



# Research Strategy

**GKCCT: For childhood cancer awareness,  
early diagnosis, research and support.**

Because the children of today all deserve a tomorrow.

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## About the Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust

The Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust (GKCCT) was set up in memory of 4-year-old Grace who passed away in 2014 from a renal rhabdoid tumour. Grace left behind a legacy, a wish to help others.

The Trust works to fulfill this legacy by funding research into very rare childhood cancers, providing support to families and raising awareness of the symptoms and signs with which cancer may present in children. Although a relatively small charity, we are growing and are working on a national scale.

### The aims, objectives and priorities of the GKCCT

To promote and protect good health among children, in particular by:

- (a) Raising awareness of childhood cancers
- (b) Providing funding or grants for research into the causes of and treatment of aggressive childhood cancers, including malignant rhabdoid tumours.
- (c) Providing discretionary grants to aid the specific treatment of individual cases of childhood cancer when not available within the NHS.
- (d) Provision of support for families.

### Our mission statement:

To inspire breakthroughs in the diagnosis and treatment of children with cancer, in particular, rare aggressive cancers of childhood.

**Because the children of today all deserve a tomorrow.**





## What research do we fund?

To date, we have funded four research projects in partnership with another major research charity. These projects include:

**Understanding the biology of malignant rhabdoid tumours to develop targeted treatments:** Improved therapeutic targeting in malignant rhabdoid tumours using discovery proteomics analysis. Lead by Dr Daniel Williamson, Newcastle University.

**Understanding what goes wrong in cells that leads to malignant rhabdoid tumours:** Unravelling the impact of SMARCB1 loss on the chromatin landscape in malignant rhabdoid tumours to identify novel therapeutic opportunities. Lead by: Prof Maureen O'Sullivan, Trinity College, Dublin.

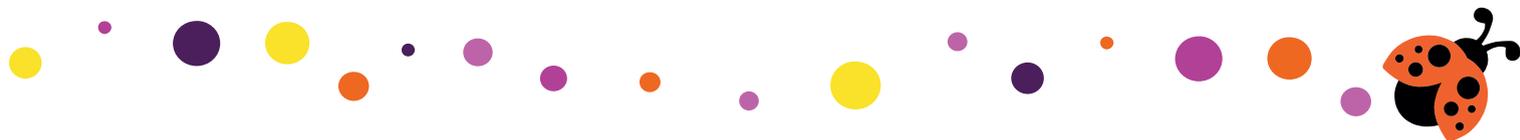
**Child Cancer Smart:** A four-year scientific research project partnership aiming to reduce the time taken to diagnose cancer in infants, children and young people.

**Next generation proteomic profiling of extracranial malignant rhabdoid tumours:** Lead by Dr Paul Huang (Institute of Cancer Research, London) and Dr Daniel Williamson (Newcastle).

By funding research grants we aim to increase the understanding of these cancers and their identification leading to more rapid diagnosis.

In time we aim for the research we fund to translate into kinder and more effective treatments for children with cancer.





## What research priority issues have been identified and why

**Our research priority is to fund projects with clear translatable outcomes that are most likely to lead to an improvement in treatment in the relatively near future.**

The GKCCT is working to fund world-class research into rare aggressive childhood cancers including rhabdoid and other rare aggressive cancers. We wish to concentrate on the earlier diagnosis and treatment of rare cancers, working towards looking for kinder and more effective treatments for these cancers which currently have poor prognoses. We will also consider participating in the funding of clinical trials if they fall under the above remit.

All areas of research related to rare non-CNS solid tumours of childhood or rhabdoid tumours of all types (including AT/RT) will be considered, but we are particularly interested in studies that will improve our understanding of the disease and lead to improvements in diagnosis, treatment and/or outcome.

Areas of special mention include non-invasive diagnostic/monitoring techniques, i.e., “liquid biopsies” and new more refined treatments for rhabdoid and other rare aggressive tumour types such as rhabdomyosarcoma.

