

# Chief Executive Officer Medical Research Foundation



# Welcome

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in leading the Medical Research Foundation at this pivotal moment in our development.

***Would you like to guide a charity research funder with a century-long legacy into its next transformative chapter?***

The Medical Research Foundation holds a unique place in the UK's research ecosystem. We are a research funding and fundraising charity with the rare freedom to support work on any health condition, anywhere in the world. Thanks to the generosity of the public, and strength of our strategic partnerships, we lay the foundations for ground-breaking discoveries and life-changing advances. We do this by investing in the most promising ideas and in the research leaders who will shape tomorrow's breakthroughs. Through support of areas of research that have previously been neglected we give hope to people whose health conditions have been overlooked.

Our history is long, and our ambition is even longer. We believe passionately in the power of medical research, and the people behind it, to make a lasting difference to health. We want everyone to benefit from scientific breakthroughs, not just today but for generations to come.

We are seeking a CEO who can build on our strong foundations: our commitment to research and governance excellence, our professional rigour, our excellent people, and our organisational agility. Someone who can lead us confidently through a period of continued growth, innovation and even greater impact.

You will join a charity supported by an outstanding executive team, an engaged and collaborative Board of Trustees, and a highly professional and committed wider team. You will work alongside: independent Expert Review Panels and an Investment Committee; our parent organisation, the UK Medical Research Council; an emerging community of lived experience experts; and, a network of researchers around the world whose work we are proud to fund.

This is a fantastic opportunity. If it resonates with you and you are bold, ambitious and motivated by the opportunity to help donors in their desire to transform health, then we look forward to hearing from you.



Professor Paul Moss OBE

Chair, Medical Research Foundation

## About us

The Medical Research Foundation is an independent charity dedicated to improving human health through investment in high-quality medical research anywhere in the world. We currently support £34m ongoing research grants primarily based in the UK, but also in equitable partnerships in Africa, and will invest £35m in new research in the five years to 2029.

Originally established as the charitable arm of the Medical Research Council (MRC) over 100 years ago, and taking on a modern governance structure in 2011, we remain deeply connected to the MRC's legacy of excellence, while using our independence to direct funding flexibly, strategically, and in ways that respond to the most pressing health challenges of our time.

### Our vision

Our vision is a world where medical research improves health for everyone.

There are still many health conditions which impose a heavy burden on millions of people, in the UK and around the world. History has shown us, time and again, that the best way to achieve better human health is through medical research. We know that by investing now, we will see life-saving advances in the future and improvements in health for everyone.

### Our mission

Our mission is to lay the foundations for ground-breaking new discoveries and life-changing advances. We give hope to people whose health conditions are overlooked, by supporting research in areas that are underfunded. We invest in the brightest and best researchers, ensuring the next generation of scientists can continue to solve the biggest challenges facing human health.



## What we fund

Our remit is wide - we can fund anything, anywhere - and the need is great. We focus on funding research that will have the greatest possible impact on people's lives, prioritising new research in our current strategy period that aligns with one or more of our strategic research themes:

- High-need, low research investment

There are too many health conditions which continue to devastate lives. We identify those areas of health that our overlooked, where people's lives see little improvement, and research is underfunded.

- Emerging research leaders

The health problems of the future will be solved by the researchers we invest in today. We structure funding to keep the brightest minds in science, for the benefit of us all.

- Changing policy and practice

Few funding opportunities exist for scientists to ensure that policymakers and practitioners are aware of their research. We provide funding that ensures healthcare policy and practice is based on the latest evidence and medical research has the greatest possible impact, not just in labs, but at bedside and in communities for people worldwide.

Our health priorities are led by our donors and where we believe that there is the greatest need for attention and research. We currently prioritise:

- Improving the lives of children and young people.
- Addressing neglected areas of mental health
- Tackling the health impacts of climate change
- Responding to emerging health threats and research opportunities

Our research priorities and funding is guided by expert advice from the MRC's boards and panels, as well as the wider scientific, clinical and lived experience communities. This ensures our grants and fellowships go to projects of the highest quality, with the greatest potential for impact.

We are passionate supporters of the next generation of researchers, and we provide opportunities for our emerging research leaders to broaden their skill-sets, build their careers and demonstrate their impact.



## Our future

We are in year 3 of our current five-year strategy period. Our current CEO has stepped down to give their successor the time to embed in the charity before developing our next five-year strategy to take us to 2034 and beyond. Our ambition is to build on our solid foundations and create new opportunities for growth, influence and impact. We are actively and purposefully spending down our accumulated assets and increasing our annual income to secure our future for the generations to come. Our new CEO will be key in building our profile and influence, developing new strategic partnerships, pursuing excellence in research, championing research careers and finding innovative ways to support the UK and wider research communities to harness new opportunities to improve health for more people.

