

**NIHR Imperial Biomedical Research Centre (BRC)**  
**Social Genetic and Environmental Determinants of Health (SGE) Theme**  
**CALL FOR BRC-Human Genetics Catalyst Pilot Project 2025**

**Deadline for submission to SGE Theme Committee – 12 noon, 15th October 2025 by email to**

**Agi Komjathy [a.komjathy@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:a.komjathy@imperial.ac.uk)**

### **1. Scope and Criteria**

This funding call is for projects investigating the potential genetic basis of usual or extreme disease phenotypes which are suspected to have a genetic basis. Unlike other pilot project calls, successful projects will be allocated funding to undertake these investigations using the analysis pipeline established by the BRC-supported Paediatric Infectious Diseases (PID) Clinic and INGENIOS study run by Vanessa Sancho-Shimizu and Jethro Herberg.

To date, the PID clinic and INGENIOS study have established a translational pipeline for delivering genetic diagnoses and molecular validation. The PID clinic has successfully recruited over 160 patients, comprised of otherwise healthy individuals presenting with life-threatening infection(s) or immune dysregulation, providing a critical means of genetic and cellular investigations. Through this work, it has made significant genetic diagnoses: some involving known genes and a few in novel genes. The approach uses a whole exome sequencing analysis pipeline looking at trio exomes, multiplex families or through cohort-based gene enrichment analysis.

Projects submitted under this call would ideally complement and expand the scope of diseases being investigated, including but not limited to the areas of monogenic disorders, patients with extreme phenotypes of any disease, or small cohorts of patients with similar unusual phenotype, for which there is a strong rationale to suspect a genetic basis.

Funding may be used to support:

- Targeted sequencing of relevant patient cohorts
- Genetic analysis and interpretation
- Molecular validation of candidate genetic variants
- Disease modelling

Proposals will be strongest when they are clearly aligned with existing clinical and scientific expertise within the clinic. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek advice or discuss their ideas with **Vanessa Sancho-Shimizu** and **Jethro Herberg** prior to submission, to ensure feasibility and strategic fit.

**Proposals will be assessed against the following key criteria:**

- Will the proposed work help deliver clinical and biomedical research that meets the SGE Theme objectives?
  - i) To inform strategies for prevention, early diagnosis and precision medicine
  - ii) To improve health through integrating research data on the social, environmental and biological (including genomic and multi-omic studies) factors
- Are the financial expenditure plans achievable within the time period?
- Does the proposal provide evidence for operational readiness (e.g. ethics, consents, samples, staff in place) so that expenditure can begin rapidly?
- What outcomes will be delivered as a result of this funding?

**Additional criteria that will be considered:**

- Proposals should be scientifically sound and innovative
- Proposals should be aligned to one or more of the Theme's objectives
- Proposals should aim to deliver benefits to the NHS and its patients, ideally working with patients
- Proposals should have a clear plan for Patient and Public Involvement, Engagement and Participation (PPIEP). See PPIEP guidance [here](#).
- Plans should be sufficiently realistic and detailed to deliver the proposed outputs
- Are there any risks to delivery and how have these been mitigated?
- Track record & performance in acknowledging the BRC in prior publications
- Cross-BRC Theme and cross-Department/Faculty engagement is encouraged
- Please use lay language when answering questions 6, 7 and 8 as these questions will be scored by theme Community Partners
- Pilot studies suitable to generate future funding are encouraged

Applications from early career researchers are encouraged, particularly if they are likely to support future funding opportunities.

It is expected that up to four awards of up to £25K will be made.