### Mainstream of funding

The mainstream of funding provided by the GKCCT is through an annual round of grant funding.

Each round will be advertised on the charity’s website, on social media and will be spread to members of the paediatric oncology and research committee.





Each round may vary slightly, but in general we would usually consider funding a range of grant types from project grants, PhD students and clinical fellowships and any other applications that fall within the GKCCT research strategy.

Mainstream funding opportunities will be annual, but from time to time, we may decide to award further grants or consider applications outside of the annual round in certain situations. Should this occur, external peer review will be applied.

## Restrictions

The GKCCT's grant funding will be allocated to teams attached to recognised medical or academic institutions and usually within the UK or Ireland. We are members of the Association of Medical Research Charities and therefore support their statement on the use of animals in research (available on our website and at <https://www.amrc.org.uk/position-statement-on-the-use-of-animals-in-research>).

It is the policy of the GKCCT that the use of animals for research purposes is only undertaken when there is no alternative. It is very unlikely that we will ever fund a project that involves research on animals, but we cannot discount the slight possibility.

All research projects that are funded by the GKCCT must declare at the outset if research in animals will be used at any stage and all work must be done in accordance with UK Home Office Guidance (or the equivalent) and all laboratories must be in receipt of valid certification.





## GKCCT Research Advisory Panel

**Members of the Research Advisory Panel should comprise where possible:**

- Up to two GKCCT trustees or members of the management team, at least one of whom as a background in medicine, research or science.
- At least one representative who is a paediatric oncology specialist.
- At least one further representative from clinical paediatric oncology or a member of the wider research community.
- The chairman of the research advisory committee should not also be chairman of the board of trustees.
- The Research Advisory Panel (RAP) should also take on board the Expert parent reviewer.

**The RAP should have at least 5 members at any one time. where possible.**

### The Role of the Research Advisory Panel:

- Consider all funding applications for funding.
- Seek peer review as appropriate.
- Make recommendations to the GKCCT board of trustees.
- Work in partnership with the GKCCT to monitor the progress of projects for the duration of the funding.





## Peer review

The GKCCT works to fund top quality research. All applications will be subjected to peer review by the Research Advisory Committee. In addition to this, all projects that are over £30,000 in size or are outside the expertise of the RAC will also be externally peer reviewed.

At the time of application, all applicants are asked to suggest at least one individual for external review. The RAP may also use other external peer reviewers who are specialists in the required field. Prior to sending an application for external review, consent will be obtained from the applicant.

## Eligible Research Costs

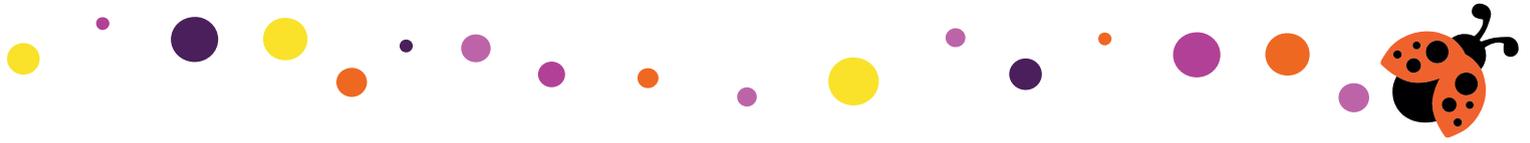
The GKCCT support the view that as a charity we will fund medical research not the cost of central overheads (core costs).

We fund directly incurred funds in full but expect the general running costs to be provided by government (or government bodies) through funding to universities. This is because we are committed to ensuring the most efficient use of possible funding as we are aware that the funding available for this type of work is very limited.

For this reason, we support the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) position statement on supporting research in universities.

More information on this can be found on the AMRC website and is available here: <https://www.amrc.org.uk/amrc-position-statement-on-supporting-research-in-universities>





## Review of the Research Strategy

The research strategy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Research Advisory Panel and the Board of Trustees. It will be reviewed more frequently should the need arise.

