



Oracle Cancer Trust

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*Patron*  
Sir Michael Morpurgo

## INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

### About Oracle

Oracle Cancer Trust (Oracle) was founded in 2000 to address the medical research and delivery gaps facing Head & Neck cancer patients in the UK. Since then, Oracle has been a leading UK funder of early-stage medical research in Head & Neck Cancer. The charity has supported over 50 research programmes and provided over £7million in funding towards better outcomes and more advanced treatment approaches in this area of cancer. Our successes include improved delivery of radiotherapy, reducing the legacy of lifelong side-effects and pioneering advances in immunotherapy.

Over the course of Q4 2021 and Q1 2022 Oracle conducted a market listening exercise to gather input into where the greatest areas of need are in Head and Neck Cancer, to understand where other organisations are operating and to identify where the gaps are. This included a patient and caregiver survey (156 participants) and a healthcare practitioner (46 participants) survey. Through this exercise we realised that there is still much to do. Head and Neck Cancers are under recognised, underfunded and have significant unmet diagnosis and treatment advance possibilities. Yet the numbers of patients are growing within the UK and global populations.

Today Head and Neck Cancers are the 4th most common cancer in men in the UK and the 6th most common cancer for all population groups in the world. There were an estimated 12,400 cases of Head and Neck Cancer diagnosed each year in the UK according to the latest CRUK data from 20181. Although still a relatively rare area of disease the awareness of Head and Neck cancers is significantly below where it should be in comparison to other cancers and healthcare conditions. There is very little understanding of Head and Neck cancer symptoms, most at risk population groups and best treatment approaches not only amongst the general public but also amongst primary care practitioners (PCPs), dentists and other medical care professionals. In the UK, many Head and Neck Cancer Multi-Disciplinary Teams within the NHS are frustrated by a lack of funding and awareness to help unblock areas of inefficiency and help ensure that patients are diagnosed as early as possible, have quick access to the best treatment approaches and have high quality of life outcomes.

This lack of understanding of Head and Neck Cancers is confounded by unique complexity amongst Head and Neck Cancers. Tumours can present in 14 different physical sites of the Head and Neck and can comprise of 30 different cancer types/tumour strains. Diagnosis can require biopsies or other imaging scans and treatment can include surgery, robotic assisted surgery, chemotherapy, immunotherapy, radiotherapy etc with many patients experiencing debilitating speech, eating and respiratory problems as well as psychological effects of loss of function and change in body image.

The deficit in funding and therefore research into new treatment approaches is amplified by the lack of data, analysis and learnings from existing diagnoses and treatment outcomes in the UK because there is no national Head and Neck Cancer Audit within the NHS.

The good news is that an estimated 88% of head and neck cancers are preventable in the UK. Positive outcomes are correlated to early diagnosis and quick access to treatment. However, the lack of awareness, socio-economic barriers and deprivation are all contributing to delayed diagnosis. In England cases in females are 64% higher in

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<sup>1</sup> CRUK

the most deprived quintile, and in males are 101% higher in the most deprived quintile (2013-2017). COVID-19 has widened these gaps even further and the NHS is struggling to respond, leaving many communities behind.

Whilst the situation around Head and Neck Cancer is worrying, Oracle believes that there are many areas where positive impact can be realised and many individuals, partners and communities who have projects waiting for funding. In specific the charity has decided to focus on three key areas;

- Increasing awareness of Head & Neck cancers in the wider community
- Supporting service delivery innovation within NHS Head & Neck cancer centres
- Promoting discovery of better treatments through research grants.

### **Research and Funding Strategy**

Oracle's research strategy is aligned with our charity's vision and aims to clearly set out the areas of research, service delivery and project scope that Oracle will support and fund. This will also shape our fundraising strategy and impact monitoring. Perhaps most importantly, the research strategy and decision making aims to incorporate the input of the wider UK Head and Neck Cancer community and in particular Head and Neck Cancer patients, survivors and carers. Our stakeholders and the community are the heart of everything we do.

Oracle Cancer Trust's Research and Funding strategy is currently focused around two main areas:

- 1) Reducing inequalities in Head and Neck Cancers: Addressing the varied and increasing inequalities and inequity that exist in Head and Neck Cancers.
- 2) Delivering new and improved approaches to diagnosis, treatment and post treatment support that deliver better quality of life outcomes for patients

We accept applications from any individual, team or institution that is able to demonstrate delivery against the charity's mission and funding strategy.

### **Quality assurance**

Oracle Cancer Trust are members of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) which is our badge of quality. Membership means that we meet high standards of research governance and that this governance is reflected in how we work with your grant applicants, recipients and donors.

