National Eczema Society Pump Priming Grant Application 2025/2026

Section 1. Applicant & Host Institution

The Principal Investigator (PI) must be based at a recognised UK research institution (e.g., university, NHS Trust, or research institution). Collaborations with clinicians, industry, or international partners are welcome where justified.

Eligibility:

- The Principal Investigator (PI) must be employed by a recognized UK host institution (e.g., university, NHS Trust, or research-active institution/charity) and eligible to hold research funding under that institution's policies.
- International collaborators are welcome and may be named as co-investigators or partners, where their expertise adds value to the project. However, NES funds must be administered through the UK host institution.
- International PIs based outside the UK are not eligible to lead an application.
- NES strongly encourages applications from early career researchers (ECRs) with appropriate mentorship and institutional support.
- PhD students cannot apply as PIs but may be included as team members.

Project Title: [Concise and informative]

Lead Investigator: [Name, position, institution]

Department: [Department name]

Email Address: [Contact email]

Phone Number: [Contact number]

**Add additional Co-/PIs as needed with same information as above provided.*

Section 2: Lay Summary & Graphical Abstract* (Max 300 words)

Please provide a clear lay statement for the proposed pilot project. This should be written for a non-specialist audience and avoid technical jargon.

This should explain the big picture of your project:

- **The problem**: Why eczema patients, carers, or health services need this research.
- **The opportunity**: How a small, short-term project can make a difference.
- **What you will do**: Describe in simple terms the approach you will take.
- **What impact it could have**: How this will help people with eczema in the near future or enable further research.

***Graphical Abstract (Optional but Encouraged):**
You may also include a simple visual that communicates the core idea, study design, or potential impact of your project. This could be a diagram, infographic, or schematic. The image should be clearly labelled and uploaded at the end of the application as a separate PNG, JPEG, or PDF file (maximum two pages).

Graphs, charts, and images should be prepared in a clear and accessible format. Please ensure:

- Minimum resolution of 300 dpi (suitable for screen and print).
- All text and labels are legible at standard viewing size.
- Colours are chosen with accessibility in mind (e.g., avoid red/green combinations that may be difficult for colour-blind readers; consider using patterns, textures, or symbols in addition to colour).
- Where appropriate, provide a short descriptive caption so that visuals are understandable without specialist knowledge.

Section 3: Research Objectives and Rationale (Max 300 words)

Provide a concise, structured description of the scientific case for support:

- Rationale: Why this research question matters in the field, supported by brief evidence, pilot data, or literature.
- Gap: What is currently missing and how your project addresses this.
- Objectives: 2–4 numbered objectives or research questions written in a specific, measurable, achievable way, suitable for a 6–12-month pump-priming award.

Section 4: Methods (Max 800 words)

Please describe the design and approach for your proposed project. This section should be concise and focused on feasibility, with sufficient detail for reviewers to assess rigour, achievability, and value for money.

Study Design

- Briefly describe the overall study type (e.g., pilot trial, proof-of-concept experiment, secondary analysis, qualitative feasibility study etc).
- Explain why this design is appropriate for a short-term, small-scale award.

Population and Sampling

- Define the target group(s) (e.g., people with eczema, carers, clinicians, datasets, laboratory samples).
- State inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- Outline the planned sample size and justify feasibility within the funding/timeline.
- Explain how diversity will be considered (e.g., skin of colour, age, socio-economic background).

Data Collection Methods

- Describe the main methods, instruments, or procedures (e.g., clinical assessments, surveys, lab assays, interviews).
- Provide a short justification for your chosen approach.
- Highlight any pilot or preliminary data collection already completed.

Data Analysis Plan

- Summarise the proposed analysis (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods).
- Indicate how outcomes will be measured and how feasibility will be assessed (e.g., recruitment rates, protocol adherence, effect sizes).
- Explain how data will be managed, stored securely, and, where appropriate, shared responsibly (e.g., open access datasets, code repositories).

Ethics and Governance

Please indicate which approvals will be required (tick all that apply):

☐ Research Ethics Committee (REC)
☐ Health Research Authority (HRA)
☐ Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
☐ Institutional/University Research Ethics Committee
☐ Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)
☐ Other (please specify): _____

In addition, please describe:

- How informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection will be managed.

- Any safeguarding considerations for vulnerable participants.
- The expected timeline for securing approvals.

Timeline and Milestones

Provide a high-level timeline for the 6–12-month project, highlighting 2–4 key milestones.