## The planet's future

Climate change poses a growing threat to human health, and we are determined to be part of the solution. We fund research into the health impacts of climate change, while also reducing our own environmental footprint, including having divested from fossil fuels and providing a green employer pension scheme. We have embedded sustainability at the heart of our decision-making, aiming to influence the researchers, partners and suppliers we work with.

## How we work

We work collaboratively in multidisciplinary teams across most of our activities. We are supportive and kind, set and work to the highest professional standards, and are a learning organisation keen to reflect, iterate and improve on a continuous cycle.

We are generous with our expertise and knowledge and believe that we can add value to UK research and improve health for more people, by sharing our practices and learnings.

We are committed to embracing diversity, attracting and keeping talent from the widest possible pool, and ensuring our research funding and employment processes are fair, transparent and inclusive. Sex and gender considerations are embedded into our grant application and review processes, and we continue to strengthen equity in our funding both in the UK and internationally.

We work hard to ensure that all of our people can contribute to the best of their abilities, and that no one is inhibited from making their contribution; we have an inclusive, positive and fair culture where opportunities are open to all.

To learn more about our current five-year organisational strategy, click [here](#).

And for our most recent annual report, click [here](#).

And our latest five-year impact report, click [here](#).

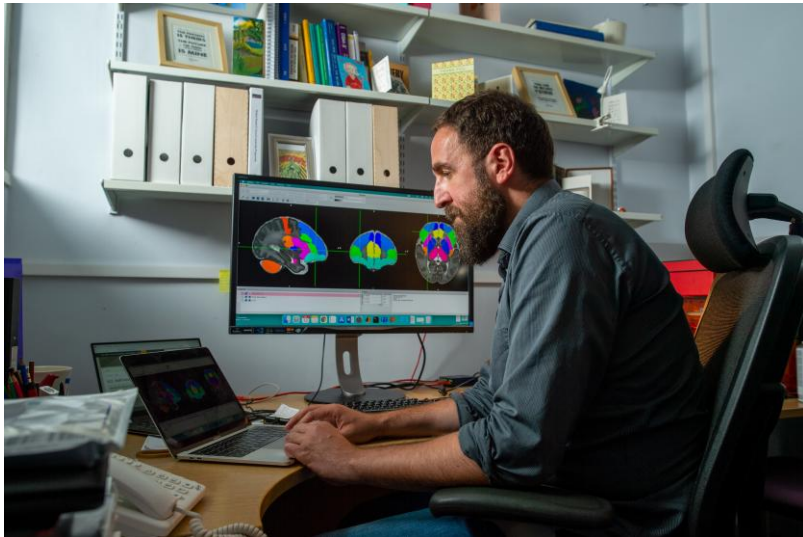
And our first one hundred years, click [here](#).

## Job description

**Job title:** Chief Executive Officer

**Reports to:** Chair of the Board of Trustees

**Direct reports:** Director of Finance and HR, Director of Research, Director of Voluntary Income and Engagement, and Director of Governance and Operations.



### Role purpose:

You will build on the strong platform established by our outgoing Chief Executive to progress us closer to our vision of a world where medical research improves the health of everyone. You will also lead us through our next stage of growth and development to maximise the impact of research for more people whose health conditions are overlooked and underfunded.

You will provide the strategic leadership and direction that enables the Medical Research Foundation to deliver effectively against its charitable objectives, achieve its mission and see its vision become a reality.

You will be the senior internal and external representative of the charity with employees, trustees, donors and funders, strategic partners, the media and other stakeholders, and you will capture the voice, experiences and needs of those living with health conditions that see no change. You will lead and motivate the Executive Leadership Team to drive the collective vision for the charity.

As CEO, you will ensure that more people whose health conditions are poorly understood find hope through medical research. You will grow our impact, build our brand, lead campaigns, secure our long-term financial sustainability and ensure that we continue to be a great place to work and an impactful charity to support.

# Job description

## Main responsibilities:

### Leadership

- Lead and communicate with scientific credibility a clear and inspiring vision of the hope that medical research can bring to people's lives.
- Lead the charity through its next period of development and growth, helping to extend the reach and impact of its funded research.
- Model organisational commitments to continuous business improvement, equity, diversity and inclusion, and planetary health, and set expectations of others and maintain best practice.
- Lead organisational culture and ensure that all activities are carried out to the highest standards of integrity and professionalism.

### Research

- Ensure the charity maintains and enhances its reputation as a funder of high-impact quality research for public benefit through continued use of gold-standard funding processes.
- Provide oversight of a diverse funding portfolio, ensuring research programmes align with the charity's strategy, balancing this with donor priorities.
- Engender trust within the sector, amongst researchers, funders and the public, through credible scientific and research understanding.

