

## Changes to the MS Society Grant Round

### Why are we making changes to the Grant Round?

The changes we're announcing are the result of an extensive review of our annual Grant Round processes and impact over the last 10 years. We've consulted widely with the research community and people affected by MS to identify issues and help improve our grant round funding approach.

The key issues our new approach will counter are:

1. Addressing current and upcoming gaps in UK MS research capacity and developing the next generation of MS research leaders.
2. A disproportionately long review process stifling innovation for our high-risk, high-reward Catalyst Awards (previously known as Innovative Awards).
3. Increasing difficulty in completing traditional external peer review.
4. A need for greater impact across all our research strategy areas

### Key changes:

- A dedicated funding round for Career Development Awards, which include PhD Fellowships and Early Career Fellowships (formerly named Junior Fellowships)
  - Early Career Fellowships will now be available across all areas of MS research
  - From 2022 we plan to separate and stagger these larger rounds to align best with the academic year – for example to attract the best PhD Fellowship candidates
- Holding two calls per year from 2022 onwards for Catalyst Awards (formerly Innovative Awards), with a much shorter and more proportionate application and review process
- Development, use of and learning from a new approach to review we're calling The Expert Review Network (TERN).
  - We're confident this approach will reduce the difficulty in completing external review while also increasing the relevance, quality and potential impact of our funded research. Initially TERN review approach will be for Catalyst Awards only, with an expectation to use the learning gained to apply this approach for all grant funding rounds in future
- Removing streaming of applications by area of research (i.e. dissolving the current Grant Review Panels) to focus on maximising impact through our research strategy

Please see the flowchart below for further information on our revised review processes for 2021.

## MS Society Open Grant Round Process Overview 2021