A one-page Gantt chart or timeline diagram may be attached as an appendix (not included in the word count).

Section 5: Patient and Public Involvement (Max 300 words)

Describe how people with eczema, carers, and advocacy groups will be actively involved throughout the research process, including:

- **Design:** How will patients and carers help shape the research questions, study design, and recruitment approach?
- **Delivery:** What role will they play during the project (e.g., advisory panels, co-applicants, supporting recruitment, interpretation of findings)?
- **Dissemination:** How will they contribute to sharing results in accessible and meaningful ways for patient and public audiences?

Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with the National Eczema Society's Expert by Experience (EXEC) Group, and co-design approaches with them wherever possible.

Please also explain how Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) will be embedded in your study design. For example, how will you ensure representation of diverse populations affected by eczema (e.g., skin of colour, different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds), and make engagement activities inclusive and accessible?

Section 6: Budget and Justification

Total Amount Requested: £ [amount]

Budget Table

Please complete the table below, providing a clear justification for each cost category.

Research Cost Category	Amount Requested (£)	Justification
Equipment/Supplies (max ≤£3–5k)		[Justify this cost]
Lab consumables		[Justify this cost]
Software/Data/Services		[Justify this cost]

Travel & Conferences (limit one UK meeting)		[Justify this cost]
PPIE*		[Justify this cost]
Other		[Justify this cost]

*For guidance on paying public contributors, see **NIHR's Payment Guidance for Researchers.**

Overheads/estates/indirects are not funded. No PhD studentships or full salary support for applicants is available.

Staff time: PI/co-I salary not funded; small RA/technician fractions may be requested if essential to feasibility (maximum 0.2 FTE for 6–12 months).

In addition to completing the table, please provide:

- **Co-funding/Institutional Contributions:** Indicate whether any additional support is being leveraged for this award.
- **Value for Money Statement (1–2 paragraphs):** Explain why this pump-priming award represents good value for money for NES, with reference to the table above.
- **Additional Notes:** Elaborate on any non-standard costs or items not captured within the table.

Section 7: Impact and Knowledge Exchange (Max 250 words)

Please outline the expected short-term outputs and impact of your pilot project, and how findings will be shared with relevant stakeholders. For pump-priming awards, emphasis should be on near-term feasibility and translation, rather than long-term outcomes.

Near-Term Outputs

Describe what will be generated during or immediately after the award. Examples include:

- A small dataset or proof-of-concept result.
- A validated tool, method, or protocol.
- Pilot effect size or feasibility evidence.
- A publication or abstract reporting feasibility findings.
- Evidence to support a follow-on grant application.

Patient-Focused Metrics

Explain how success will be assessed beyond academic outputs. Examples include:

- Recruitment and retention of diverse eczema populations.

- Patient or carer satisfaction with study processes or tools.
- Reach of patient-facing materials (e.g., webinars, infographics).
- Evidence of potential to influence clinical practice or service delivery.

Knowledge Exchange and Wider Engagement

Outline how findings will be communicated with:

- Patients and carers (e.g., EXEC group involvement, plain-English outputs).
- Clinicians and healthcare professionals (e.g., training, guidance updates).
- Policy or service stakeholders (e.g., NHS services, commissioners).
- Industry or third-sector partners (if relevant).

Applicants are encouraged to co-design engagement activities with National Eczema Society's EXEC group and to use creative formats (e.g., podcasts, infographics, briefing papers).

Section 8: Leverage & Next-Steps (250 words)

This award is intended to provide feasibility data that will unlock larger research funding. Please describe how you will use the findings to secure follow-on support.

Your response should include:

Target Funders and Schemes

- Identify the specific funders or calls you will apply to (e.g., NIHR, MRC, Wellcome, CRUK, British Skin Foundation, EU Horizon, or relevant international charities).
- Name the scheme(s) where appropriate (e.g., NIHR HTA, Wellcome Discovery Award, ARUK Project Grant).

Timing

- Indicate the expected submission window(s) for follow-on applications.
- Explain how your pilot project outputs will align with these timelines.

Data and Evidence to be Generated

- Specify the feasibility data this project will deliver (e.g., recruitment rates, pilot effect size, validated tool, preliminary biomarkers, proof-of-concept dataset).
- Explain how these outputs will strengthen the competitiveness of a major application.

Strategic Fit and Sustainability

- Describe how this project and its outputs align with NES's Research Strategy.
- Indicate any partnerships, collaborations, or institutional support that will enhance sustainability beyond the pump-priming award.

