

2026 Research Grant Round – Lifetime Impact of Meningitis

Aligned with our [2025–2030 Research Strategy](#), Meningitis Research Foundation will invite research proposals to improve our understanding of the lifetime impacts of meningitis.

These catalytic grants are designed to support the generation of preliminary data that can be used to underpin future, larger-scale funding applications from other research funders.

Justification:

- The impact that meningitis has on the life of people and their support network is **under-funded**. For example, in 2022, only 0.56% of global research on meningitis was spent on understand the impact it has on people’s lives.
- A survey of our research network revealed that many view this is an area where MRF is uniquely positioned to act and **make a difference** because of our direct connection to patients and their families, both with the UK and globally through our global network of meningitis patient groups – The Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (CoMO).
- Using research to reduce the impact of meningitis **matters** to our supporters. After preventing anyone from having to go through what they have been through, helping people affected is their number one priority.

Goal:

Proposals must have one or more of the following aims:

1. Generate **new data and evidence** on the impact of meningitis on individuals and/or their support network.
2. Develop, test or refine **methods and tools** to improve how we measure the impact of meningitis.
3. Develop, test or refine approaches or **interventions to reduce the impact** of meningitis and directly improve quality of life for individuals and/or their support network.

Eligibility:

- Individuals and teams at all career stages, who have the skills and experience to deliver a scientifically robust research study. **Early career researchers are especially encouraged to apply.**
- Lead applicants must be based in the UK, Republic of Ireland, or low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), excluding mainland China and countries subject to UK sanctions.
- For-profit (commercial) organizations are not eligible.
- Proposals of up to **£50,000** and up to **18 months in duration**

Scope

- Any type of impact, including physical, neurological, psychological, social, economic, and educational/vocational consequences (i.e., sequelae).

- Any type of meningitis.
- Impacts on survivors, their support networks, or families bereaved by meningitis.
- Any robust and well-justified study design.

Application deadline: 17:00 GMT, 24 March 2026.

2027 Research Priority – Improving Vaccine Use and Uptake

Internal summary

Our next major research priority, aligned with our [2025–2030 Research Strategy](#), will be a 2027 grant call focused on using research to improve vaccine use and uptake. This will represent our next step in reducing the global burden of meningitis through equitable use of, and access to, meningitis vaccines, supporting advocacy and decision-making that improves protection and care.

Vaccination remains the most cost-effective tool for preventing meningitis, yet real-world uptake varies widely due to behavioural, social, logistical and system-level barriers. Improving vaccine confidence, accessibility and demand is essential to achieving the WHO Global Roadmap to Defeat Meningitis by 2030.

Priorities (to be confirmed in 2026)

Based on emerging needs and strategic alignment, priority areas are expected to include:

1. MenB vaccination in adolescents
 - Despite the burden of MenB disease in older children and young adults, uptake and policy recommendations vary across regions. Research could explore optimal delivery models, behavioural drivers of vaccine acceptance, or impacts of catch-up programmes.
2. Group B Streptococcus (GBS) vaccination in pregnancy.
 - With GBS the leading cause of neonatal meningitis, research into pathways for maternal vaccine acceptance, antenatal delivery systems and equity in access will be critical.

Additional priorities will be finalised following consultation with our Scientific Advisory Panel and lived experience advisors.

Expected focus of the 2027 call

The call is likely to support research that:

- Identifies barriers and facilitators to vaccine uptake across diverse settings.
- Designs and tests behavioural or system-level interventions
- Improves understanding of communication strategies that build vaccine confidence.

- Evaluates implementation models in both high-income and LMIC contexts.
- Generates evidence to inform future recommendations, policy or programme design.