

Parkinson's Research Centre

Group Leader Recruitment



Principal funder:



Medical
Research
Council



Welcome

Group Leader, Parkinson's Research Centre

The UK Dementia Research Institute (UK DRI) is committed to transforming the lives of people affected by neurodegenerative conditions. In partnership with Parkinson's UK, we launched our new Parkinson's Research Centre (PRC) in 2025 and recruited three Group Leaders. We are now seeking to appoint a fourth Group Leader (Principal Investigator) who will drive a programme of molecular mechanistic research in Parkinson's disease and contribute to our collaborative and inclusive scientific community. Led by inaugural Centre Director, Professor Miratul Muqit, FRSE FMedSci, the PRC adopts a distributed, network structure, with researchers hosted in leading universities across the UK.

As a UK DRI Group Leader within the PRC, you will lead an internationally competitive research programme focused on Parkinson's disease. You will contribute to an integrated, collaborative, interdisciplinary, and open science environment. We welcome applications from applicants whose research lies in any aspect of molecular research including cell biology, biochemistry, CRISPR-based screening or structural biology relevant to Parkinson's, that aims to advance our understanding of the mechanisms of Parkinson's. The PRC will provide support to enable the rapid translation of these fundamental insights into drug development and tangible benefits for people living with the condition. We welcome applications from those seeking independence for the first time, as well as from established tenured researchers.

"My vision is to build a centre fully integrated with people with Parkinson's and which will become one of the world's leading centres for discovery science and translation that will deliver new ideas for better diagnosing and treating Parkinson's in the future. In my role I will make the Centre a beacon for open science and collaboration with researchers all over the UK and globally to deliver for people with Parkinson's."

Professor Miratul Muqit

Centre Director, Parkinson's Research Centre

Launched in 2017, the UK Dementia Research Institute (UK DRI) stands as a beacon of scientific innovation. The purpose of the UK DRI is, through research, to transform the outlook for people living with or at risk of all neurodegenerative conditions, including Parkinson's, Lewy body dementia, Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, motor neuron disease and more.

Our vision is a future of healthy brain ageing for all.

Our work is data driven, collaborative and team-based, targeting discoveries that will lead to more effective therapies and better quality of life. We achieve this through three linked pillars of research activity:

Discover what causes neurodegeneration

Develop new tools, tests and treatments

Deliver solutions to maintain brain health in an ageing society

Our unique strength lies in our comprehensive approach, bridging the gap between scientific inquiry and therapeutic innovation.

The UK DRI is a single national MRC institute which brings together approximately 1,000 world-leading researchers across multiple disciplines hosted across prestigious UK universities:

- UK DRI at The University of Cambridge
- UK DRI at Cardiff University
- UK DRI at The University of Edinburgh
- UK DRI at Imperial College London
- UK DRI at King's College London
- UK DRI at UCL
- Centre for Care Research & Technology (Imperial College London / University of Surrey)
- BHF - UK DRI Centre for Vascular Dementia Research (UCL / University of Edinburgh / University of Oxford)

Under the leadership of UK DRI Director and CEO, Professor Siddharthan Chandran, our researchers are supported by a Core Team who provide operational and strategic support, including in scientific affairs (led by Dr Jo Latimer) and business and innovation (led by Dr Róisín NicAmhlaoibh).

Each of our Centres is led by a tenured, seasoned professorial-level Centre Director.

In addition to the UK DRI's principal funder MRC, our other major funding partners include the British Heart Foundation, LifeArc, NIHR, Alzheimer's Society and Alzheimer's Research UK.

The UK DRI are delighted to partner with Parkinson's UK to establish a ninth Centre, the "Parkinson's Research Centre".

Discover more:

www.ukdri.ac.uk



Existing Parkinson's research at the UK DRI

In addition to the PRC, the UK DRI brings together a diverse and world-leading range of expertise to explore key questions in the Parkinson's field.

Our research ranges from a molecular and cell biology perspective, developing and utilising state-of-the-art disease models, through to translational studies identifying digital, imaging, and blood biomarkers.

Our researchers leverage innovative technologies including spatial transcriptomics, proteomics, and environmental sensing in the home to address critical challenges in understanding, diagnosing and treating Parkinson's and related synucleinopathies.

