



Peer Review Guidance

Our mission is to advance an increased quality of life for those affected by secondary (metastatic) breast cancer and we are uniquely placed to make this happen through our research, support and education programmes.

In our funding call, we are inviting proposals for research projects which deliver tangible near-time benefit to people living with secondary breast cancer. Patient benefit is defined as a positive effect on or change to the care, services, treatment, mental wellbeing or quality of life of the secondary breast cancer community.

Grant applications follow a two-step process:

1. Letter of Intent - accessed internally to check the proposal meets our eligibility criteria
2. Application form - assessed by external written peer review

We require at least two external written peer reviews for each proposal, including subject matter experts and a patient advocate.

Our Research Committee meets to discuss each application and the external written peer review. The Research Committee makes funding recommendations to the charity and the Board of Trustees makes the final funding decisions.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The integrity of external peer review is critical in removing bias from the grant funding process. It is considered a conflict of interest where:

- An applicant, co-applicant or patient representative on the proposal is a close friend or relation
- You work in the same organisation as the main applicant, co-applicant or patient representative on the proposal
- You have collaborated with the main applicant in the last 5 years
- You will be directly involved in the proposed work in any capacity
- You will benefit financially from the proposed work

If you are in any doubt about whether you have a conflict of interest, please discuss it with a member of our team before taking part in the peer review: research@make2ndscount.co.uk

HOW TO WRITE YOUR REVIEW

Our external peer review form contains questions about the proposed work and your assessment of it. Your comments are invaluable in helping to guide our decision making. Your feedback will be shared anonymously with the main applicant, which could help to improve their research in the future.

Please provide:

- Clear and concise comments for each question
- Strengths and weaknesses of the proposal
- An explanation for the comments given and the score
- An indication of whether you are supportive of the application or not

Try to avoid:

- Making it personal
- Including any self-identifying information in your comments
- Penalising the applicant for any disruption to the careers due to family life or COVID-19
- Allowing your review to be influenced by your personal views of the applicants or organisations involved

Good questions to ask yourself as you review an application:

- Will this research make a real difference to people living with secondary breast cancer?
- What is the potential impact of this work?
- Is the research design good quality? Are the methods appropriate? Is there anything in the methodology that could be done better?
- Does the proposal offer good value for charity money in terms of the patient benefits it will bring?
- Will patients be suitably engaged in this research and will the outcomes be shared with them?
- Has the applicant set out how they will recruit patients and will this fairly represent the diversity of the patient population?
- What are the health economic benefits of this work? Will any potential outputs be cost-effective and realistic for implementation on the NHS or roll-out at national scale?

TIME FRAME

If you cannot provide a written review within the proposed time frame, please let us know as soon as possible so we can approach another prospective reviewer: research@make2ndscount.co.uk

AFTER YOU SUBMIT THE REVIEW

Your review is passed to the Research Committee who will use it to inform their assessment of the application. Feedback will be shared with applicants anonymously. You will be informed of the outcomes of the funding call after the Board of Trustees has ratified the final decision. This takes place approximately 2 months after the external review.

We are incredibly grateful for your vital role in our research funding process.