

Funding at Wellcome

University College London
24th January 2019



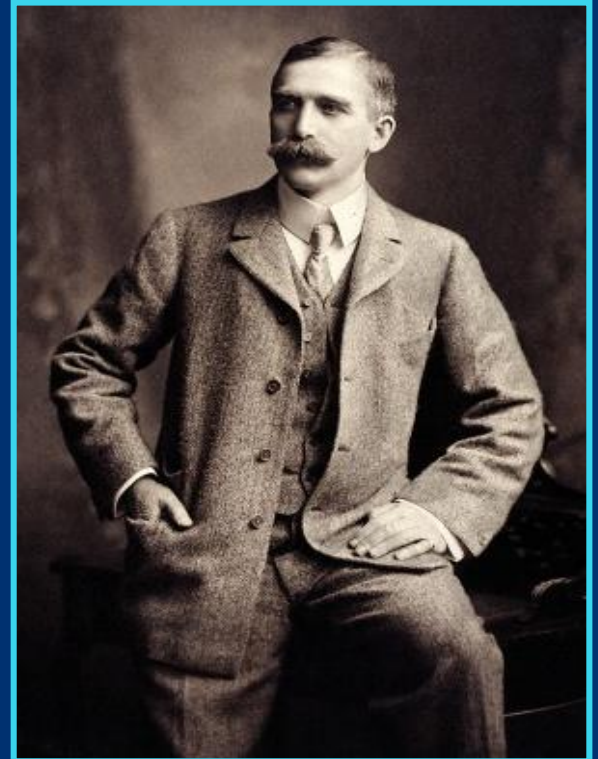
Wellcome

We are an independent global charitable foundation dedicated to understanding and improving health.

We were established in 1936 under the will of Sir Henry Wellcome.

We are funded from a private endowment ~ £26 Billion

We expect to spend ~£5 billion on charitable activities over the next five years



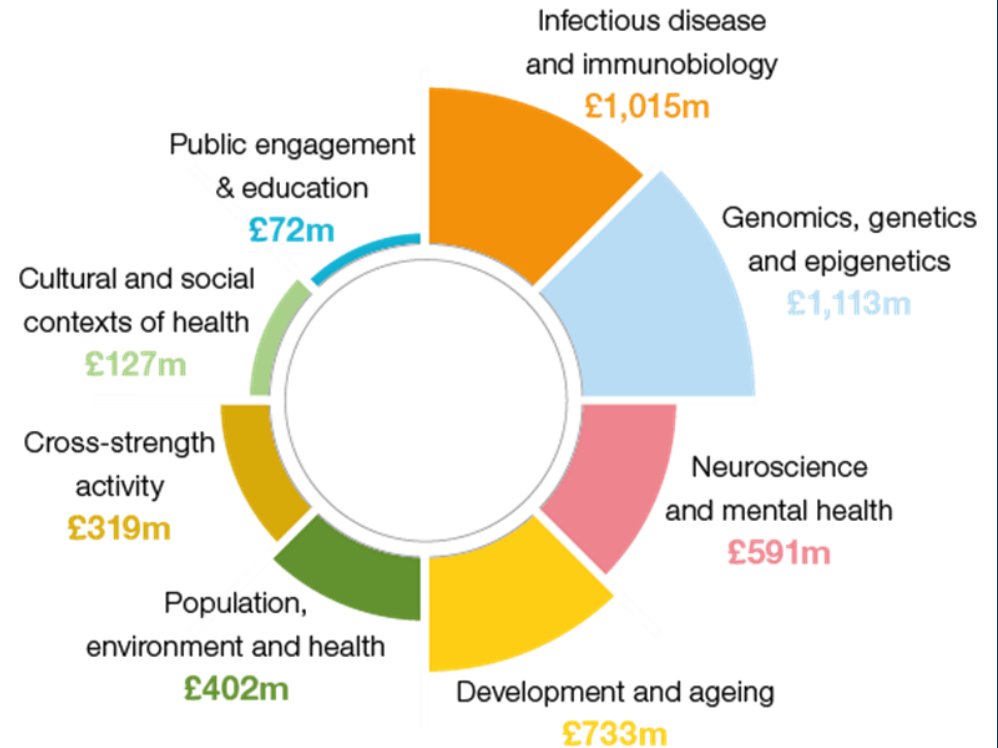
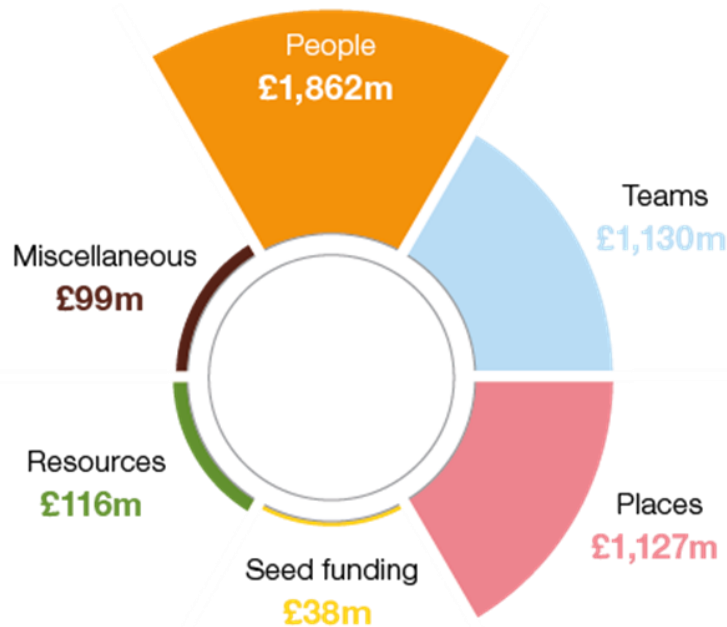
What we do