Our current Parkinson's research includes:

- Elucidating specific vulnerability of cell types
- Protein structure, protein misfolding and proteostasis
- Mechanisms of alpha-synuclein spread and the gut-brain-axis
- Genetic and epigenetic contributions towards disease
- Biomarker discovery, including digital, imaging, and blood biomarkers
- Synapse and circuitry
- Robotics and environmental sensing
- Novel therapeutics and drug screening
- Utilising cutting-edge model systems e.g. stem cell and organoid models

We currently have a network of 32 Group and Emerging Leaders whose research focus includes Parkinson's (see right). The Parkinson's Research Centre will work closely with our existing researchers, contributing to a dynamic group united in their efforts.

Read more about our research groups here:

www.ukdri.ac.uk/conditions/parkinsons-disease

UK DRI Group and Emerging Leaders whose research focus includes Parkinson's:

- Professor Gabriel Balmus
- Professor Payam Barnaghi
- Dr Tim Bartels
- Dr Dayne Beccano-Kelly
- Dr Kathryn Bowles
- Professor Tim Constandinou
- Professor Paul Elliott
- Dr Nir Grossman
- Dr Shlomi Haar
- Professor Henry Houlden
- Professor Sir John Hardy
- Dr Soyong Hong
- Dr Jo Jackson
- Dr Valeria Jaramillo
- Professor Sir David Klenerman
- Dr Pete Lally
- Professor Pete Magill
- Dr Anna Mallach
- Dr Sarah Marzi
- Professor Miratul Muqit
- Dr Alexi Nott
- Professor Laura Parkkinen
- Professor David Rubinsztein
- Professor Mina Ryten
- Dr Mootaz Salman
- Dr Cynthia Sandor
- Dr Gregory Scott
- Dr Nathan Skene
- Professor Tara Spire-Jones
- Professor Ravi Vaidyanathan
- Professor Caleb Webber
- Professor Henrik Zetterberg



Parkinson's is on the rise, and by 2050, the number of people with Parkinson's worldwide will double to 25 million.

There is currently no cure.

As the largest European charitable funder of Parkinson's research, Parkinson's UK is determined to change that.

We're here to support every Parkinson's journey, every step of the way.

We've invested over £120m in vital research that has delivered groundbreaking discoveries, new medications and better care. And right now, new treatments that can slow, stop or reverse the damage occurring within the brain are within our grasp.

We're delighted to be joining forces with the UK Dementia Research Institute to create a Centre dedicated to better understanding the causes of Parkinson's and to finding new treatments to prevent, halt and ultimately cure Parkinson's.

Alongside this, Parkinson's UK will bring powerful additional support, including:

Our pioneering Virtual Biotech programme

Established in 2017, the Parkinson's Virtual Biotech is the charity's global drug discovery and development programme dedicated to delivering life-changing new treatments in years not decades.

Patient & public involvement support

Patient and public involvement (PPI) is a collaborative process where patients, carers, and members of the public work with researchers to improve the quality and impact of their research.

Our sector-leading patient and public involvement team will support UK DRI researchers to work in partnership with people with Parkinson's to shape and guide their work.

A wealth of Parkinson's UK resources

The new UK DRI Centre will be able to benefit from other major Parkinson's UK initiatives including:

- Data from cohort studies which have collected detailed longitudinal data on thousands of patients across the UK
- Samples from the Parkinson's UK Brain Bank
- Insights from our multi-million pound landmark programme which is applying cutting-edge genetic techniques to hundreds of samples from the brain bank

With these combined resources to draw upon, the new Centre will be uniquely positioned to make and translate discoveries to create a future free from the devastating effects of Parkinson's.

