

# Programme Guide

## Lewy Body Dementia 2026

### Funding available

**Tier 1: Up to £350,000 in total for proof-of-concept and early validation studies.**

**Tier 2: Up to £750,000 in total for later-stage biomarker validation, clinical translation or implementation, or early-stage clinical treatment studies.**

### Important dates

|                                              |                         |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Programme launch</b>                      | <b>1 October 2026</b>   |
| <b>LOI submission deadline</b>               | <b>17 November 2026</b> |
| <b>Invitations to submit a full proposal</b> | <b>19 January 2027</b>  |
| <b>Proposal deadline</b>                     | <b>2 March 2027</b>     |
| <b>Award announcement</b>                    | <b>June 2027</b>        |

### Background

The Galen and Hilary Weston Foundation (the “Foundation”) supports neuroscience research that accelerates the development of therapeutics for neurodegenerative diseases of ageing. To help achieve this, the Foundation supports high-risk, high-reward translational projects, while leveraging world-class scientific expertise in a fast and flexible grant-making process.

Lewy body dementia (LBD) encompasses Dementia with Lewy Bodies and Parkinson’s Disease Dementia. These conditions remain substantially underserved, with significant unmet needs in the development of

biomarkers to improve diagnosis and track disease progression, as well as treatments to better manage selected cognitive and neuropsychiatric symptoms experienced by people living with these diseases.

The Lewy Body Dementia 2026 Programme (the “Programme”) provides catalyst funding for translational research focused on biomarkers and symptom-focused treatments for Dementia with Lewy Bodies and Parkinson’s Disease Dementia. Projects should be positioned to generate practical, decision-relevant evidence that can advance the development, validation, clinical translation or implementation of biomarkers, or the development and evaluation of treatments for selected cognitive and neuropsychiatric symptoms.

### Important things to know about the Foundation

- We do not fund basic or fundamental research. We only fund translational research.
- Funds are generally provided contingent on meeting milestones. If a project is approved for funding, grants are provided in tranches as experimental milestones are successfully reached.
- Our application process is interactive. Applicants may receive feedback and be asked to make modifications, and the Foundation welcomes questions from prospective and invited applicants.
- Applications to the Programme are highly competitive. The LOI stage is designed to identify projects with the strongest alignment, scientific rationale and translational potential for invitation to submit a full proposal.

## Programme scope

The Programme supports high-risk, high-reward translational research to advance:

- **The development, validation, clinical translation or implementation of biomarkers for Dementia with Lewy Bodies (DLB) and Parkinson’s Disease Dementia (PDD); and/or**
- **Treatments that directly reduce the burden or severity of selected cognitive and neuropsychiatric symptoms in people living with DLB or PDD.**

## Biomarker projects

Biomarker projects should support the development, validation, clinical translation or implementation of defined biomarkers relevant to DLB and/or PDD. Projects may address diagnosis or differential diagnosis; prognosis or disease progression; cognitive impairment or cognitive fluctuations; patient stratification for clinical trials; or prediction or measurement of treatment response. Biomarkers for monitoring disease progression or predicting or measuring treatment response are of particular interest.

Eligible modalities may include, but are not limited to:

- Fluid biomarkers, including blood and cerebrospinal fluid;
- Tissue-based biomarkers, including  $\alpha$ -synuclein-related measures;
- Structural, molecular or functional imaging;

- Neurophysiological measures, including electroencephalography (EEG);
- Physiological or sensor-derived measures, including digital biomarkers; and
- Multimodal approaches, including those addressing clinically relevant co-pathology.

Projects must begin with a defined candidate biomarker, panel, signature or algorithm and a clearly stated intended use. All projects must be supported by preliminary evidence appropriate to the proposed stage of development and should include a clear plan for human validation, implementation or further translation.

Eligible projects may include testing promising biomarkers in larger or longitudinal cohorts, new clinical or trial populations, multisite settings, or other contexts needed to establish clinical utility or support adoption.

Open-ended discovery, unbiased screening, or exploratory omics studies intended principally to identify new biomarkers or signatures are out of scope for this Programme. Omics, machine learning or other data-driven approaches may be eligible where they are used to validate or refine an already defined candidate, signature or algorithm. Mechanistic studies, general cohort studies and studies primarily intended to understand disease biology are out of scope unless they are evaluating a defined biomarker against a clearly stated translational objective.

