

Research Review Panel

Terms of Reference January 2021



INTRODUCTION:

- Asthma + Lung UK (A+LUK) is committed to ensuring that its annual spend on research adds the greatest possible value to the overall research activity in the field of asthma and other lung diseases.
- A+LUK attaches importance to adherence to the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) good practice guidelines and to maintaining a high level of transparency in reviewing all funding applications.
- This document outlines A+LUK's Terms of Reference for both expert and lay members of the Research Review Panel when participating in any review process linked to the charity's research funding programme.
- A+LUK's Research Review Panel consists of core members, in addition to those with specific expertise who are recruited to participate in themed funding calls (e.g. disease-specific calls).

PURPOSE:

The Research Review Panel is mandated by A+LUK's Board of Trustees:

- To ensure the integrity of the charity's programme of research project support and its relevance and importance to people affected by asthma and other lung diseases.
- To provide scientific input of any of the charity's activities in support of research and the perspective of people affected by asthma and other lung diseases regarding these activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- For expert members to assess applications for research grant support received during the charity's research funding rounds for scientific merit and appropriateness of expenditure, except where there is a conflict of interest.
- For lay members to assess applications for research grant support received during the charity's research funding rounds for their importance to those affected by asthma and other lung conditions, except where there is a conflict of interest.
- For members to attend the Research Review Panel meetings, where invited.
- For members to present reviews and scores on the applications assigned to them to the rest of the Panel at the grants review meeting.
- For members to score all applications for research grant support received at the grants review meeting, except where there is a conflict of interest.
- For all members to advise A+LUK's Board of Trustees, Chief Executive and Director of Research and Innovation on the order of merit of the grant applications it has assessed, except where there is a conflict of interest.
- For the core members to undertake other review tasks from time to time, at the request of the Board of Trustees.

- For the core members to assist with the identification and promotion of published research findings funded by A+LUK, where appropriate.

PANEL MEMBERSHIP, APPOINTMENTS & SERVICE PERIOD:

- The Research Review Panel membership comprises of core members and those recruited only for specific funding calls:
 - Core members – experts in respiratory research (including the Chair) and two patient representatives
 - Call-specific members – experts in areas specific to the funding call
- The composition of the core Panel is subject to annual review by the Research & Innovation directorate.
- New members will normally be selected by a targeted recruitment processes. The Board of Trustees nominates responsibility to A+LUK’s Research & Innovation team to identify suitable members. Membership is approved by the Board of Trustees (and copied to chair of RRP who is invited to submit comments to the Board).
- The organisation’s Research Review Panels Chair and core members serve for a fixed term (generally 3 years with an option to extend for one further term). An individual can serve a maximum of two consecutive terms (6 years), after which they will be asked to step down and cannot be re-invited for a period of 3 years.
- Call-specific Panel members are requested to serve on the Panel only for the duration of the specific funding stream they were recruited for. Where applicable, we will not approach the same individual as a call-specific member for more than 3 consecutive grant rounds.
- The Chair will normally be appointed from the membership of the Panel, externally by advertisement and in discussion with the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Director of Research & Innovation, Head of Research & Innovation, and the Chief Executive of A+LUK.
- The Chair must not serve on the Panel for more than 6 years, this includes time as a Panel member before stepping up to Chair, if applicable.

MEETINGS & OPERATIONS:

- The Panel will participate in grant review meetings, as determined by the number of funding rounds held by A+LUK annually.
- The Chair will not score or vote on funding applications being considered.
- Meetings of the Panel must be quorate. The quorum is one half of the total number of Panel members plus one (rounded to the nearest whole). Quorum must be maintained throughout the duration of a meeting.
- Minutes will record all discussions and decisions made by the Panel and may be circulated to all Panel members, the Board of Trustees, and the A+LUK senior management team.
- Panel members may be reimbursed legitimate travel expenses incurred on Panel business, in accordance to A+LUK’s *Expenses Policy*.
- The A+LUK’s Research & Innovation team is expected to play an active part in the Panel's work but will not referee or vote on applications for grant funding. Secretariat support will be provided to the Panel by members of the Research & Innovation team.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

- Members of the Research Review Panel agree to follow principles of confidentiality during Panel meetings and in any correspondence relating to Panel meeting business. Panel members agree to not disclose confidential information with any third parties. Confidential information includes information regarding research grant applications, recommendations made to A+LUK on research to fund, information provided by peer reviewers etc.
- Maintaining confidentiality in the peer review process is important to A+LUK. In line with good practice, the best quality peer review is obtained when referees can comment candidly, in the knowledge that their identity will only be disclosed to those directly involved in the decision-making process and not to the applicants, unless express permission is given to do so. Applicants will be sent comments received from peer reviewers, as this is particularly useful to unsuccessful applicants to help them understand why they have not been recommended for funding and to improve future applications and research. However, confidential information provided by reviewers will not be disclosed to applicants.
- In agreeing to act as a member of the Research Review Panel, members agree to have their contact details processed by A+LUK for the purposes of managing Review Panel activity.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

- Potential conflicts of interest will be avoided by maintaining high levels of transparency in the work of the Panel and by scrupulous procedures which remove those Panel members with a potential conflict of interest from the review of certain application. The *Conflicts of interest policy* outlines this in more detail.
- Panel members will be requested to declare any conflicts of interest with applications submitted for funding at the earliest opportunity. Members are not permitted to take part in any aspect of the review of an application for which they have a conflict of interest and, where applicable, must exclude themselves from a Panel meeting while the relevant application is being discussed. Conflicted members will additionally not be shown the reviewers' reports in advance of a funding decision. In cases where the decision regarding funding is not clear-cut, the individual must not be in a position to influence the decision on competing applications and will therefore take no part in the discussion about prioritising applications for funding.
- When selecting external referees, the A+LUK will request any conflicts of interest to be declared before the grant application is shared. It is preferable that external peer reviewers do not have a grant being reviewed at the same meeting, but in the event that they do, a minimum of two other referees will be sought.

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY FOR FUNDING:

- The Chair of the Panel cannot apply for A+LUK funds for research grants during their tenure.
- Members of the Panel (excluding the Chair), are eligible to apply for funding from the A+LUK.