



THE ALZHEIMER  
SOCIETY *of* IRELAND

# Research Strategy 2022-2024



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## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all of the individuals who contributed to the development of this strategy for their time, energy, insights and invaluable contributions.

# Foreword

I am delighted to introduce The Alzheimer Society of Ireland's 2022-2024 Research Strategy.

We publish this Research Strategy on the near two-year anniversary of the COVID-19 Pandemic, in an ever-changing dementia landscape not only for The Alzheimer Society of Ireland but on a global scale.

With disease-modifying therapies on the horizon and growing public interest in research, it is more important than ever to support and communicate developments in dementia research across Ireland. We also look forward to harnessing research internally as we rebuild and reimagine dementia supports and services post COVID-19.

Research at The Alzheimer Society of Ireland has developed significantly since the publication of our first ever Research Strategy four years ago. We are building on this work and in the pages that follow, we set out our ambitious vision for the next two years with key priority areas and actions to direct this work.

This strategy is the result of robust consultation with our communities including people living with dementia, family carers/supporters, colleagues, branch members and the dementia research and clinical communities.

**Dr Laura O'Philbin**  
**Interim Research & Policy Manager**  
**The Alzheimer Society of Ireland**

# Introduction

As The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) enters its 40<sup>th</sup> year, research continues to be an integral part of our work. Research is an essential tool to explore and understand interventions that improve the health and wellbeing of people living with dementia and their families. The ASI is dedicated to supporting the development, delivery and dissemination of high-quality research and evaluation.

This Research Strategy provides a clear roadmap for The ASI's research work and activities for the next two years. It has been developed following consultation with ASI staff, ASI branch members, people living with dementia, family carers / supporters, and the clinical and research communities in Ireland.

## Development

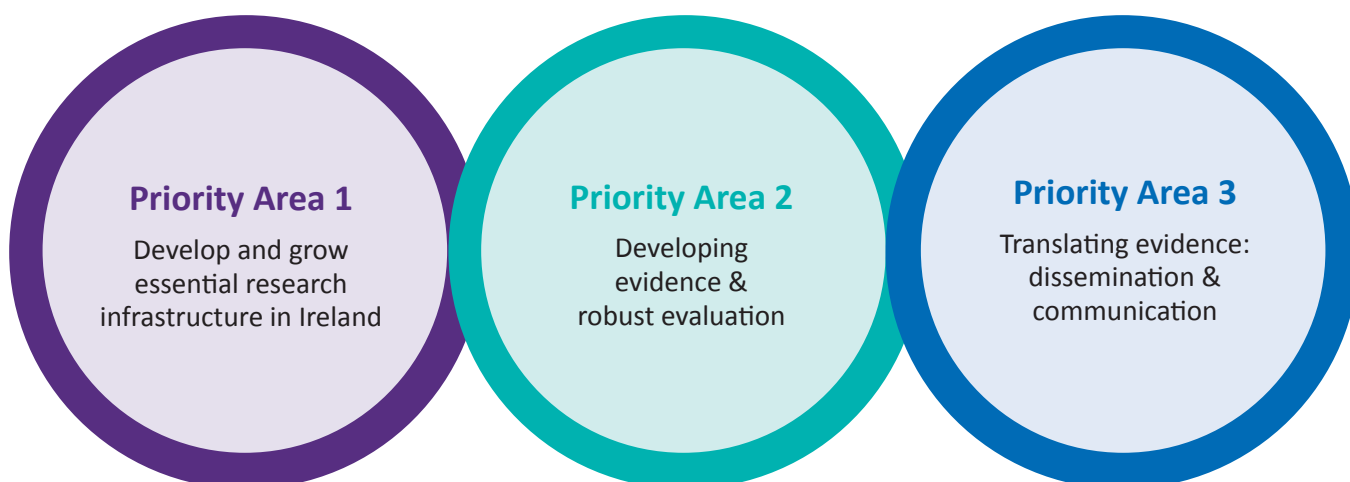
This Research Strategy was created using a phased approach between November 2021 and January 2022.