### **Examples of biomarker projects**

Examples that may be **in scope** include, but are not limited to:

- Validation of a blood- or CSF-based  $\alpha$ -synuclein biomarker to improve diagnosis or differential diagnosis of DLB or PDD.
- Longitudinal or multisite evaluation of a defined blood, CSF or imaging biomarker to establish its clinical utility for monitoring disease progression and support further clinical implementation in DLB or PDD.
- Validation of an EEG-based biomarker of cognitive fluctuations in DLB.
- Validation of a biomarker or biomarker panel to predict or measure response to an eligible cognitive or neuropsychiatric treatment in DLB or PDD.
- Validation of biomarkers of clinically relevant co-pathology, such as Alzheimer's disease and cerebrovascular pathology, to improve prognosis, patient stratification or prediction of treatment response in DLB or PDD.

Examples that are **out of scope** include:

- Untargeted proteomic, metabolomic or transcriptomic screening intended primarily to discover new biomarkers for LBD.
- Exploratory imaging or neurophysiological studies without a prespecified biomarker and clearly defined intended use.
- Development of a new machine-learning-derived biomarker signature through exploratory analysis without a prespecified candidate or validation objective.
- Studies focused primarily on understanding the biological mechanisms of LBD, rather than advancing a defined biomarker towards clinical use.

- Biomarker studies focused primarily on sleep, autonomic dysfunction or motor symptoms, rather than the biomarker priorities of this Programme.

## Treatment projects

Treatment projects should support the development and evaluation of interventions that directly reduce the severity or burden of selected cognitive and neuropsychiatric symptoms in people living with DLB or PDD.

Eligible approaches may include pharmacological interventions, neuromodulation approaches and therapeutic devices designed to directly address one or more of the eligible symptom domains listed below.

For this round, eligible symptom domains are limited to:

- Cognitive impairment and cognitive fluctuations;
- Hallucinations, delusions and psychosis;
- Apathy.

Projects must be supported by preliminary evidence and a clear rationale that justify the proposed intervention and population of interest. Projects should clearly define the symptom being targeted, the intervention and population of interest, and the next stage of development that would follow if the proposed work is successful.

Treatment projects focused primarily on preventing disease onset, slowing or reversing neurodegeneration, neuroprotection, or otherwise modifying the underlying disease course are out of scope for this Programme. A project is not excluded merely because an intervention may also affect disease biology, provided that its primary purpose and principal outcomes concern direct improvement of existing cognitive or neuropsychiatric symptoms.

Interventions primarily targeting depression, anxiety, motor symptoms, sleep symptoms or autonomic symptoms, for example, orthostatic hypotension, are also out of scope for this round of the Programme. The Programme will also not support app-based treatments, caregiver-focused interventions, music or arts therapies, general supportive-care approaches, psychotherapy, broad behavioural programmes or wellness interventions.

## Examples of treatment projects

Examples that may be **in scope** include, but are not limited to:

- A randomised proof-of-concept study of a repurposed pharmacological treatment for hallucinations or psychosis in DLB.
- An early-stage clinical study of a pharmacological intervention targeting cognitive impairment in PDD.
- A dose-ranging study of an intervention targeting clinically significant apathy in people with DLB.
- A sham-controlled study of a neuromodulation approach targeting cognitive fluctuations in DLB.
- A small early-phase study of a therapeutic device designed to reduce one of the eligible cognitive or neuropsychiatric symptoms listed above in PDD.

Examples that are **out of scope** include:

- An intervention intended primarily to slow  $\alpha$ -synuclein accumulation, neurodegeneration or overall disease progression.
- A neuroprotective intervention intended primarily to preserve neuronal function or delay progression of DLB.
- A treatment primarily targeting parkinsonian motor symptoms, such as gait, balance or falls.
- A treatment primarily targeting sleep or autonomic symptoms, such as REM sleep behaviour disorder or orthostatic hypotension.
- App-based, caregiver-focused, music or arts therapy, general supportive-care, psychotherapy, broad behavioural or wellness interventions intended to manage symptoms.

## Trial-linked projects

Trial-enabling studies, small early-phase clinical studies, and biomarker sub-studies embedded within larger clinical trials may be eligible where they address an eligible LBD biomarker or symptom-focused treatment question.

