The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Dementia Research Award 2023

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1. Overview

1.1. Background

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is the leading dementia specific service provider in Ireland. We work across the country in the heart of local communities providing dementia specific services and supports and advocating for the rights and needs of all people living with dementia and their carers. Our vision is an Ireland where people on the journey of dementia are valued and supported. A national non-profit organisation, The ASI advocates, empowers and champions the rights of people living with dementia and their communities to quality support and services.

In the 2022-2024 Research Strategy, The ASI has committed to developing and supporting quality dementia research that is in line with our mission and values and is important to our communities of people living with dementia, family carers, supporters, staff and volunteers. The ASI is pleased to host a research funding call focused on six key themes.

1.2. Research Themes

The Research Themes have been informed by the results of a Research Prioritisation exercise *(in press)* led by Dementia Research Network Ireland (DRNI), supported by The ASI. The exercise combined the viewpoints of clinicians, health and social care professionals, researchers, representatives from government agencies, policymakers, community organisations, people with dementia and family carers.

The ASI enlisted the support of staff, volunteers, people with dementia and family carers to refine the top twelve research priorities from the exercise to the six below. We have also included a new theme based on diversity and inclusion.

- Identify the most effective strategies and supports for enabling people with dementia to maintain their interests and abilities for as long as possible.
- Explore ways to address gaps in healthcare for people with dementia, and what may be the quality of life and cost benefits of a more holistic approach (instead of a medical-only model).
- Identify the range of supports required to best meet the needs of family/unpaid carers of people with dementia.
- Identify the best ways to deliver education, training & support to professional carers and health & social care professionals in the field of dementia.
- Reducing the risk of developing dementia.
- Explore experiences of people with dementia and families from marginalised communities and how to improve access to supports and services.

1.3. Funding

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland will commence funding of the successful application in Q4 2023. This will be subject to the submitted grant proposals meeting the required standard as assessed by international peer review and public review. The ASI will provide funding of up to €100,000 towards a project of 9-24 months duration.

Only proposals with the potential to deliver excellent, informative, and impactful research within the timeframe and remit of the grant will be considered for funding.

In the case where the two highest rated proposals require less than €100,000 funding combined, The ASI will endeavour to award funding to both projects.

1.4. Application process

The ASI is committed to funding excellent research that is relevant and important to people affected by dementia, their families, and health and social care professionals who work with people with dementia. The ASI also understands the significant time and effort that goes into writing extensive funding applications and are therefore piloting the following review process.

Phase 1. Proposal

Applicants are invited to submit a proposal outlining key areas such as a plain language summary, the research question(s), aims of the work, proposed impact etc. Assessment in Phase 1 will be focused on the perceived importance, relevance, and potential impact of the research.
Proposal forms will be assessed by people living dementia, family carers/supporters, and ASI staff. This will be a blind review process.

The highest rated applications will be invited to make a full application in Phase 2 of this scheme. A maximum of five applications will be invited forward for full review.

Before the blind review, The ASI will ensure that the principal investigator and the host institution meet the minimum criteria as outlined in Section 2.

Phase 2. Invited Full Application

Five applicants from Phase 1 will be invited to submit a full application. Those invited to submit a full application will receive further guidance documentation. The full Phase 2 application form will be in-depth and similar to those required by other funding bodies. Applications will be reviewed by international academic reviewers.

1.5. Key dates

Action	Date
Call open	19th January 2023
Deadline for queries	1st March 2023
Proposal deadline	6th March 2023 (midnight)
Notice of Phase 1 outcome	w/c 3rd April 2023
Full application deadline for invited applicants	5th June 2023
Notice to applicants	w/c August 14th 2023
Project commences	November 2023

Please note that the above dates are subject to change at the discretion of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

2. Applicant Eligibility

2.1. Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator (PI) will serve as the primary point of contact during the review process and during the award. The PI will be responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the research programme and has primary fiduciary responsibility and accountability for carrying out the research within the funding limits awarded and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract governing the award.