- Phase 1. Desk research including an in-depth review of the progress made in the ASI 2017-2021 Research Strategy, and existing national and international research strategies were reviewed.
- Phase 2. Consultations with 152 ASI staff members, 10 ASI branch members, 66 research professionals and clinicians, 14 people with dementia, and 45 family carers were involved in shaping this new strategy.
- Phase 3. Feedback on draft strategy including priority areas, objectives, and associated actions.

Further information is available in Appendix A.

## Priority areas, objectives and actions

This Strategy has three key priority areas. Within each priority area there are three to four key objectives and several associated actions.



# ASI Research Strategy 2022-2024: Priorities, objectives, and actions

## Priority 1: Develop and grow essential research infrastructure in Ireland

*Support the development of essential research infrastructure in Ireland to assert research readiness and prepare for current and future developments in the field.*

### OBJECTIVE 1

Continued development of the TeamUp For Dementia Research service and platform to provide participation opportunities to people with dementia and their families in addition to supporting dementia research.

- Action A:** Grow membership by 50% year on year, with a focus on diversity and inclusion.
- Action B:** Build awareness of TeamUp For Dementia Research across The ASI, branch networks, corporate partners, and the general public.
- Action C:** Harness the TeamUp For Dementia Research platform for public research communications and dissemination.
- Action D:** Monitoring and evaluation of service impact through annual surveys and member / researcher feedback.

### OBJECTIVE 2

Continued development of The ASI's Person & Public Involvement (PPI) initiative to ensure dementia research in Ireland is relevant, engaging, competitive and achieves maximum impact for people living with dementia and their supporters.

- Action A:** Fully integrate PPI into all aspects of The ASI's research activities.
- Action B:** Develop and deliver novel and authentic opportunities for research leadership for members of DRAT.
- Action C:** Continue to build awareness of The ASI's and Dementia Research Advisory Team's PPI work nationally and internationally.

### OBJECTIVE 3

Proactively consider the potential for The ASI to develop a centre of research excellence that acts as a vehicle for research funding across the spectrum of basic science, prevention, clinical and social research to create tangible change for people with dementia and their families.

**Action A:** Commission a team of professionals to assess and provide guidance on how this research-intensive extension should be structured (i.e., what it should look like) and what the key functions should be.

**Action B:** Diversify The ASI's research portfolio to demonstrate commitment to all types of research.

### OBJECTIVE 4

Engage in research advocacy related activities in collaboration with The ASI's Advocacy Department.

**Action A:** Advocate for dementia research funding in collaboration with The ASI's Advocacy Team and other key stakeholders including an annual research briefing to the All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia.

**Action B:** Nurture and develop relationships with national and international collaborators and organisations to support and raise the profile of dementia research in Ireland.

## Priority 2: Developing evidence & robust evaluation

*Develop and support quality dementia research that is in line with The ASI's mission and values and is important to our communities of people living with dementia, family carers / supporters, staff and branches.*

### OBJECTIVE 1

Foster an environment supportive to the research community, with a focus on early career researchers.

**Action A:** Identify additional research funding streams and co-funding opportunities to support innovative and high impact dementia research in Ireland.

**Action B:** Develop small-scale initiatives and awards for early career research professionals.

### OBJECTIVE 2

Sustained and focused internal research and evaluation to complement work of other departments across the organisation.

**Action A:** Carry out quality internal research and evaluation, aiming for a minimum of three internal projects each year.

**Action B:** Commission quality research from external groups where required or possible with transparency and cross-organisational collaboration.

**Action C:** Re-imagine and re-develop the Research Review Committee enabling interested ASI staff and branch members to be involved in the research review process.

### OBJECTIVE 3

Collaborate with academic partners to provide non-financial support to innovative research across a diverse range of research areas informed by our communities and research prioritisation work.

