



Operational costs of the UK ME/CFS Biobank (UKMEB)

Grant Amount	£220,789 (2026-2027)
Total Investment	£1,091,822 (2009-2027)
Location	London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)
Research Field	Biobanking infrastructure
Principal Investigator(s)	Dr Luis Nacul
Current Grant Start	01/01/2026
Duration	24 Months
Status	In progress
Latest Update	<u>Update UKMEB Steering Group: ME Association investment in UK ME/CFS Biobank exceeds £1M</u>
Publications	<u>Publication list from the ME/CFS Biobank</u>

BACKGROUND

The UK ME/CFS Biobank (UKMEB) has been a crucial infrastructure project supporting biomedical research into Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) since a feasibility study in 2009, with original funding input from Action for M.E. (AFME), ME Research UK (MERUK) and the ME Association ([Lacerda et al., 2017](#) and [2018](#)).

The ME Association has covered all the operational costs of the UKMEB since it was established in 2011 and this partnership will continue until at least the end of 2027. The MEA's total investment in this vital resource will be £1.1M.

The UKMEB provides high-quality biological samples to research teams across the UK, Europe, North America, Latin America, and the Middle East. It has established a deserved reputation for efficiency and quality, which has led to increased demand and reinforced its role in advancing scientific understanding of ME/CFS.

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The UKMEB contains samples from mild to severely affected people with ME/CFS between 18-60 years old, as well as healthy controls and people with multiple sclerosis (MS). The collected blood samples are aliquoted into serum, plasma, peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC), red blood cells/granulocyte pellet, whole blood, and RNA.

PROJECT DETAILS

The ME Association's continued belief in the UKMEB means that this key resource can continue with its goals of providing an efficient and cost-effective service to UK and international researchers who need high-quality samples and clinical data.

In the next two years the UKMEB team plan the following:

1. Replenishing Samples:

- Recruit additional research participants to replenish depleted aliquots.
- Allocate additional nursing time for clinical assessments and sample collection.
- Expand the Biobank to include a sub-cohort of people with Long Covid, including those meeting ME/CFS criteria and those who do not.

2. Expanding Clinical and Educational Work:

- Develop and produce relevant education resources for people with ME/CFS, researchers, and healthcare professionals.
- Support efforts to improve awareness and understanding of ME/CFS in medical and research communities.

3. Enhancing Communication and Fundraising:

- Partner with LSHTM's fundraising team to appeal to major donors.
- Increase global visibility and attract new clients.

The Biobank Steering Group (SG) meets quarterly and monitors the progress of the UKMEB. The Group is chaired by Dr Charles Shepherd (Trustee and Hon. Medical Advisor to the MEA) and others from the MEA, ME Research UK and individuals with lived experience.

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IMPORTANCE OF FUNDING

Fundamentally, the financial support provided by the ME Association enables the UKMEB to continue providing valuable bio-samples and clinical data to research teams in the UK and around the world. The UKMEB helps stimulate and maintain research interest in ME/CFS by ensuring the service it provides is efficient and cost-effective.

Continued funding of the UKMEB is vital for multiple reasons:

- **High quality samples:** the success of the UKMEB is built on rigorous quality and operational control allowing easy direct comparison between samples and removing any collection bias.
- **Accelerating ME/CFS Research:** By providing reliable, high-quality biological samples, the UKMEB enables researchers worldwide to investigate the biological underpinnings of ME/CFS and develop potential treatments.
- **Addressing Research Gaps:** The addition of a Long Covid sub-cohort will enhance understanding of overlaps and distinctions between ME/CFS and Long Covid.
- **Strengthening Global Collaboration:** The Biobank's reputation continues to grow, facilitating greater international research partnerships.
- **Supporting Patient-Centred Initiatives:** Educational resources will improve access to information for people with ME/CFS and healthcare professionals, fostering better clinical care.

More information

- The ME Association [website carries more detail](#) about the UKMEB as well as the [CureME website](#).