The PI must be employed by a higher education institution in the Republic of Ireland for the duration of the award. This higher education institution will act as the host institution for the duration of the award.

The PI must:

- Demonstrate that they will have the time to lead the programme
- Show appropriate evidence of expertise matched to the nature and context of the project
- Show evidence of achievement as an independent researcher in their chosen research field by:
  - Demonstrating a record of research output, with at least three first author publications of original research in peer reviewed journals.
  - Demonstrating a record of independence by showing that they have secured at least one peer-reviewed research grant for a research project/s, as either the lead applicant or a co applicant. Funding received for travel to seminars/conferences and/or small personal bursaries will not be considered.
  - Show evidence that they possess the capability and authority to mentor, manage and supervise less experienced researchers and to manage relationships with co-applicants, collaborators and the host institution.

Where an applicant fails to meet the eligibility criteria, the application will be deemed ineligible and will not be accepted for review. The ASI will contact the Principal Investigator if this situation arises. An individual may submit only one application to these funding scheme.

A list of co-applicants are **not** required in Phase 1. Please be aware that in the event of a full application, a maximum of five Co-Applicants are permitted and must have a well-defined and substantial role in the proposed programme. A Co-Applicant may receive funding for items such as running costs and personnel but will not receive support towards his/her own salary if they are in salaried positions.

Principal Investigators must include a CV as part of the research proposal. Please note, CVs must be a maximum of 4 pages long. In this stage, CVs are only being assessed for the minimum application criteria outlined above.

2.2. Host Institution

The host institution is the organisation that receives and administers grant funding and is responsible for compliance with all general and specific terms and conditions of awards. To be eligible to apply for funding, a proposed host institution must be a higher education institution in the Republic of Ireland and demonstrate capacity to manage research awards and possess an existing in-house capacity to carry out research that materially extends and enhances the Irish research base.

3. Application Procedure

3.1. How to Apply

Applicants must email the completed proposal Form to research@alzheimer.ie by midnight on 6th March 2023. They must be submitted as a Word Document to allow for coding and anonymisation. Forms should be clearly labelled with the PI Last Name and Institution abbreviation.

3.2. Writing in Accessible Language

The proposal form will be reviewed by non-scientific review panels, and as such, the language used in the application should be reflective of this. The purpose of Phase 1 in the review process is to convey why the research is necessary, relevant and important. The ASI is cognisant of the fact that some sections of the application may require the provision of technical information. However, we do ask that every effort is made where possible to ensure that the application is accessible in its language and tone. Jargon and complex concepts should be described clearly when necessary.

3.3. Person & Public Involvement

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland promotes active Person Public Involvement (PPI) in all the research that we fund. The role of PPI Contributors is separate to that of research participants. PPI Contributors are involved in designing, planning, implementing and disseminating research. This in turn will help to improve the overall quality of research conducted.

The Dementia Research Advisory Team is a group of people living with dementia and family carers/supporters who get involved in research as PPI Contributors. Should applicants wish to work with members of the Dementia Research Advisory Team, please contact ASI Research Project Officer ciara.oreilly@alzheimer.ie. Further information on PPI is available HERE. Please note that PPI Contributors and/or The ASI's Project Officer involved in any proposal will not be involved in assessing that proposal.

3.4. Proposal Form

The proposal form should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. The sections included in the proposal form are as follows:

- Principal Investigator details
- Host Institution
- Plain Language Summary
- Theme
- Justification for the research including relevance to the chosen theme
- Research question(s)
- Aims & objectives
- Person & Public Involvement
- Impact statement
- Total budget amount & duration (approximation – detail not required in Phase 1)

Further details are available in the Appendix.

4. Assessment

4.1. Reviewers
Proposals will be assessed by people living dementia, family carers/supporters, and ASI volunteers and staff.