## **2. Project Costings**

- Ideally, proposals costs should be developed using WorkTribe, but where capacity is not available indicative costs should be provided (a WorkTribe will be required if funded, and costs will be reviewed at this time). If requesting salary support, then a WorkTribe costing must be provided. Departments should select Internal Scheme, and costings will need to have been agreed in outline by the relevant Department (an e-mail signifying this will suffice).
- The WorkTribe record should be attached to your application
- Budgets need to be broken down into financial years (Apr-Mar)
- Any applications linked to clinical studies must demonstrate it has been accurately costed, approved by Trust JRO and appropriate funds are in place to support the full study. Please send your costing request to [imperial.admin\\_trustresearchcontracts@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.admin_trustresearchcontracts@nhs.net). ICHT JRO require a minimum of two weeks' notice to produce a costing.
- The use of large or patient-related datasets in your project will require early discussion with the relevant NHS Trust(s), to determine:
  - Feasibility of extracting/providing the clinical data you require, and the relevant clinical systems that will need to be linked
  - The cost of clinical data
  - Whether any external systems or software will need to be interfaced to existing NHS clinical systems
  - Resources and associated costs required to deliver your project requirements
  - Compliance with data protection and patient confidentiality frameworks

- Projects will be funded for a maximum of 12 months starting no earlier than 1st December 2025
- Any salary costs requested should not duplicate resources already provided for by the BRC
- New posts are unlikely to be recruited in time to deliver significant value and therefore will not be supported.
- Costs for meetings may be included in the applications
- Eligible costs may include salary support and consumables. Animal costs and equipment costing more than £5K are ineligible.
- These awards will not support any estate costs, indirect costs or PI time
- Projects must adhere to all BRC contractual terms and conditions

### 3. Eligibility

Any clinical academic member of staff with an employment contract with either Imperial College London or Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust may apply. In summary:

- College substantive employee who has a clinical affiliation with ICHT or any of the other NHS Associate Partners in our BRC application. Our named Partners are Chelsea & Westminster NHS Foundation Trust, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust, Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, West London NHS Trust and The University of Cumbria.
- Substantive employee of ICHT or any of the other NHS Associate Partners WITH an honorary research contract with the College. In this case they can apply for pilot project funding with a college-substantive employee as co-investigator (this enables us to manage the funds with a clear line of accountability through a P code with a partner budget for NHS Associate Partner). As project work is expected to take place within the NIHR Imperial BRC, a substantive employment association with Imperial College London is required in these cases.
- We wouldn't consider eligible anyone who is a substantive employee of ICHT or any of the other NHS Associate Partners WITHOUT an honorary research contract with the College.

Notes:

In general, priority will be given to junior and mid-career applicants. All applicants must hold a contract of employment which extends to at least the end of the proposed project and all applicants must have secured departmental approval prior to submission.

Applications likely to accelerate impact of existing work or lead to larger grant submission in future will be prioritised.

### 4. Application Review

The deadline for submission of proposals is **15<sup>th</sup> October 2025**. Proposals will be assessed by a panel PIs and Community Partners on the basis of the criteria outline above, and decisions taken at the SGE Theme Management Group. Key dates are as follows:

22nd August 2025	Call launch
15th October 2025	Deadline for submission of proposals
15th November 2025	Shortlisting and funding decisions meeting
20th November 2025	Notification of successful proposals
1st December 2025	Earliest Project Start Date
31st March 2027	Latest Project End Date

## 5. Reporting & Monitoring Requirements

Successful awardees will be required to show evidence of expenditure beginning as indicated within the proposal plan. If progress and/or expenditure is deemed unsatisfactory, continuation of funding may be terminated and funds re-allocated.

A brief final report showing outputs and deliverables achieved with this funding will be expected within 1 month of project end date. You may also be asked for ad hoc interim report. At least 1 member from the awardee's team must complete [PPIEP training](#) and PPIEP Impact Log for their project.

## 6. Acknowledgement of BRC Funding

BRC funding includes an assessment of publications acknowledging the centre. Investigators should routinely include the wording "This research/study/project was funded/supported by the NIHR Imperial Biomedical Research Centre (BRC). The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care." in **ALL** publications. Failure to acknowledge the BRC can result in funding being withdrawn.

## 7. Enquiries

General enquiries relating to the scope and objectives of this call should be directed to Vanessa Sancho Shimizu [v.sancho-shimizu@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:v.sancho-shimizu@imperial.ac.uk) and Agi Komjathy [a.komjathy@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:a.komjathy@imperial.ac.uk).