### Strategy, finance and performance

- Lead delivery of the 2024-2029 organisational strategy and the development of future strategies. Work with the Executive Leadership Team to monitor and evaluate progress.
- Ensure the development and delivery of annual plans and budgets; monitor and adjust in-year in line with delegated authorities, and report against measurable targets.
- Ensure sound financial and performance management with effective monitoring and evaluation.

### Governance

- Ensure the charity fulfils its legal, statutory and regulatory responsibilities through effective governance systems and processes that are responsive to changing needs and the external environment.
- Lead open, collaborative dialogue with the Board of Trustees about performance, ensuring that trustees are well briefed and positioned to manage the affairs of the charity.
- Be responsible for managing and mitigating risk to the charity, including health and safety.

# Job description

## External Profile and Income Generation

- Build the charity's public profile by acting as a high-profile ambassador. Engage in external events and engagements, pursue strategic public speaking opportunities and take the role of key spokesperson with the media.
- Position the charity as a strategic partner of choice for others, including research funders, industry and philanthropic institutions, and actively support the development of these partnerships.
- Actively support the charity's fundraising ambitions through involvement in the identification, cultivation, conversion and stewardship of high value prospects and donors.
- Maintain constant awareness of the external and internal landscape, opportunities for growth and collaboration and new developments and standards.

## People

- Ensure the culture, workforce planning, and overall performance of the staff supports the charity achieving its strategic objectives
- Ensure that the charity continues to be, and is seen to be, a good employer.
- Be responsible for the motivation, wellbeing and efficiency of the charity's people.
- Set, assure and model high professional standards, in parallel with a commitment to learning and empowerment.
- Lead, motivate, challenge and support the Executive Leadership Team so that it can deliver collective leadership for the charity.



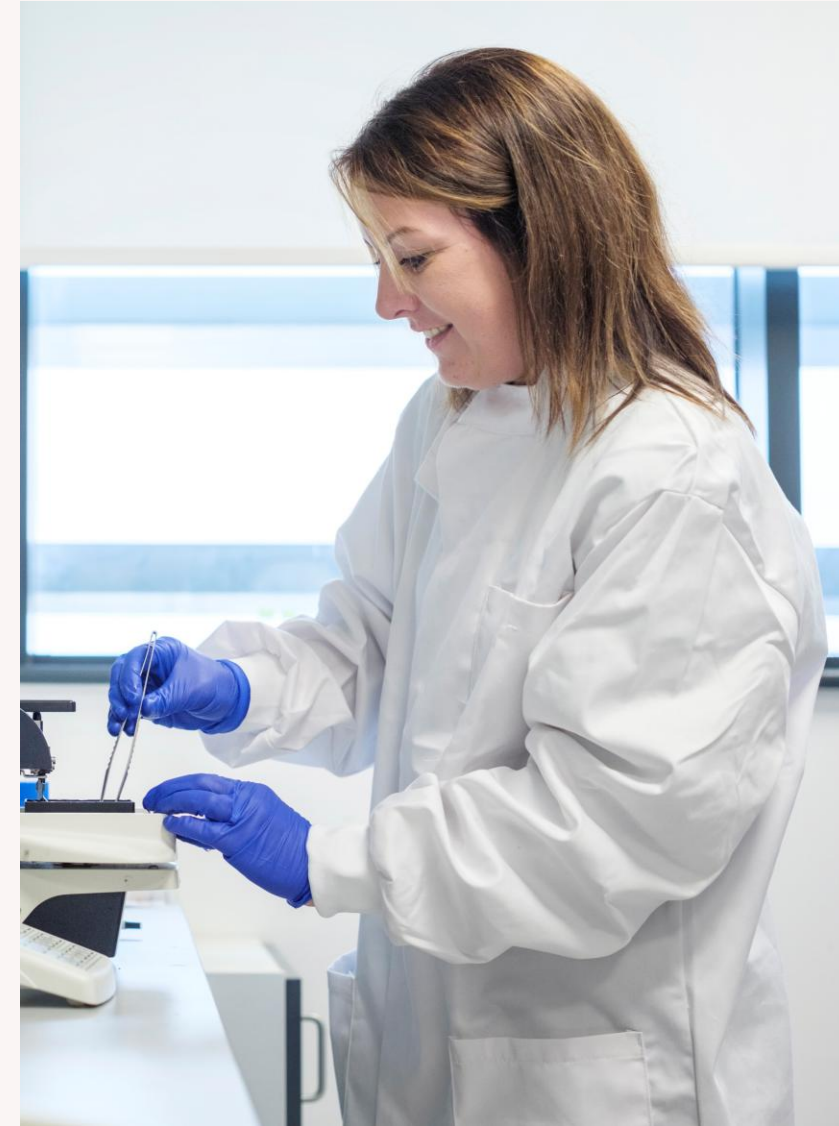
# Person specification

## Knowledge and experience

- A strong knowledge of medical research and belief in its power to improve health.
- Experience of senior leadership in a research funding organisation or a closely related environment.
- Significant experience of leading an organisation through incremental, yet transformative, change to deliver its strategic objectives.
- An understanding and knowledge of the fundraising and voluntary sector and an ability to lead discussions with potential and existing funders and donors

