Research Network and Lay Review Panel members
- Coordinate research support requests and ensure appropriate opportunities are posted on the online forum in a timely way
- Champion best practice in PPI within the research community, promoting Bowel Cancer UK's approach to meaningful involvement among researchers and supporters

Other duties

- Contribute to the review and development of research governance and management policies.
- Support the planning and delivery of researcher events and meetings.
- Participate in relevant internal meetings and contribute to wider organisational priorities.
- Comply with organisational policies, values and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the level and responsibilities of the role.

Person specification

Qualifications and experience

- A scientific or clinical qualification (or equivalent experience)
- Demonstrable experience of research grants administration and peer review coordination
- Experience of managing or coordinating scientific or expert committees, including preparing papers and writing minutes
- Experience of managing multiple workstreams simultaneously in a fast-paced environment
- Experience of working with researchers, clinicians, or academic stakeholders in a professional capacity
- Experience of working independently with delegated authority
- Experience of Patient and Public Involvement in research, or a demonstrable understanding of its importance (strongly desirable)
- Experience of using grant management systems, such as Flexi-Grant or similar (strongly desirable)

Knowledge, skills and abilities

- Ability to critically engage with complex scientific information from applications, presentations and in-person conversations
- A continuous improvement mindset - proactively identifying where processes, systems, or communications could be strengthened and taking initiative to implement improvements within their area of work, in collaboration with the Head of Research where wider changes are needed.
- Ability to manage own workload effectively, work with autonomy and exercise sound judgement about when to escalate or seek input.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to correspond clearly and professionally with a wide range of stakeholders
- Excellent organisational skills and strong attention to detail

- Comfortable with data protection requirements and confident applying them to grant records and personal data
- A working knowledge of other research administration best practice – including intellectual property, research ethics, and conflicts of interest - is desirable.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office and able to learn new systems quickly.

Personal qualities

- Self-sufficient and confident working flexibly and effectively as part of a small team
- Proactive and solutions-focused, with the confidence to identify issues and take action.
- Warm and professional in dealings with researchers, patient advocates, and committee members.
- Flexible and collaborative, with a willingness to turn their hand to whatever the role requires.
- Committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Genuinely interested in bowel cancer research and motivated by the charity's mission.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and at Bowel Cancer UK we are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Successful candidates may be subject to either a satisfactory, basic or enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS - UK), (PVG – Scotland) or Access (NI) dependent upon the role. There is no cost to you and will be processed on your behalf.

Our Values at Bowel Cancer UK:

We live by five core values that guide everything we do. They're not just words—they shape our culture, our decisions, and the way we support our community.

Caring – Patient and Community Focused

We put people first.

- We listen and respond to the needs of patients and families.
 - We make a positive, lasting difference to lives.
 - We work with compassion and empathy every day.
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Ambitious – Determined to Make Change

We aim high because lives depend on it.

- We set bold goals and strive to exceed them.
 - We embrace challenges and find innovative solutions.
 - We never stop learning and growing.
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Supportive – Compassionate and Human

We care about each other and our community.

- We treat everyone with respect and kindness.
 - We create an environment where people feel valued and included.
 - We celebrate teamwork and collaboration.
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Expert – Evidence-Based and Trusted

We lead with knowledge and integrity.

- We base our work on research and best practice.
 - We stay ahead of developments in bowel cancer care.
 - We share expertise to empower others.
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Open – Welcoming and Inclusive

We believe diversity makes us stronger.

- We welcome different perspectives and ideas.
- We ensure fairness and transparency in all we do.
- We create a space where everyone can be their authentic self.