

Call for ideas on an initiative to establish:

Research and Innovation Centre for Paediatric Low Grade Brain Tumours

In collaboration with the Everest Innovation Fund

Rob Ritchie and his
son Toby



"My son, Toby, has a low grade brain stem tumour. His tumour was diagnosed when he was five following a very traumatic 10 day spell in intensive care where he nearly died of pneumonia, his lungs collapsing. He is now eight, very wobbly and recovering from an 18-month course of chemotherapy. We take each day as it comes. He is an incredibly brave boy, doing all that is asked of him with little complaint." Rob Ritchie

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbJDFO9RO0c>

As a parent when you face this kind of situation, of having a young child diagnosed with cancer, you feel totally powerless and your world feels like it has spun out of control. Immediately one thinks of all the things you would be prepared to do. Give your body for his, walk to the ends of the earth, climb the highest mountain (and scream to the skies), but none of that works. It can't be done or makes no sense. It won't help. But then on reflection maybe you can do something, maybe you should climb a mountain – climb Everest or your Everest.

That's where the idea of Everest in the Alps came from: the idea to ascend on skis (with 'skins') the equivalent vertical height of Everest in as short a time as possible. To take a team and test yourselves, to achieve something new, to do something tough and beyond all else to help raise awareness of paediatric brain tumours. To raise money for the best charity that is funding research to help Toby and others fight their tumours.

Everest in the Alps took place in March 2015 in the Swiss resort of Verbier and has raised over £3m for the Everest Innovation Fund to date. In collaboration with The Brain Tumour Charity, this Fund is seeking a team to achieve something new and climb an Everest for brain tumour research: to initiate an ongoing innovative centre for research into low grade paediatric brain tumours like those that Toby and thousands of other children are diagnosed with.

About The Brain Tumour Charity

The Brain Tumour Charity is a patient-led organisation in the UK driven by vision of a world where brain tumours are defeated. We fund pioneering research to increase survival, raise awareness of the symptoms and effects of brain tumours and provide support for everyone affected to improve quality of life. Since 1996, the organisation has been at the forefront of supporting the brain tumour community.

As an organisation, we are focused on increasing survival and improving quality of life for everyone affected by a brain tumour. We know that brain tumours have a disproportionately high impact on children and young adults compared with other cancers, resulting in high premature mortality as brain tumours are the biggest cancer killer of the under 40s. We are also committed to taking every step necessary to improve the quality of life of everyone affected by brain tumours. Our strategic goals are designed to make a step change in the overall experience of our community and are necessarily and unashamedly ambitious:

- Double survival within 10 years
- Halve the harm that brain tumours have on quality of life within 5 years

As part of this plan, we have recently launched '[A Cure Can't Wait](#)'; our Research Strategy. All grant calls will focus on the research priorities highlighted in this strategy and all grant applications and ideas must address specifically the priority outlined in the call text.

Purpose and Scope of this Call

The Brain Tumour Charity calls upon members of the research community to contribute their ideas to this groundbreaking initiative to establish the Research and Innovation Centre for Paediatric Low Grade Brain Tumours.

We invite the submission of ideas for a programme grant for the first five years of what will be a ongoing centre for research. The initiative will address critical problems in low grade pediatric brain tumours and positively impact children's lives in the near future as well as increasing the understanding of the disease biology. It should be directed and executed by a multidisciplinary, synergistic team of expert investigators and should connect where possible with international experts in particular Dr Mark Kieran, Harvard.

Within the initiative, the basic science component must build on the information already in the scientific literature regarding the pediatric disease e.g. BRAF mutations and/or fusion genes or the MAPK pathway. A translational component must be designed to accelerate therapeutic application to the clinic (ie lead to patient benefit within the first grant period). Proposals for this research initiative must present plans indicating specifically how the work will translate into the clinic. Initiatives involving a surgical intervention must have an integrated plan for donation of samples for research at all possible stages.

The ideas should be based on perceived opportunities for success, both in terms of clinical advancement and publication, as well as high-priority areas with a critical need for rapid progress beyond current medical care. Proposals should note where the programme directly addresses areas of focus from The Brain Tumour Charity's [overarching](#) and [research](#) strategies.

