

Versus Arthritis and the Kennedy Trust Fatigue evidence review - Call for applications

Summary

In 2020, Versus Arthritis and The Kennedy Trust held a workshop to identify priorities for musculoskeletal fatigue research. Participants from a diverse group of clinical and academic backgrounds, along with people with lived experience of fatigue worked together to identify tangible areas of research where collaboration between funders could achieve an impact on the lives of people living with musculoskeletal fatigue. Working with a small steering group we were able to stratify the outputs of the workshop into practical recommendations to be taken forward in partnership by Versus Arthritis and The Kennedy Trust. The steering group set a vision for the partnership of:

“Uncovering the fundamentals of fatigue, revealing its hidden world, breaking down its stigma, and removing its hold on people with long-term conditions. Through partnership and collaboration, we will better define and measure fatigue, we will ensure the key elements of fatigue are understood and we will invest in new and existing solutions to better prevent, intervene, and manage fatigue.

The partnership will elevate the national platform of fatigue and create a network of patients, research funders, scientists, and healthcare professionals working collaboratively across conditions, disciplines, and geographical boundaries. For many, fatigue is overlooked, under-prioritised, and not understood. Together we will address this most significant of unmet healthcare needs for people living with musculoskeletal, and other long-term, conditions.”

We are excited to set out our first steps in this partnership in support of the research activity proposed by the steering group: a comprehensive scoping review on the ways of measuring, assessing, and treating chronic fatigue, to consider:

- the amount of evidence in each area
- the quality of evidence available
- where there are substantial gaps in our current knowledge
- the needs of people living with chronic fatigue
- future research priorities based on the information gathered

The outputs of this scoping review are expected to provide an important guide and inform future research partnership activity.

Whilst the focus of this scoping review is on musculoskeletal fatigue, we would also welcome collaborative proposals that include other chronic long-term conditions in which chronic fatigue is a significant component.

Applicants must carefully read the application form and guidance documentation before starting an application. Please ensure that the most appropriate language is being used in each section of the form and that the correct sections are completed.

Applicants are invited to submit applications to this one-stage process through Grant Tracker. The deadline for the receipt of applications is **16:00 on the 7th of November 2022**.

If you have any questions about this call document, eligibility, or would like to discuss your research proposal with the office please email awards@versusarthritis.org

Scope

Through this call for applications, we are looking to fund a single proposal that can generate a substantial and well-evidenced scoping review that comprehensively covers how chronic fatigue is measured, assessed, and treated. Reviews should include scientific and clinical evidence, as well as meaningful inclusion of the needs of people living with chronic fatigue. We expect the primary focus of the review to be on musculoskeletal fatigue, but encourage cross-disease applications, including outside musculoskeletal diseases where chronic fatigue is a key component.

The focus of this evidence review is on chronic fatigue related to long-term conditions. We welcome proposals that include CFS/ME in the analysis, but proposals that include CFS/ME as the primary focus will not be reviewed. Studies that also include COVID-19 in the analysis will be accepted.

We strongly encourage applications that carefully consider chronic fatigue across the life course (younger to older) and across diverse demographics and ethnic groups.

There is an expectation that applicants meaningfully involve people living with chronic fatigue in the development of the outlined work.

If required, please contact the research team for guidance (awards@versusarthritis.org) on the scope of the call and the relevance of your application.

Who can apply

We welcome **collaborative applications** with at least one of the applicants having a tenured position within a UK university, hospital, or recognised academic research institute.

Applications can include lead applicants and/or co-applicants with expertise relevant to this initiative, but who do not have a track record of musculoskeletal research. We expect applications to take a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach to answering the research questions. Patient partners are encouraged to be included as co-applicants and we would welcome studies that include industry partners.

What you can apply for

A single award of up to £100K, for up to 12 months is available. Costs for salaries, expenses, and essential research costs to conduct the scoping review can be requested. For further details on what you can apply for, please see the associated [guidance document](#).

How to apply

Applicants must carefully read the application form and guidance documentation before starting an application. Please ensure that the most appropriate language is being used in each section of the form and that the correct sections are completed.

There is a single-stage application process for all applications.

Applicants are invited to submit applications through [Grant Tracker](#), where the form is available. The deadline for the receipt of outline applications is **16:00 on the 7th of November 2022**. Submissions after 16:00 will not be accepted.

How will applications be assessed

Assessment by people living with chronic fatigue forms a key part of the review process. Further information and guidance can be found on our [website](#) and in the call guidance document.

Applications will be reviewed by an assembled panel of experts, which will include scientific, clinical, and people with lived experiences of chronic fatigue and will be assessed on:

- i. Relevance to the scope of the call
- ii. Importance, novelty, and whether it meets an unmet clinical need
- iii. Significance of the research outputs in driving translation and the route to patient benefit and impact
- iv. Involvement of people with relevant chronic long-term conditions
- v. Quality and appropriateness of the research design and methodology
- vi. Strength and make-up of the research team, including collaboration and proposed management arrangements
- vii. Applicants' track record and ability to deliver the proposed research
- viii. Facilities to conduct the proposed research
- ix. Feasibility and the potential to deliver the stated outcomes within the timescales and budget
- x. Value for money

This streamlined process will assess applications and make funding recommendations via a single-stage panel review and meeting without additional external peer-review.

Award management

Awards will be managed by Versus Arthritis on behalf of the partnership with the Kennedy Trust. It is expected that all awards will report annually via Researchfish. During the course of the award applicants may be invited to meetings with Versus

Arthritis and/or the Kennedy Trust to discuss their research findings and/or asked to contribute written summaries.

At the end of the award the PI and research team may be invited to discuss findings and outputs with the funders to help guide future funding initiatives.

Timelines

Call opens	22 nd August 2022
Deadline for applications	7 th of November 2022 16:00hrs
Panel meeting	13 th February 2023
Notification and Feedback	March 2023

Contact details

For all enquiries, please contact awards@versusarthritis.org