We want to improve health by:

- Understanding the processes that underpin life
- Exploring the way social, historical and ethical factors affect how people experience healthcare
- Developing new technologies, treatments and diagnostics
- Engaging the public
- Influencing healthcare policy



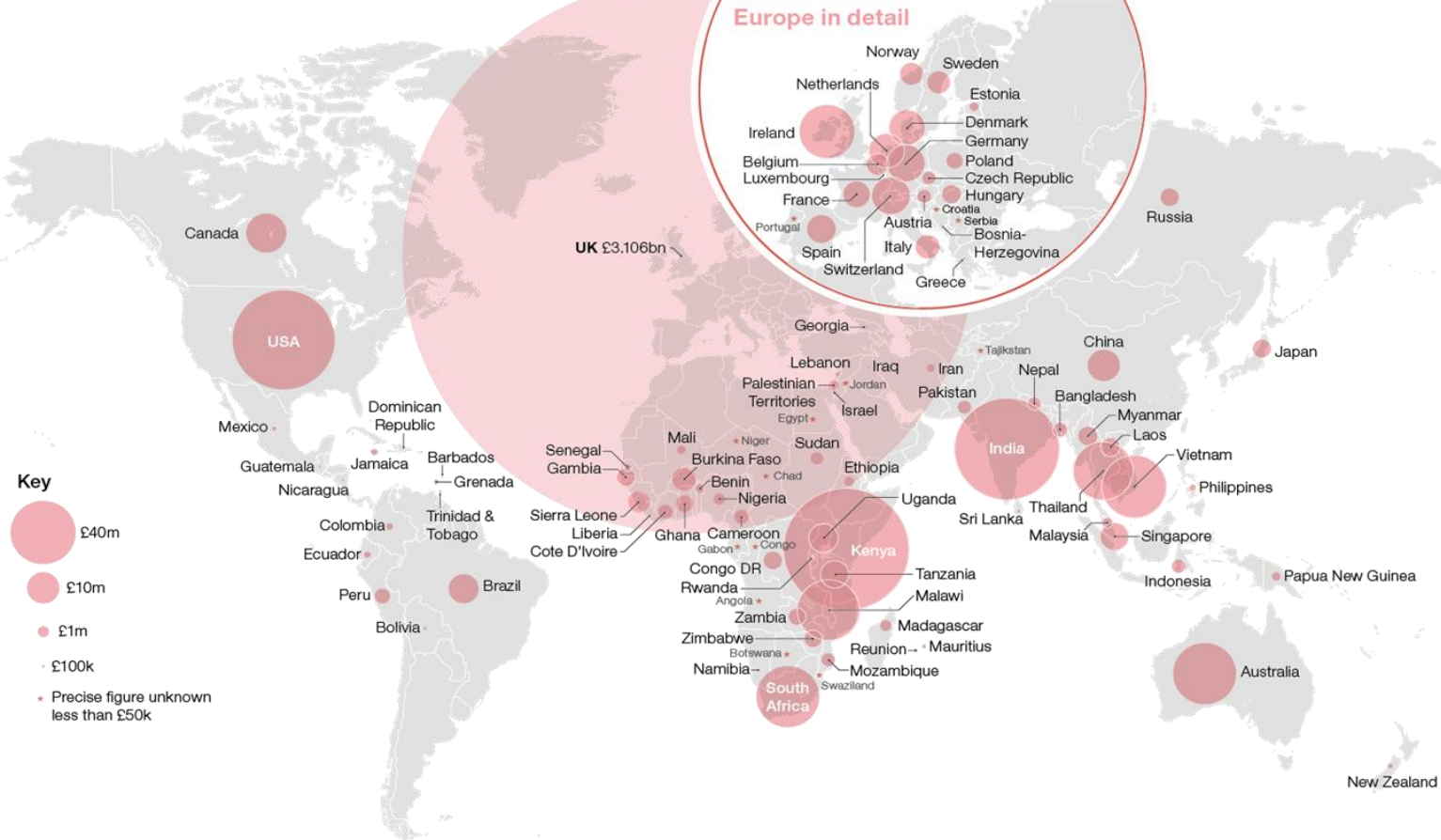
Our current grant portfolio



Note: The categories 'Places' and 'Genomics, genomics & epigenetics' in the above charts each include £550m for Sanger Centre operating costs over 5 years.

Our current grant portfolio

Global distribution of our funding



How we organise our funding

‘Primary’

- Funding is response-mode and competitive
- We fund (mainly): UK, Ireland & LMICs
- Last year we received requests totalling ~£8 billion
- We spent approximately £900 million in 2016-17
- Response-mode will continue at similar levels to current

‘Reserve’

- Strategic Initiatives to deliver very specific outputs and outcomes.
- Largely not open response-mode.

'Reserve' funding - strategic initiatives

The first six are:

- Vaccines
- Drug Resistant Infections (AMR)
- Mental Health
- Our Planet, Our health
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Strengthening Research Ecosystems in Africa and Asia