Application process

The Research and Innovation Centre for Paediatric Low Grade Brain Tumours will be awarded via a competitive two stage process. Initially applicants will be asked to submit an outline proposal which will be assessed by members of our [Grant Review and Monitoring Committee](#) (GRAM).

Please submit your expression of interest (EOI) by 12 noon (London time) Friday 20 May 2016 to the email address below. This should be no longer than three pages plus cover letter. It should include, as a minimum:

- Your ideas for a research initiative (outline justification, scope and approach)
- The proposed clinical impact of the programme
- How the initiative might support the rapid progress in understanding of low grade pediatric tumours, including any innovations in your approach
- How you will work with international collaborators
- The EOI should reference the [‘Everest in the Alps’ video](#)

Successful applicants from the outline stage will be invited to submit a full application (notifications by Friday 10 June 2016). An application form will be made available to successful applicants.

Full applications will undergo peer review (in line with AMRC principles) and applicants will have the opportunity to respond to peer review comments prior to the application being considered by the GRAM committee for final decision. Site visits may be conducted prior to an award being made.

Grant applications must be completed on the appropriate application form by 12 noon (London time) on Thursday 1 September 2016 and submitted to the email below.

Unlike other grant rounds from The Brain Tumour Charity, there will be only one grant awarded for this round.

A hard copy of the signed application form should be sent within seven days of this deadline to: Research Department, The Brain Tumour Charity, Hartshead House, 61-65 Victoria Road, Farnborough, GU14 7PA.

The Brain Tumour Charity is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) and adhere to it principles of peer review.

The Brain Tumour Charity encourages those developing ideas to speak with the team early in the process as we are open to an iterative approach to the development of final application.

Funding

The Research and Innovation Centre for Paediatric Low Grade Brain Tumours will be a permanent centre, subject to annual assessment of progress, with the initial award being up to £5million over a five year period. It is expected that the host institution will evidence its commitment to this long term initiative and early conversations with key decision makers are welcomed.

Eligibility criteria

- This award is open to international researchers, but applications including a UK collaborator will be looked on favourably.
- The team lead - Principal Investigator - must hold an academic or research post at a university or research institution.
- The host institution/s are required to provide a significant financial commitment towards co-funding this programme of work.
- Grants will be awarded to the Principal Investigator's institution. Funding can be allocated to co-investigator institutions with agreements put in place between all partner institutions.
- The Principal and co-investigators should be in receipt of salary funding for the duration of the grant or, if this is not in place, have a position that is underwritten by their employing institution for the duration of the grant.
- The team should be comprised of both established and promising early-career researchers.
- There should be at least one patient/carer on the team, who can give their perspective of the programme as an expert through their experience of being affected by brain tumours. The Brain Tumour Charity will be happy to provide suggestions on patient advocates for these teams. This person will need to have been identified by the time the programme grant starts.
- The collaborative team should have the relevant expertise of laboratory and clinical researchers to demonstrate how discoveries will be translated and taken forward to patient benefit.

Assessment criteria

- Suitability of applicants
We are looking for applicants with a strong track record and a demonstrated ability to lead this innovative centre. Applicants should have strong support from their host institution to aid set up.
- Collaborative and multidisciplinary emphasis
The application should show clear benefits in bringing together a collaborative team and demonstrate a synergy that potentiates the achievement of scientific goals that could not be realised by the individual components of the team. New avenues of research which involve experts currently working outside the brain tumour research field are encouraged.
- Potential for patient benefit
A potential pathway for the research programme to lead to patient benefit must be articulated as well as the anticipated impact of this. Applications with a clear path to clinical application will be strongly favoured.
- Milestone and goal-driven approach
The research programme must have detailed milestones which will be used for monitoring its progress and dictate continuation of support by The Charity.
- Value for money

Clear plans and mechanisms for sharing resources and information across the team, including existing resources and platforms must also be demonstrated.

Key dates

midday (London time zone), 20 May 2016	Deadline for receipt of Expressions of Interest
10 June 2016	Invitations to submit full application
midday (London time zone), 1 September 2016	Deadline for receipt of full applications
January 2017	Grant Review And Monitoring (GRAM) committee meeting
February 2017	Award announced

Contact details for applications and queries

E-mail: research@thebraintumourcharity.org

Address: The Brain Tumour Charity
Hartshead House
61-65 Victoria Road
Farnborough
GU14 7PA
Hampshire