**Action A:** Provide support and expertise in the development and delivery of high-quality dementia-related research.

**Action B:** Establish and maintain partnerships with research professionals and organisations that are aligned with The ASI's values and goals.

## Priority 3: Translating evidence: dissemination & communication

*Translate and disseminate evidence-based research to promote awareness of dementia and dementia research. Utilise our leadership in this field to transform research to develop and highlight our communities of practice.*

### OBJECTIVE 1

Position The ASI as a trusted source of research evidence and information by boosting research activities, research output and dissemination.

- Action A:** Host a collaborative research event to facilitate knowledge exchange and sharing in dementia aimed at the research community, people with dementia and family carers / supporters.
- Action B:** Boost The ASI's formal research outputs, extending to conference presentations, reports, journal articles etc.

### OBJECTIVE 2

Proactively disseminate research evidence across a wide variety of targeted internal and external audiences to boost research knowledge, understanding and awareness.

- Action A:** Monitor evidence development nationally and internationally and disseminate this internally and externally with particular focus on diagnostics, disease modifying therapies, prevention, and psychosocial interventions.
- Action B:** Develop and deliver consistent and in-depth internal and external research communications including webinars, evidence repositories, plain language summaries etc.
- Action C:** Seek annual feedback from ASI Staff and the public on how best to engage and disseminate research information and activities to staff at all levels.

### OBJECTIVE 3

Provide and synthesise evidence that supports the translation of research into policy and practice.

- Action A:** Synthesise relevant evidence and policy to inform and support The ASI's Pre-Budget Submission and other activities.
- Action B:** Commission a policy series focused on topical and high impact areas of interest that will support issues raised in The ASI's Pre-Budget Submission.



# Appendix: Development of the 2022-2024 Research Strategy

This work was led by The Alzheimer Society of Ireland's Interim Research & Policy Manager, supported by the Research Officer and Project Officer. The development of this strategy was undertaken in three stages: (i) reviewing, (ii) consultation, and (iii) feedback.

## Phase 1: Review

Phase 1 consisted of reviewing the 2017-2020 Research Strategy which had been extended to December 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was a narrative review focusing on the progress made in each priority area outlined in the previous strategy, the dementia research landscape, identifying what worked well, and areas for further work or improvement. In addition, existing research strategies by other charities and Non-Governmental Organisations both in Ireland and abroad were reviewed and appraised.

## Phase 2: Stakeholder consultation

It was important to gain the insights of our collaborators and different stakeholders of The ASI. Phase 2 consisted of consultations with various stakeholders internal and external to The ASI. Methods included (a) anonymous online, telephone and / or postal survey and (b) group consultation. A pilot survey was first implemented, and surveys were then tailored to each stakeholder group. Surveys consisted of a number of open-ended questions which would allow stakeholders to share their perspective across a variety of themes.

Respondents included:

- 10 Branch Chairs & Members via paper and online survey
- 66 individuals from the dementia research and clinical community via online survey
- 152 ASI Staff members via online survey
- 47 members of TeamUp For Dementia Research (people with dementia and family members) via online survey
- 7 members of the Dementia Research Advisory Team via group consultation

Feedback from all consultations with stakeholder groups were collated and analysed by the Research Team. Data from surveys in conjunction with qualitative discussions were combined and themes explored. These core themes and discussion points were evaluated in terms of applicability for a research strategy. This was formulated and organised in an iterative manner, aligned to each overarching research priority and research action.

## Phase 3: Feedback

The ASI Research & Policy Team then sought feedback on a draft Research Strategy with internal and external stakeholders and hosted telephone and online consultations to seek their counsel and feedback. This included an in-depth workshop with members of the Dementia Research Advisory Team.



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The Alzheimer Society of Ireland,  
National Office,  
Temple Road,  
Blackrock,  
Co Dublin.

National Helpline 1800-341-341  
[alzheimer.ie](http://alzheimer.ie)