## Skills and abilities

- Strategic and entrepreneurial thinker, able to set a clear direction of travel supported by rigorous planning.
- Ability to lead, inspire, challenge and motivate high performing teams to achieve even greater results.
- Skilled and inspiring communicator, able to effectively influence and engage diverse stakeholder groups and build strategic partnerships.
- Ability to engage with philanthropic donors from a range of backgrounds to enthuse, motivate, secure and maintain their support.
- Sound financial acumen.
- A keen eye for seeking out, recognizing and responding to emerging opportunities.
- Ability to positively engage with uncertainty, finding rational and effective ways to lead others through.
- Able to use sound judgement and decisiveness when making tough decisions in challenging circumstances; a willingness to tackle problems head-on with sensitivity and a learning mindset.
- Experience of working effectively with a governing body.



# Person specification

## Styles and behaviours

- **Bold** - willing to do things differently and take calculated risks to find solutions to debilitating health challenges that have been ignored for too long.
- **Expert** - for over a century, we've focused solely on funding world-class medical research, selected by the brightest minds in science.
- **Human** - caring deeply about people who live with devastating, overlooked health conditions. Like us, you will have an unwavering conviction in our responsibility to offer them hope of a better future.
- **Driven** - relentless in the pursuit of ground-breaking discoveries, with an urgency to change lives now and in the years to come.
- **Credible** - able to inspire confidence and bring others with you through a strong belief in the power of medical research.
- **Collaborative and flexible** - works constructively with colleagues, partners and other funders, and is pragmatic in responding to changing circumstances.
- **Committed to equity, diversity and inclusion** - in health, in research and in the workplace.
- **Committed to continuous business development** - determined to help the charity become ever more effective, efficient and impactful.
- **Committed to environmental sustainability and planetary health.**



# Terms of appointment

## Salary

The salary for this role is c.£130,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

## Location/Hybrid Working Pattern

Farringdon - We all come together in our office on a Monday and Tuesday to support collaborative, creative, in-person working and we work additional office days according to the needs of our roles. Those of us who are full time are office-based at least three days each week. Other days of the week may be worked remotely at a UK address. We work remotely on a Friday except when there is demand for office working or there is a specific business need.

## Pension

You will be auto enrolled into our workplace personal pension that is provided by Standard Life, from day one. We will contribute up to 12% of your salary to your pension plan through a salary sacrifice scheme, double matching your contributions.

## Annual leave

From day one, you will be entitled to our full and generous annual leave allowance and you'll be allocated 30 days annual leave. In addition to your annual leave allocation, you are entitled to paid leave on all of the public holidays each year (pro rata). Some of our public holiday allowance is flexible and can be transferred to another date that is more suitable to you.

## Additional benefits

- **Financial support:** We provide interest-free loans for travel and other significant one-off expenses, participate in the cycle to work scheme, and provide a life assurance scheme that provides to your nominated beneficiary four times your salary should you die in service.
- **Special circumstances:** We offer generous enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption pay to support your family life and, if the need arises, we offer enhanced pay for ill health absences
- **Other leave:** We offer additional paid leave for volunteering and trusteeships, bereavement and other life circumstances.
- **Summer working time:** For four weeks in the summer each year, when much of our business slows, we work only four days for five days of pay (pro rata).
- **Learning and development:** We are a learning organisation and are committed to the skill development of all our people. You will have opportunities to engage in Executive coaching, and internal and external training.
- **Annual health check:** We provide an annual comprehensive health check with an external assessor to help you to keep track of your personal health circumstances and goals.
- **Advice and support services:** We offer a health and wellbeing app that gives access to online appointments with GPs, mental health specialists and nutritionists.
- **Occupational health:** We work with an external OH professionals to help team members stay in work or return to work.
- **Physical and mental health at work:** We have physical and mental health trained first aiders amongst our team.
- **Workplace wellbeing:** We provide tea, coffee and fruit for all to enjoy, a spacious kitchen for lunchtime use, and regular team lunches to socialise with colleagues.

# How to apply

To make an application, click on the link below

[APPLY HERE](#)



Please ensure you have the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

## Closing date:

Monday 8th June 2026

## Preliminary interviews:

w/c Monday 15th June & w/c Monday 22nd June 2026

## Final Panel interviews:

Friday 17th July 2026



Changing  
medicine today.  
Changing lives  
tomorrow.



[medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk](http://medicalresearchfoundation.org.uk)



[starfishsearch.com](http://starfishsearch.com)