

## **Charities working together announce a further £500,000 to help tackle premature birth**

Children's charity Action Medical Research and premature birth research charity Borne are proud to announce their continued work together and further planned investment of £500,000 of joint funding for research projects to help tackle premature birth.

Each year, around 55,000 babies in the UK are born preterm and sadly more than 1,000 babies die as a result<sup>1-5</sup>. Children who survive can experience lifelong disabilities such as cerebral palsy, learning difficulties, blindness and hearing loss. Despite being the single biggest cause of neonatal death in the UK<sup>6</sup>, premature birth remains an underfunded and overlooked area of research.

The two charities joined forces in 2016 when they pledged to work together to help babies born too soon and attract more funding to this vital area of research. Since then, together they have invested £723,948 into research to further our understanding of why babies are born prematurely, diagnose women for their risk of preterm labour early in their pregnancy, and develop new treatments to help reduce the numbers of babies being born too soon.

Action and Borne have now announced a further £500,000, which will take the total investment in this area to £1,223,948, to fund project grants from across the UK for translational research into the causes of preterm birth in order to develop diagnostic, treatment and prevention strategies to reduce the rates of prematurity.

[This grant round is now open for outline applications](#), with a closing date of 5pm Tuesday 22 March 2022. Joint awards are to be focused on the pregnancy period and the factors and conditions in pregnancy that may lead to preterm birth. Outline applications will be graded on both potential clinical impact and scientific quality. A combination of clinical and science applicants and interdisciplinary collaboration is particularly welcome including novel collaborations that could bring new insight into the problems of preterm birth.

Current jointly funded projects underway to help tackle premature birth are:

- [Preterm birth: developing immunotherapy to prevent spontaneous preterm birth](#)  
Led by Professor Rachel M Tribe at King's College London
- [Identifying risks and improving pregnancy care in childhood cancer survivors](#)  
Led by Dr Melanie Griffin, at University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust
- [Reducing the risk of preterm birth](#)  
Led by Professor Michael J Taggart at Newcastle University
- [Developing a new test to identify women at risk of premature birth](#)  
Led by Professor Rachel M Tribe at King's College London

## References

1. Vital statistics in the UK: births, deaths and marriages – 2020, Office for National statistics: [Vital statistics in the UK: births, deaths and marriages - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#) [website accessed 02 February 2022]
2. Preterm labour and birth final scope – April 2013, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE): [Clinical guideline scope \(nice.org.uk\)](#) [website accessed 02 February 2022]
3. Child mortality (death cohort) tables in England and Wales – 2019, Table 4 (Release date 24 February 2021) – Office for National Statistics Office for National Statistics: [Child mortality \(death cohort\) tables in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#) [website accessed 02 February 2022]
4. Vital Event Reference Tables 2020 Section 4, Table 4.05: Infant deaths, by sex and cause, Scotland, 2009 to : Stillbirths and infant deaths, National Records of Scotland: [Vital Events Reference Tables 2020 | National Records of Scotland \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](#) [website accessed 02 February 2022]
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6. Preterm labour and birth, November 2015 (updated August 2019), National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). [Context | Preterm labour and birth | Guidance | NICE](#) [website accessed 02 February 2022].

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**Action Medical Research** is the leading UK-wide charity saving and changing children's lives through medical research. For 70 years we've helped pioneer ways to prevent disease and develop treatments benefiting millions of people. Our research has helped to beat polio in the UK, develop ultrasound in pregnancy, fight meningitis and prevent stillbirths. But we urgently need to develop more new treatments and cures for sick babies and children and we can't do it without you.

Join our fight for little lives today.

Charity reg. nos 208701 and SC039284.

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**Borne** is a medical research charity working to identify the causes of premature birth. We bring scientists and doctors together to advance our understanding of pregnancy, and to find effective ways to screen women at risk of preterm birth and develop new treatments to prevent it. We believe every child should have the chance of a full and healthy life, unaffected by disability. A baby's first hours should not be its hardest, or its last.

Help us find answers to premature birth.

Registered charity no. 1167073