### **General Guidance**

Please consider Oracle's mission and focus areas and our Research and Funding Strategy prior to completion of your application as it will help you assess whether your application for funding falls within the charity's remit. Please contact us with any questions at [info@oraclecancertrust.org](mailto:info@oraclecancertrust.org)

### **Level of funding**

There are no formal restrictions on the amount of funding that can be requested. However, as a guide, Oracle is unlikely to fund applications requesting >£200,000 in total or >£100,000 within a single year unless there is potential for match funding or joint funding which we will always endeavour to find where and as possible.

Oracle accepts funding applications for single year or multi-year projects (Including for three- or four-year PhD student projects).

## **Eligibility**

In general terms, applications should be

- Able to demonstrate how it will help Oracle achieve its mission and Research and Funding strategic objectives
- Based in and of benefit to the UK
- From teams or individuals with an established record working with Head and Neck cancers or associated disease
- Clear on project metrics and milestones
- Easily understood by patients, donors, clinicians and researchers. Please avoid submitting applications that cannot be understood by patient, public and donor individuals and advocates.

## **Oracle's Research and Funding Committee**

The role of Oracle's Research and Funding Committee is to review applications received from a wide range of applicants across the UK and evaluate their promise and potential for real impact.

Oracle's Research and Funding Committee is wholly independent and voluntary:

*Dr Teresa Guerrero-Urbano* (CHAIR), Consultant Clinical Oncologist and Honorary Senior Lecturer Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

*Keith Jones* (Financial Impact Perspective), Trustee Oracle Cancer Trust and leading UK financial expert

*Mr Stuart Winter*, Consultant ENT, Head and Neck Surgeon, Oxford University NHS Foundation Trust

*Dr Ketan Shah*, Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Oxford University NHS Foundation Trust

*Dr Kate Newbold*, Consultant Clinical Oncologist, The Royal Marsden Hospital

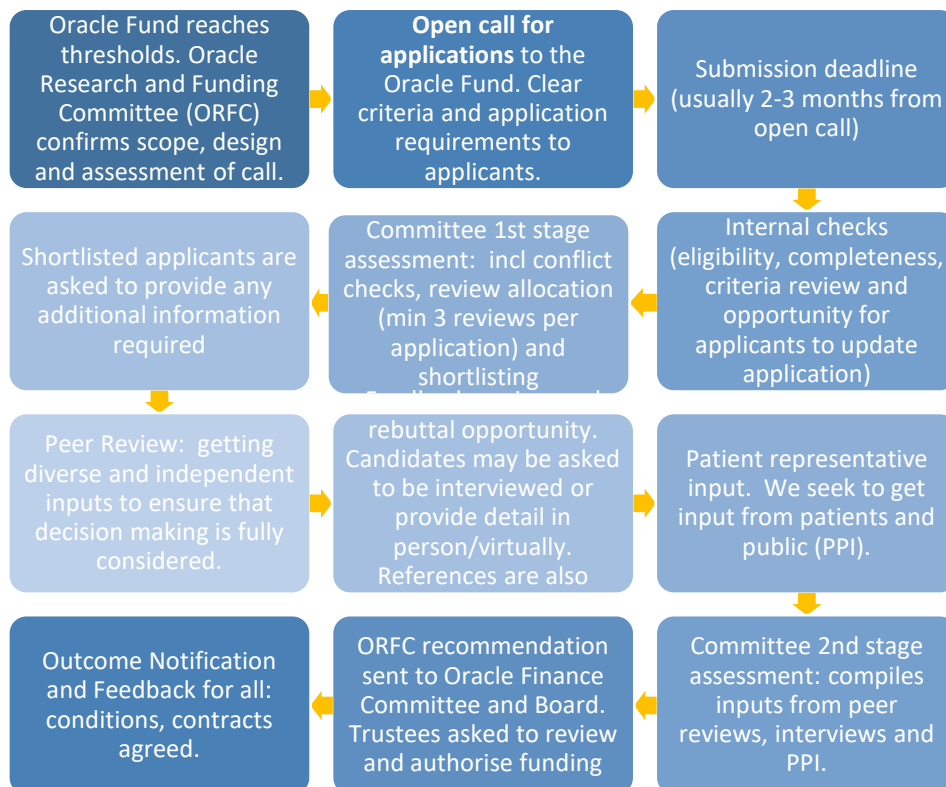
*Kiran Nistala* (Industry perspective), AstraZeneca, VP Immunology, R&I Late-Stage Development

*Prof Anson Mackay* (Patient advocate), Professor Emeritus, Department of Geography, Environmental Change Research Centre, University College London