The Foundation may support a defined component of a broader study or clinical trial. Applicants should clearly identify the work that would be supported by the Foundation, explain how it contributes to the broader study, and confirm that the requested funding is additive and does not duplicate costs supported by another funding source.

Projects must be feasible within the applicable funding tier and award period.

## Funding specifications

Funding is available at two tiers:

- **Tier 1:** Up to **£350,000 in total** for proof-of-concept and early validation studies.
- **Tier 2:** Up to **£750,000 in total** for later-stage biomarker validation, clinical translation or implementation, or early-stage clinical treatment studies.

The tier limits represent the maximum total amount available from the Foundation over the full project period and are not annual amounts. Projects may be funded for a maximum of three years. The amount and duration requested should be appropriate and justified for the proposed work.

- Funds will be granted only for direct costs that are appropriate and justifiable for the work proposed.
- Reasonable open-access publication fees directly arising from the funded project may be included as direct project costs.
- Each budget item and its cost must be clearly articulated and justified.
- Indirect costs are not allowed under this Programme.
- Funds may not be used for equipment purchases, computer purchases or administrative costs unless prior written approval from the Foundation has been obtained.

- Travel expenses to scientific conferences or meetings to present work funded by the Foundation may be included in the budget. Applicants should also make provision for the principal applicant to travel to London, UK once per year to present their research to the Foundation's trustees and staff.
- The Foundation reserves the right to award an amount that differs from the amount requested.
- Funds may be distributed within the UK and Ireland without restriction. Up to 35% of the total grant may be used to access unique international expertise, resources or capabilities that strengthen work led by researchers in the UK or Ireland.
- **Multiple institutions:** Where a project involves multiple institutions, the principal applicant is responsible for the appropriate distribution and management of grant funds.
- **Full or partial support of projects:** The Foundation may support a complete project or a clearly defined component of a broader project. Applicants must clearly identify the work that Foundation funding would support.
- **Conditional funding and milestones:** Grants are conditional on grantees meeting pre-determined milestones and providing required deliverables, including progress reports and participation in annual meetings.
- **Supplemental funding:** The Foundation encourages grantees to seek additional funding to further their work. The Foundation does not guarantee renewal or continuation of funding.

Any grant awarded by the Foundation through this Programme will be made to the applicant's institution and not to an individual. Responsibility for the planning, direction and execution of the funded project rests solely with the applicant.

## Application process

The application process consists of two stages: (1) Letter of Intent (LOI) submission and review and (2) full proposal submission and review. Applicants must submit an LOI through the Foundation's [grants management system](#).

All LOIs and full proposals will be reviewed by a scientific review committee comprising international experts in Lewy body dementia, biomarkers, treatments and/or neurodegenerative diseases of ageing.

The LOI is intended to provide a concise overview of the proposed project, including the central idea, translational rationale, overall approach and anticipated path forward. LOIs will be reviewed to determine the project's relevance to the Programme, innovation, translational potential and likelihood of generating meaningful, decision-relevant evidence.

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be asked to provide additional detail on the experimental approach, team and environment, milestones, budget and development plan.

If a proposal is approved for funding, the Foundation will provide a detailed grant agreement. Under normal circumstances, the grant agreement must be executed, without amendment, within four weeks of receipt.

# Review criteria

## LOI review criteria

The criteria considered when reviewing LOIs include, but may not be limited to:

- **Relevance:** How well does the project align with the scope and priorities of the Lewy Body Dementia Programme?
- **Innovation:** How novel or distinctive is the proposed biomarker, treatment approach or application?
- **Translational rationale:** Is there a compelling rationale and clear path towards an appropriate next stage in biomarker development, validation, clinical translation or implementation, or symptom-focused treatment development?
- **Approach:** Is the overall strategy appropriate for addressing the proposed research question?
- **Likelihood of success:** Is the project positioned to generate meaningful, decision-relevant evidence within the proposed timeframe?
- **Impact:** If successful, to what extent could the project advance biomarker development, validation, clinical translation or implementation, or symptom-focused treatment development, for DLB or PDD?