- Science Education

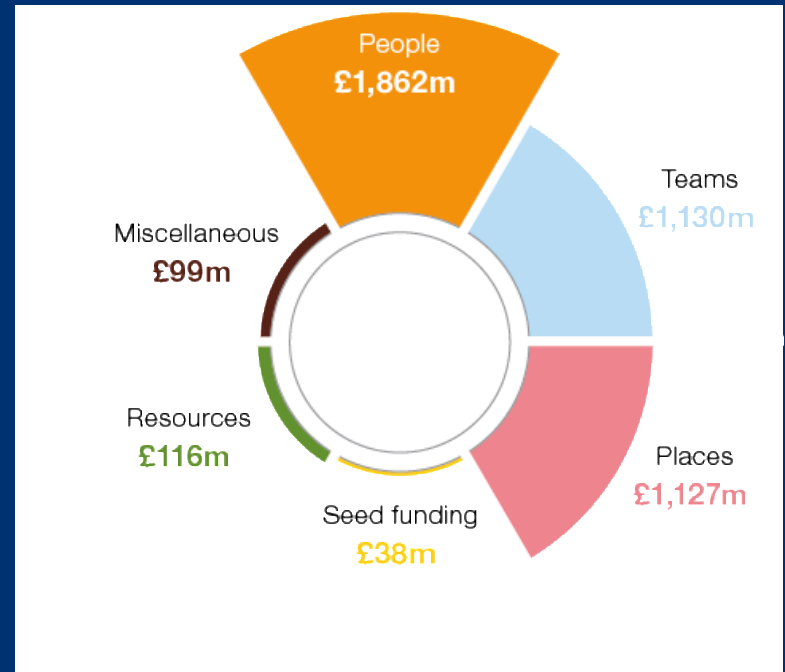
Specific stand-alone teams. Largely NOT open response-mode

To deliver very specific outputs and outcomes

Primary funding

Response mode funding for:

- **People** - support for individuals and career pathways.
- **Teams** - support for research groups.
- **Places** – core support for centres of excellence and building capacity (including the ISSF)
- **Seeds** - to develop ideas for future support.
- **Resources** - for enabling work and equipment that underpins research.



Science strategy: 'Improving health through the best research'

- Creating knowledge
- Strengthening research capability
- Using knowledge effectively
- Promoting an environment in which research can flourish



Support for researchers



Fellowships

- To attract, train and retain the best researchers (basic and clinical research)
- Schemes designed for each stage of the research career
- Salary of the Fellow provided
- Plus research costs - including the salaries of the Fellow's research team, consumables, equipment and other expenses
- Award size and duration varies, depending on the career stage and scheme
- Over 550 current Fellows.