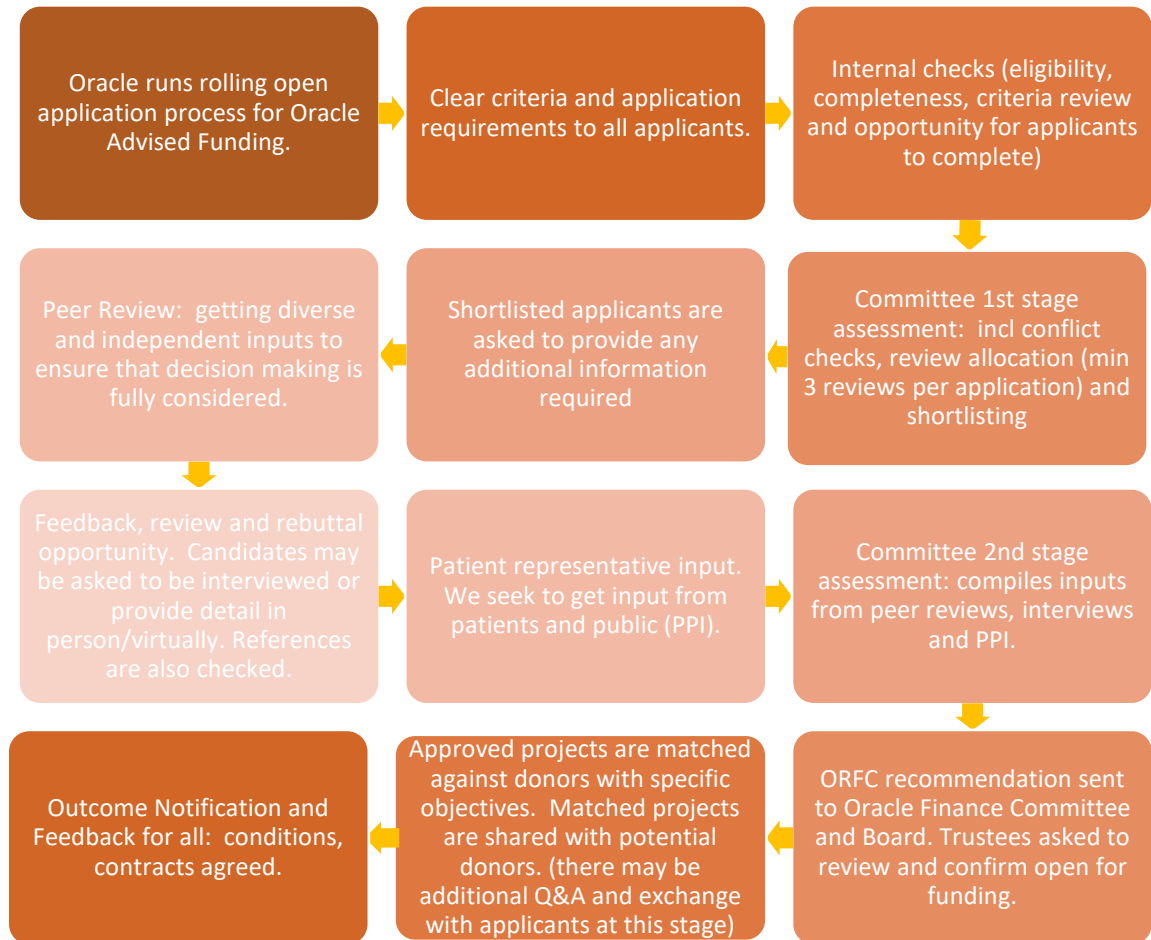
## Evaluation of Research Applications

Oracle receives applications for funding on both a rolling basis and in response to a call for proposals.

- 1) Call for Applications:** Oracle Cancer Trust conducts ongoing fundraising for its “Oracle Fund”. When there are excess financial reserves in the organisation to cover existing projects and operating costs it will put out a call for Applications in support of the charity’s Research and Funding Strategy. The steps associated with an Oracle Fund call for applications are as follows:



**2) Rolling Application and Oracle advised funding** - Oracle is open to receiving funding applications on a rolling basis and aims to match donor specific funding objectives with individual projects. All projects must meet Oracle’s Research Committee criteria and a comprehensive conflict of interest process is followed. The steps for this would be:



**Timeline 2022**

Oracle is currently receiving applications for Oracle advised funding on a rolling basis. There is not currently an Open Call for Applications for the Oracle Fund. Please check our website again in Summer 2022.

## **Costing guidance**

### **Allowed costs**

We provide funds for the directly incurred costs of Oracle funded projects. These are the actual costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of the project. We do not fund on a proportion of full economic costs (fEC) basis.