## Additional full proposal review criteria

Additional criteria considered when reviewing invited full proposals include, but may not be limited to:

- **Experimental approach:** Are the study design, methodology and analyses rigorous and appropriate? Are potential challenges adequately considered and addressed? Is access to the required human samples, data, cohorts, participants or other resources feasible?
- **Development plan:** Are the next steps following successful completion of the proposed work clearly defined and compelling?
- **Team and environment:** Is the team appropriately positioned to conduct the proposed work, and does the research environment provide the expertise and resources required?
- **Budget, milestones and timeline:** Are the proposed budget, milestones and timeline appropriate and justified for the work proposed?

## Eligibility of applicants

For this Programme, the Foundation accepts LOIs and full proposals from investigators affiliated with eligible institutions located in the UK or Ireland.

- Applicants must be affiliated with a charitable or academic institution in the UK or Ireland.
- Principal applicants must be at or above the level of lecturer, assistant professor or equivalent and hold an appointment at the eligible institution through which they are applying.
- Each LOI must identify one principal applicant, who will serve as the Foundation's primary point of contact for the application. Projects may include multiple co-applicants and collaborators, but only one person may be designated as the principal applicant.
- Principal applicants must be physically present and working in the UK or Ireland at least 50% of the time.

- Each applicant may submit one LOI per round as principal applicant but may participate as a co-applicant or collaborator on other applications.
- Institutional approval is not required at the LOI stage. Any invited full proposal must be approved by the institution through which the application is submitted.

## Reports and assessments

If a grant is awarded, grantees will be required to complete the following. The Foundation will provide templates where applicable.

The frequency and timing of milestone and progress reports will be agreed with each grantee based on the project's duration, milestones and nature of the work.

- **Milestone reports:** Grant payments are tied to the successful achievement of project milestones agreed upon by the grantee and the Foundation. A milestone report is required before each scheduled payment.
- **Progress reports:** Grantees will be required to provide periodic progress reports describing scientific progress and expenditures. The Foundation may also request discussions with the principal applicant and/or supporting data where necessary to assess progress.
- **Grantee meetings:** Principal applicants must attend one event annually to present research progress and/or engage with other funded researchers. Additional key personnel may attend with prior approval from the Foundation. Applicants should include travel expenses for the principal applicant to attend one grantee meeting per year in London, UK in the proposed budget.
- **Foundation visits:** With prior consent from the grantee, Foundation representatives may visit researchers to learn about funded work underway. These visits are not mandatory and are uncommon.
- **Financial accountability:** Grantees are responsible for accounting for funds expended under the grant. Expenditures outside the approved research project, or material changes made without prior approval from the Foundation, may be recoverable and may result in termination of funding.

## Confidentiality

The Foundation treats all LOIs, full proposals, research project details and associated research information (collectively, the "Confidential Information") in confidence using reasonable care in protecting such Confidential Information from disclosure to third parties who do not participate in the grant review process and Foundation assessments.

All Confidential Information will be used by the Foundation and its scientific review committee for the purposes of review and assessment and will be shared only in accordance with the sharing policy as set out herein. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Confidential Information shall not include any information that:

- was generally known to the public prior to the effective date of this Programme announcement;
- becomes generally known to the public through no unlawful or unauthorized act by any recipient of Confidential Information; or,

- was independently developed by the Foundation or its scientific review committee without reference to the Confidential Information.

If the Foundation or any of its scientific review committee members is requested to disclose Confidential Information pursuant to a legal or governmental proceeding, the Foundation shall give the applicant, grantee or other owner(s) of such Confidential Information notice of such disclosure request as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## General information

Applicant Institutions and individuals affiliated with and applying through or on behalf of institutions (collectively, the **“Applicants”**) should carefully discuss the Programme announcement and the terms of this document with the appropriate office at their institution before submitting an application.

The submission of a LOI or full proposal does not bind either the Foundation or the applicants by any commitment to provide or receive funding, respectively. Successful applicants will be required to agree to terms substantially similar to those contained in this document and the Foundation reserves the right to alter, delete, or add additional terms in the grant agreement between the successful applicants and the Foundation.

The Foundation reserves the right to accept or reject any or all grant applications at its discretion and to negotiate the terms of the specific grant agreement with applicants.

The Foundation, at its sole discretion, may change the timeline of the application process.

## Other

### Liability and indemnity

Each applicant to this Programme acknowledges and agrees in responding to the Programme announcement that the applicant shall have no claim against the Foundation, and its respective representatives, related companies or affiliates, should such Programme response be unsuccessful for any reason.