Investigator Awards

- For researchers with established academic posts, from newly appointed lecturers to senior professors
- Applicants assessed according to their career stage
- Research question drives duration and value of award.
- Up to 7 years – full research costs supported
- Applications from Joint Investigators considered.
- Over 400 current Investigator Award holders.



Collaborative Awards

For three or more individuals to deliver something that could not be achieved by any alone

Question driven

OR 'Core' awards to underpin question driven research

'Normally' up to £4 million

Talk to the office before proceeding



Seed Awards

⊘ Stopping

- New ideas that will underpin larger future grant applications
- Preliminary data gathering, pilot and scoping studies – not discrete projects
- **Eligibility (for Science Seeds):**
 - Salary from organisation (or personal fellowship if no research expenses provided)
 - No funding at similar level to a Seed Award
- Up to £100,000 for up to 2 years
- Only one award per lifetime



Culture and Society

Medical Humanities:

Exploring the social, historical and cultural dimensions of scientific knowledge, clinical practice and healthcare policy.

MHgrants@wellcome.ac.uk

Society and Ethics:

Research that explores the social and/or ethical aspects of biomedical research and health.

SEgrants@wellcome.ac.uk



Public Engagement

- Funding and support for creative approaches to engaging the public with health research
- Funding for our researchers
- Funding ideas/projects to engage the public in conversations about health-related research
- Fostering conversations through:
 - the Wellcome Collection (exhibitions, events and activities, Library)
 - Targeted activities (e.g. WT Book Prize, National Science Learning Centre)



PEgrants@wellcome.ac.uk

Innovations

Helping researchers and organisations across the world to transform great ideas, discoveries and inventions into treatments, products and cures for disease

Innovator awards. Funding healthcare innovations that could have a major and measurable impact on human health.

Innovator awards: Digital technologies



Thermostable oral rotavirus vaccine

innovations@wellcome.ac.uk

Population Health funding

Remit:

Support research that helps understand the causes and consequences of health and disease in populations

Current interest areas:

- Diversifying the scientific portfolio
- Developing mechanisms to support using knowledge more effectively
- Exploring multi-morbidity and nutrition as areas of strategic interest

Case study: Sir Henry Wellcome Fellowship

Data linkage for evaluating maternal, household and social influences on childhood health service use and outcomes in children born preterm

Dr Katie Harron



Examining the effects of preterm birth in England and Canada into adolescence by linking health and non-health administrative data

Case study: Sir Henry Dale Fellowship

Using social networks to understand and intervene on HIV epidemic spread

Dr Guy Harling



Identifying who influences the behaviours of at-risk people, and how these influencers can help prevent HIV transmission in young people in South Africa.

Assessment process



*Peer review before expert review group for Sir Henry Dale applications

Assessment criteria

Person

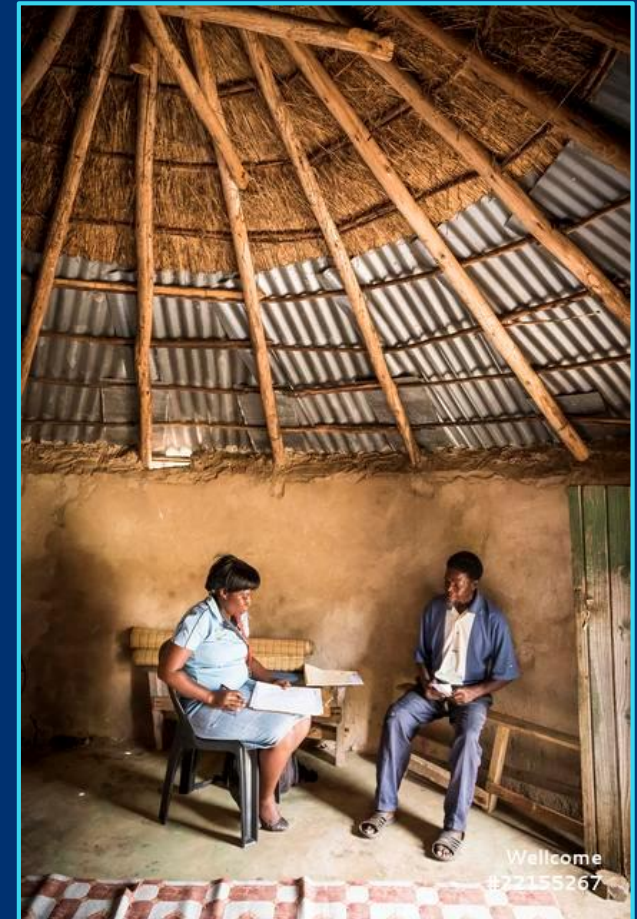
Programme

Place

‘Grantsmanship’