Section 9: Feasibility & Risk (200 words)

Please outline the main risks to delivery of this pump-priming project and how they will be managed. This should include scientific, technical, operational, and ethical considerations.

Key risks and mitigation:

- **Scientific/technical** – e.g., assay not optimised, recruitment lower than expected.
- **Operational** – e.g., delays in approvals, staffing, data access.
- **Ethical/regulatory** – e.g., REC/HRA timelines, safeguarding requirements.
- **Financial/resource** – e.g., reliance on costly consumables, IT/data services.

For each risk, briefly describe how you will monitor and mitigate it during the award.

Go/No-Go Milestone (Month 3–6):
Identify one pivotal checkpoint that will determine whether the project can progress as planned (e.g., assay reproducibility, recruitment of first cohort, successful data extraction). Explain what criteria will be used to decide whether to continue, adapt, or halt the project.

Governance & Policies

- **Intellectual Property (IP) and Data Sharing**
  All data, outputs, and publications arising from NES-funded research must follow the host institution's IP policy and comply with relevant legislation. NES requires that:
    - Research articles be made available via **open access** in line with funder and institutional policies.
    - Underlying data, code, and materials be shared responsibly and securely, wherever possible, to maximise research value and reproducibility.
- **Conflicts of Interest (COI)**
  Applicants and co-applicants must declare any potential conflicts of interest (e.g., financial, personal, institutional, or professional) that could influence the design, conduct, or reporting of the project.

- Please confirm by ticking the box:
  ☐ *I/we have disclosed all potential conflicts of interest relevant to this application.*

- **Research Integrity**
  NES expects all applicants and host institutions to comply with the **UKRI Concordat to Support Research Integrity**, ensuring the highest standards of rigor, transparency, and accountability in research.

Section 10: Departmental/Institutional Support

Please provide evidence of institutional commitment to the project. A short supporting statement and/or letter and/or email from the Head of Department (or equivalent) must confirm that:

- The applicant has protected time within their workload to deliver the proposed pump-priming project within the 6–12-month funding period.
- The applicant has access to appropriate facilities, equipment, and infrastructure required to complete the project (e.g., laboratory space, IT, data services, clinical facilities).
- The department will provide necessary administrative and financial support to manage the award.
- The project aligns with the department's research strategy and environment, and will be supported by mentorship (particularly for ECR applicants).
- Any relevant collaborators or institutional resources will be available as described in the application.

Letters of support can be concise on headed letterhead or email format, and attached as an appendix to application.

Optional Appendices:

Applicants may attach supporting documents to strengthen their application. These may include:

- Gantt chart or project timeline
- Graphical Abstract
- Schematic or diagram illustrating study design/methodology/data collection.
- Letter/s of support

- Short CVs for named researchers and collaborators (maximum 2 pages, double-sided – 4 pages total – per person)

Accepted formats: **PDF** or **DOCX** for documents; **PNG, TIFF, JPEG, PDF** for images. All appendices should be clearly labelled and directly relevant to the application.

Monitoring and Reporting Expectations

Successful applicants will be required to provide:

- **Quarterly written updates** (1 page) submitted to the NES Research Engagement Lead. These should highlight progress, challenges, next steps, and include evidence of progress against the go/no-go milestone (e.g., recruitment thresholds, technical validation, dataset completion). Oral presentations may be requested by NES at key points (e.g., to patient groups or Trustees), but these are in addition to the written updates.
- **Financial statements** confirming expenditure against the approved budget.
- A **final scientific report** at the end of the grant, outlining outputs, outcomes, and impact.
- **A short lay summary (≤500 words)** at the end of the project, written in plain English for patients, carers, and NES supporters. This will be used for NES communications (e.g., website, newsletters, webinars).
- **Interim Public Dissemination**
  Applicants are encouraged to outline how emerging findings (even if preliminary) could be communicated to people with eczema, carers, and the wider public during the course of the project. This may include short updates via NES newsletters, blogs, webinars, or infographics, co-developed with the EXEC Group.

Go/No-Go Milestone:
Applicants must define a key feasibility checkpoint at Month 3–6 (e.g., recruitment of first participants, assay reproducibility, successful data extraction). They should also specify how success at this milestone will be measured (e.g., numerical recruitment threshold, technical performance benchmark, dataset completion) and reported to NES.

NES may also request interim updates (e.g., short summaries or presentations) to share progress with patients, carers, or supporters. NES reserves the right to review progress and, if necessary, adjust or withdraw funding where satisfactory progress is not demonstrated.