Each applicant hereby remises and releases the Foundation, its representatives and affiliates, from any cause of action, complaint, or claim in connection with the request for applications process and its outcome.

The Foundation’s role in grants awarded pursuant to this Programme is that of a funder. The Foundation is not the *sponsor* of funded projects. As such, the Foundation will not assume any liability associated with funded projects and each applicant who is ultimately awarded a grant pursuant to this Programme releases the Foundation from any and all liability with respect thereto and further indemnifies the Foundation, and its respective representatives and affiliates, from any claim or loss whatsoever associated with the applicable grant.

## **Safeguarding policy**

The Foundation is committed to safeguarding all individuals from harm, including grant recipients and anyone who interacts with the Foundation. This expectation extends equally to grant recipients and to the researchers, staff, and volunteers who work with them. The core principle of this policy is that every individual, without exception, has the right to be free from harm and to receive appropriate protection.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that no one is harmed in any way through their contact or relationship with the Foundation or its grantees. Grant recipients are required not only to understand this policy but to actively uphold and implement it.

As part of the assessment of grant applications and the due diligence process prior to releasing funds, the Foundation will evaluate whether applicants have appropriate systems of control in place, including adequate safeguarding policies. Safeguarding-specific questions will be asked only of invited proposals.

If concerns arise from the responses provided particularly in applications that would otherwise be strong candidates, the Foundation will raise these issues with the applicant before any recommendation is made to the Board. Applications will be removed from consideration if identified safeguarding concerns are not addressed to the Foundation's satisfaction.

## **Publication and sharing policy**

The Foundation expects results of funded research to be published as rapidly as possible in open-access scientific journals or other forms of publication that are readily available to the research community, unless the Foundation agrees there is a greater public good served by proceeding otherwise. Such publication should be consistent with high standards of scientific excellence and rigor and provide sufficient detail so that the research community can benefit from the findings from, or in connection with, the funded project.

A lay person abstract of the research proposal must be submitted prior to funding. A lay person abstract of the research results must also be submitted no later than two (2) months from the date of grant expiration. These abstracts may be made available to the public by the Foundation.

Any presentation, releases, papers, interviews, publication or other forms of communication dealing with the awarded project or the results from the awarded project must acknowledge the funding provided by the Foundation, in a manner proportionate to the contribution of the Foundation. Any other use of the Foundation's intellectual property, including its name, logo or trademark requires prior written permission of the Foundation.

All tools or reagents (i) funded by and (ii) that result from funded projects should be made readily available to the research community either freely or at reasonable prices within 3 months of study completion. If sharing of such tools or reagents will jeopardize the grantee's right to secure patents or copyrights necessary to protect the grantee's ownership, then they should be made available as soon as these rights have been secured. The Foundation may let the public know of these tools or reagents so other researchers know they are available.

The Foundation encourages sharing of data, inclusive of raw data, publicly wherever possible.

The Foundation requires any clinical trial awarded under any of its funding Programmes be registered with [clinicaltrials.gov](https://clinicaltrials.gov), [PDTrials.org](https://pdttrials.org), or other appropriate public registry.

## **Intellectual property**

The Foundation acknowledges that any IP that arises from a project funded under this Programme (the "Funded IP") is not the property of the Foundation.

That said, the Foundation reserves the right to impose certain conditions on the Funded IP, if appropriate in its sole opinion, including to ensure sufficient UK and Ireland public benefit in line with its charitable objects or to comply with legal requirements.

Specifically, if, in the sole opinion of the Funder, the grant recipient does not take steps to promptly achieve practical application of the Funded IP within the UK or Ireland and for the benefit of UK or Ireland residents and/or seeks to achieve practical application in a jurisdiction other than the UK or Ireland prior to achieving practical application in the UK or Ireland, then the Funder may require the grant recipient to: (a) terminate or convert any exclusive rights granted to a third party in connection with the Funded IP, as well as any background IP necessary to enable the full practical application of the Funded IP, to non-exclusive rights; and/or (b) promptly locate, and grant to a new entity acceptable to the Foundation the rights to apply the Funded IP, all improvements thereto made by the grant recipient and the principal investigator necessary to enable full practical application of the Funded IP in the UK or Ireland.