‘Good writing will not save bad ideas,
but bad writing can kill good ones’

Jacob Kraicer *The Art of Grantsmanship* 1997



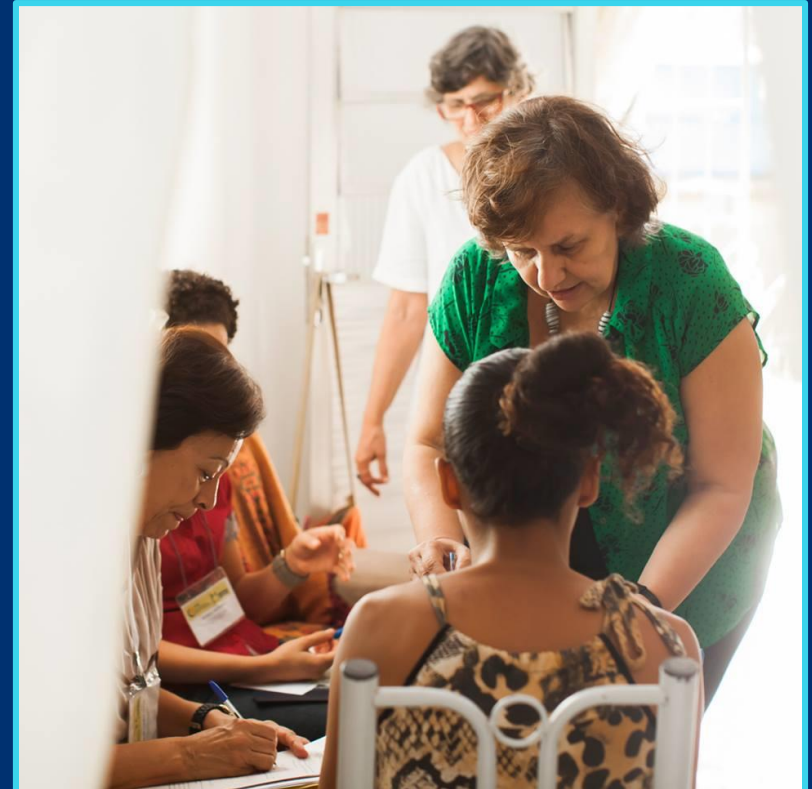
Assessment criteria – ‘3Ps’

Person

What is your track record?

What is your vision of how the funding will contribute to your career?

What are your longer-term aspirations?



Assessment criteria – ‘3Ps’

Place

Who is/are your sponsor(s)?

Why is this place good for your research?

And good for your career?



Assessment criteria – ‘3Ps’

[this is the most important slide in this deck]

Programme

What is your question?

Is it interesting and/or important?

Can you answer your question?

Are the resources requested appropriate?

*Think less about what you will do, and more about what you will **achieve** by doing it*



Programme (and comments you do not want to receive).....

Strong hypothesis/vision/important research question

‘This project will lead to a number of high profile papers, but will have no actual impact in the real world’

‘It looks like they have all this great technology but no good ideas... So they went to some one else... and they don’t have any either...’

Be realistic

‘This is a wonderful project... it’s a shame they don’t have a cat in hells chance of actually achieving it.’

Relevant approaches

‘They have come up with a brilliant untestable hypothesis.’

Back-up plan(s)

‘...one weakness in the proposal is that there is no alternative plan should the proposed approach not yield information relevant to the hypothesis proposed...’

Programme (and comments you do not want to receive).....

Persuasive but unbiased arguments

‘The applicant says that this is completely novel, which is of course true if you ignore all the previous work that has been done in this area...’

Preliminary data and appropriate expertise

‘...it involves techniques with which the applicant appears to have no prior experience and for which no preliminary data are proposed...’

Get a second opinion, proof read & spell check

‘The poor writing, referencing and proof reading of this application significantly detract from its overall quality’

‘There is something reminiscent of monkeys on typewriters about this proposal...’

Summary

Check the web site first

Then email one of us (or someone else at Wellcome)

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e.netsi@wellcome.ac.uk