4.2. Review Criteria
Proposal forms will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Importance of the research question/justification for the research - 40%
- Potential impact - 30%
- Person & Public Involvement (PPI) - 30%

4.3. Conflicts of Interest

Any person involved in reviewing or assessing applications are asked to adhere to The ASI's Conflict of Interest Policy.

Two ASI staff members will assess if the Phase 1 applicants and their host institution meet the minumum criteria for this funding scheme as outlined in Section 2. These staff members will not be involved in assessing any other sections of the proposal form as this will be a blinded process.

Any member of the public or PPI Contributor involved in a proposal will not be involved in assessing that particular proposal.

4.4. Assessment outcome

Review scores and feedback will be compiled and evaluated. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the review by email. Where desired, The ASI will supply feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Five applicants with the highest scoring proposals will be invited to submit a full application based on their proposal form. Specific documentation and guidance will be provided. The full application form will be extensive and similar detail required as those required for other funding bodies in Ireland (e.g., Health Research Board, Irish Research Council etc.).

Should a successful applicant decline the invitation to submit a full application, the applicant with the next highest score will be invited.

5. Contact

Any queries in relation to the funding call and procedure must be submitted via email to research@alzheimer.ie. Any queries and the corresponding response will be published on www.alzheimer.ie in a live FAQ document to ensure all applicants have access to the same information during the process.

Last updated 28/2/23

Appendix. Application Guidelines

Section 1: Applicant details

1.1. Principal Investigator Details & CV: Includes name, contact information, host institution, present position and profession. Please ensure your CV covers the criteria outlined in Section 2. Your CV should be attached to the submission email along with the application form. Please declare any conflict of interests or potential conflict of interest that a member of the applicant team may have.

1.2. Host institution for the award: This institution is normally that of the Principal Investigator, but it may be another organisation/institution where this is clearly justified. The ASI must be satisfied that the institution can account appropriately, over time, for any funding awarded. You are requested to state the name of the institution and to provide the name and contact details of the Dean of Research/CEO/equivalent authorised personnel of the institution in your application.

Section 2: Project Description

2.1. Project Title

2.2 Plain Language Summary: This summary needs to be written in plain English such that it is clear, easy to understand, and is easily accessible to the PPI Contributors who will review this application, as well as a broad public audience. Please refer to Involve Guidelines. The word limit is 300 words.

2.3. Keywords: Please choose up to five keywords that specifically describe your area of research.

2.4. Research theme: Select the Research Theme (refer to Section 1.2.) that this project addresses.

2.5. Justification for the research including relevance to the chosen theme

Describe the background to the research proposal and detail size and nature of the issue to be addressed. Please provide a clear explanation of the problem to be addressed and why it is important and timely, especially in an Irish context. The relevance of the project to the theme should be outlined. The word limit is 600 words.

2.6. Research question(s): Clearly state the research question(s) behind the proposed work. The word limit is 150 words.

2.7. Overall aim & objectives:
    a. Please state the overall aim of your project. The word limit is 100 words.
    b. Please add at least three individual objectives. The word limit is 60 words per objective.

2.8. Person and Public Involvement: please describe:
    A. The purpose of the involvement

        B.   Person and Public Involvement to date (if applicable)

        C.   Person and Public Involvement planned for the duration of the award

Word limit is 500 words.

2.9. Impact statement: Describe the anticipated outputs and outcomes of the proposed research. Please provide details on the potential impact of this research project on people affected by dementia indicating the anticipated timescale for any proposed benefits to be realised. Word limit is 500 words.

Section 3: Project Duration & Budget:

3.1. Budget total and duration: Please indicate the expected length of the proposed project in months and the approximate amount of funding required. Please note this is for planning purposes.

A thorough examination of the project budget will be conducted in Phase 2 should the application be taken forward. The minimum duration is nine months, and the maximum is 24 months. It is important to note that the budget requested, and award duration must reflect the scale and nature of the proposed research. The maximum total value of the award is €100,000.