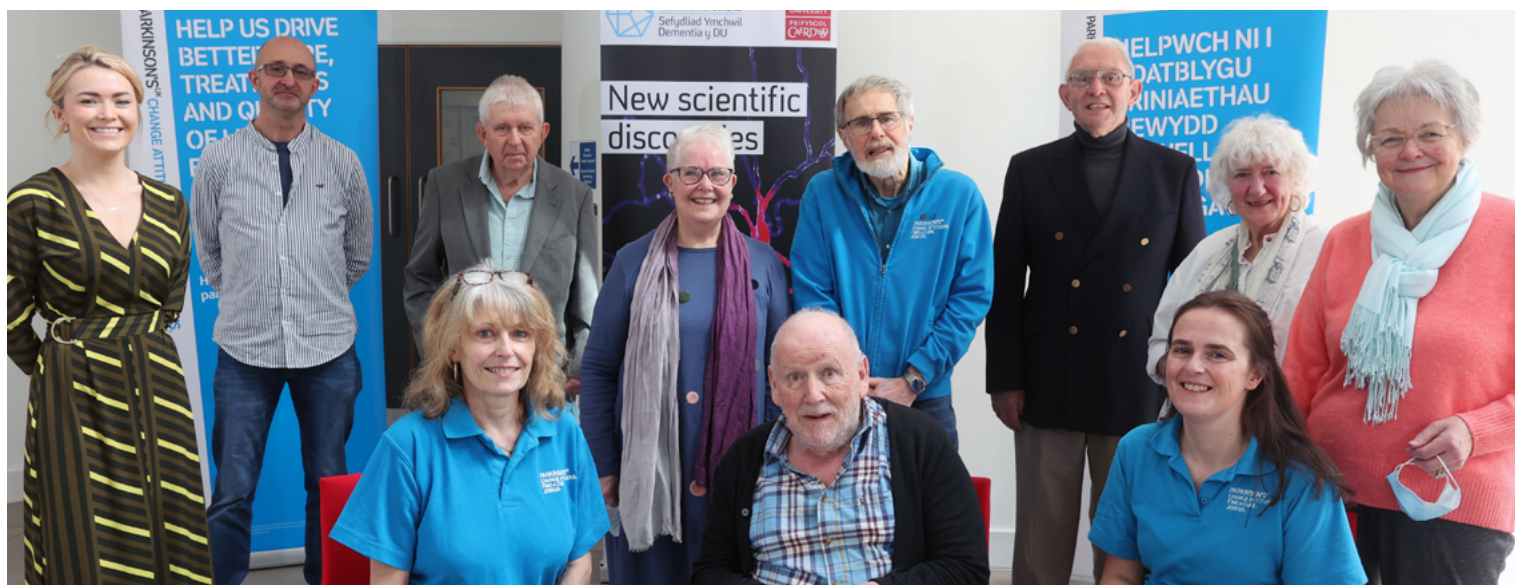
Together we can find new treatments.

And one day, a cure.

Join us.

Read more about Parkinson's UK:

www.parkinsons.org.uk



Parkinson's Research Centre

The PRC will become a recognised centre of Parkinson's research excellence which will substantially increase Parkinson's research capacity in the UK complementing existing research capacity funded and conducted by the UK DRI and Parkinson's UK.

The UK DRI and Parkinson's UK will each invest £5 million over five years to drive forward vital research. The PRC aims to deepen our understanding of the molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying Parkinson's to accelerate the development of effective treatments. It will focus on identifying and validating key biological targets, enabling data- and technology-driven approaches to predict, prevent, and treat the condition. The PRC will also support the broader translational research environment, including the design of "smart clinical trials", the use of emerging medical and

diagnostic technologies, and the application of experimental medicine. The perspective of people with Parkinson's will be placed at the heart of the PRC's research so that it is relevant and impactful.

The PRC will benefit from the established resources at the UK DRI, including the phenomenal discovery-to-patient research community, technology platforms and expertise, partnerships, training and tech transfer, as well as powerful additional support from Parkinson's UK (page 5).

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new Group Leaders will be recruited including the Centre Director

The PRC will adopt a distributed, network structure. PRC Group Leaders will be physically located at one or more of the UK DRI's host universities (Cardiff University, Imperial College London, King's College London, UCL, University of Cambridge, University of Edinburgh), or the University of Oxford, noting the establishment of the Oxford Parkinson's Disease Centre supported by major investment from Parkinson's UK. These decisions will be based on the optimum intellectual environment, access to critical technology and infrastructure, proximity of intended close collaborators and other tangible benefits offered by the universities.

£10M

will be invested in the new Centre over 5 years

Professor Miratul Muqit

Prof Muqit has made major contributions to understanding how two Parkinson's disease-linked genes, PINK1 and Parkin, function together in removing damaged mitochondria by autophagy or 'mitophagy'. The molecular mechanisms elucidated by his research group have contributed to the development of targeted therapies for mitophagy that entered clinical trials last year for Parkinson's patients. He studied Medicine at the University of Edinburgh and was a Kennedy Scholar at Harvard University before completing a PhD at UCL. He is currently Director of the UKDRI PRC at the University of Edinburgh and Professor and Aligning Science Across Parkinson's (ASAP) Co-Investigator at the MRC Protein Phosphorylation and Ubiquitylation Unit at the University of Dundee. He has been elected an EMBO Young Investigator, Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and Fellow of Academy Medical Sciences.



Role of the Group Leader

Scientific Research Programme

This role provides an excellent opportunity to develop a programme of world-leading Parkinson's research that complements the present research portfolios across the UK DRI, helping to shape future scientific direction. Start-up funds will be available; however, you will be expected to apply for further research funding from other relevant funders to further strengthen your personal and professional portfolio.