Provisions may be made for the following:

- **Salaries for additional staff** to work full-time or part-time on the project
- **Salaries for technical staff** working full-time or part-time on the project
- **Salaries for other staff** (e.g. secretarial, clerical and administrative) may be provided on the same basis as above.
- **Consumables/materials** required to carry out the project including hospital and/or laboratory materials
- **Equipment** including computers and software. If the Institution is a registered charity, it should be possible to obtain exemption from the payment of VAT within the UK for equipment donated for medical research. Oracle Cancer Trust will not normally reimburse for VAT, but will reimburse for delivery costs if specified in the approved application.

Oracle Cancer Trust **will not contribute to the indirect costs of the project.** This includes:

- Central institutional libraries
- Departmental services: administrative and secretarial (where not included under direct support), local finance, minor consumables, printing/photography, (where below threshold limits) minor store items and laboratory and workshop support
- Financial services (finance, accounting, tendering, marketing)
- Personnel services
- Public relations
- Recruitment costs (advertising etc.)
- Staff development (including training)
- Staff facilities (transport, health and safety, welfare services, laundry)
- Part-time staff effort on research projects which cannot easily be identified or allocated to the research project but are assumed to contribute a general background level of departmental administrative/secretarial/technical support

Research expenses outside the scope of the project

Oracle Cancer Trust **as a rule will not meet costs associated with:**

- Employment of established academic staff
- General premises costs
- The cost of unspecified research/delivery work
- The cost of work already done or the cost of writing up such work
- The cost of literary surveys
- Remuneration of undergraduates (other than payment for vacation work under an existing award if such earning is allowed by the host institution)
- The cost of host facilities to which the investigator normally has free access
- Removal costs incurred in filling posts
- Costs associated with travel to conferences

## **Once a grant has been made**

### **Approval**

The grant holder must provide copies of the relevant hospital and/or ethics committee approval and/or Home Office licences for their proposed project before any payment of grant monies can be made. Such proofs are not required at the application stage. The Host Institution will also be required to sign a Grant Terms Agreement Form and a Grant Award Letter.

### **Start of work**

Grant holders must notify Oracle Cancer Trust of the actual starting date of work on the grant. Work must begin within 12 months of the award notification date.

### **Approval for changes**

Grant holders must seek prior approval from the Research and Funding Committee and trustees of Oracle Cancer Trust for any deviation in the methodology or planned use of funds from that described in the original application. Grant holders must also notify Oracle Cancer Trust if a member of the project team funded by the grant leaves and supply the curriculum vitae of any new appointee.

### **Reporting and grant outcomes**

All grant holders are required to supply Oracle Cancer Trust with an annual progress report (to be submitted within one month of the year end date) and a final report (to be submitted within four months of the grant end date). These need to be completed in full. Grant holders are also asked to write a Donor update letter on an annual basis.

Template forms will be forwarded at the appropriate times. Failure to provide such reports/updates may result in final grant payments being withheld and subsequent applications being reviewed less favourably. For grants lasting one year or less, only a final report is normally required. The Research and Funding Committee reserves the right to request additional reports at any time if it is concerned about a grant's progress. These reports will also be used to update donors on the impact of grant awards.

Grant holders may be asked to provide updates for at least three years after their grant has ended. If any outcomes/outputs arise after this time, the grant holder must make Oracle Cancer Trust aware of them as soon as possible.

Oracle Cancer Trust also reserves the right to contact grant holders periodically for informal updates on the longer-term outcomes of funding.

### **Publicity**

Oracle Cancer Trust may periodically require grant holders to edit short plain English summaries of their work to appear in the charity's print and web publications. Grant holders must also supply the office with a photograph of the Project Lead, the whole team (project grants) or fellow and supervisor (fellowship awards).

### **Acknowledgement**

Grant holders must acknowledge Oracle Cancer Trust's financial support in all publications and presentations of work arising from the grant and supply the charity with evidence of this. We also ask that grant holders acknowledge Oracle Cancer Trust, as the funder of their initial data, in all publications resulting from subsequent grants.

## **NIHR**

Oracle Cancer Trust is a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) non-commercial Partner. This means the studies that we fund may be eligible to access the NIHR Study Support Service which is provided by the NIHR Clinical Research Network.

The NIHR Clinical Research Network supports researchers and the life sciences industry to plan, setup and deliver high quality research to agreed timescales and study recruitment targets, for the benefit of patients and the NHS. This includes relevant research in public health and social care in England.

In partnership with your local R&D office, we encourage you to involve your local Clinical Research Network team in discussions as early as possible when planning your study. This will allow you to fully benefit from the support available through the NIHR Study Support Service. To find out more about how you can apply for this additional support to help deliver your study, please visit [www.nihr.ac.uk/study-support-service](http://www.nihr.ac.uk/study-support-service).

## **Further information**

For further information, please contact Sarah Bender  
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