It's essential that you have a strong understanding of and commitment to the mission of the UK DRI. Together with a broad and deep understanding of Parkinson's research, you'll bring a strong commitment to supporting and delivering research of the highest quality.

You will represent the PRC and the UK DRI, contribute to scientific progress in the field, and maintain a broad, balanced and informed perspective of current scientific issues and opportunities in Parkinson's research.

Leading a research programme means providing effective management and leadership of all aspects, including science, logistics, finance, and people and career development. You'll foster a positive research culture that is committed to inclusivity, nurturing of talent, collaboration, and open science.

Research outputs will be disseminated through publication of results and presentations at scientific meetings, working with UK DRI and Parkinson's UK communications teams to ensure that achievements are widely publicised through all suitable outlets.

Collaborations & partnerships

You will identify, initiate and manage key collaborations nationally across the UK DRI and other relevant UK partners, and internationally with leading Parkinson's researchers globally, communicating with a wide range of stakeholders.

Working with the PRC Centre Director and relevant university and UK DRI teams, you will seek and develop industry partnerships, including Parkinson's Virtual Biotech, to facilitate translation of your research into drugs, devices, tests, services, or other deliverables. You will also work with the relevant teams to identify and capitalise on opportunities for the creation of intellectual property and the exploitation of commercial potential, including cooperating on patent protection and exploitation in accordance with the UK DRI and university policies.

Reporting, regulations & policies

All research within the Centre will be conducted in accordance with good practice and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements with the UK DRI and host university, in respect of equality and diversity, data protection and information governance, copyright and licensing, security, financial and other university policies, procedures and codes as appropriate, is required.

With Centre administrative support, you will be responsible for recording all UK DRI activities and compiling submissions for annual reports and quinquennial reviews.

Academic role

As a Group Leader, you will adhere to the generic expectations of an academic role. Depending on your host university, and by agreement, you may have additional teaching, management, or administrative responsibilities within their university. Other duties may include those consistent with the role of an academic, on an occasional basis, and by agreement. Whilst there are currently no clinical sessions confirmed for this position, we envisage supporting the successful candidate to maintain clinical work if required.



Selection criteria

Essential criteria

- An ability to develop and lead a programme of internationally competitive Parkinson's research that complements the present research portfolios across the UK DRI and aligns with the vision of the PRC
- An established record of high-quality, impactful research, published in national and international journals and/or other quantifiable research outputs
- An ability to shape, develop, inspire and lead a research group
- A commitment to the involvement of people with Parkinson's in research
- Excellent communication and networking skills, evidence of successful relationship building, collaboration, and project management
- An ability to attract research funding
- Evidence of commitment to nurture and support the development of the next generation of researchers
- A commitment to supporting and fostering a positive research culture that promotes diversity and inclusion, nurturing of talent, and open science
- An understanding and commitment to mission of the UK DRI and the vision of the PRC
- A postgraduate research degree, MD or PhD or equivalent
- For clinical applicants: A relevant registration in accordance with University requirements

Desirable criteria

- Outstanding track record in molecular mechanistic research in areas including cell biology, biochemistry, structural biology or CRISPR-based screening.
- Commitment to engage with stakeholders to translate research into new tests or treatments for Parkinson's

Apply

The UK DRI's structure provides that Group Leaders at the PRC are employed by the university at which they are based. The successful Group Leader applicants will be initially funded for five years with salary and resources to fund a personal research programme.

As part of the application, please tell us which university you prefer to be employed by, provide a short justification. You may choose to be based at the one of the following universities: Cardiff University, Imperial College London, King's College London, UCL, University of Cambridge, University of Edinburgh, or University of Oxford.

Each request will be reviewed, and the respective University will be engaged as part of the recruitment process if your application is taken forward.

To apply, please visit the UK DRI careers site, and submit:

- A **cover letter** outlining your background, your motivation for joining us, and your preferred university choice and justification.
- A research proposal, presenting your five-year research vision and the optimum university host for your research programme. This must be no more than five pages, including references and all material.
- A **full curriculum vitae** and **details of three referees**.
- A **lay summary of your application**. This must use appropriate lay language, avoid technical language, and give a realistic representation of the scientific sections. With advance notice, support can be sought from [Parkinson's UK's patient and public involvement programme](#).

UK DRI is committed to equal opportunities

We are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. We encourage applications from all backgrounds, including but not limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and age. We believe that a diverse workforce leads to richer ideas and better outcomes for our research community and the people we serve.

**Closing date for applications:
Monday 4th May 2026, 5pm (BST)**

In-person interview date: 1st June 2026

For informal enquiries, please contact:

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UK Dementia Research Institute

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