

RESEARCHER LINKS

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RESEARCHER LINKS TRAVEL GRANTS GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS – UK / ISRAEL APRIL 2017 VERSION 0.5

Call opens: 3 April 2017

Call closes: 13 June 2017

1. Background

The Researcher Links Travel Grants between Israel and the UK were created by the Science and Innovation Network and the British Council in Israel.

The Travel Grants Scheme aims to strengthen academic collaboration between the UK and Israel in the following priority sectors: nanoscience, neuroscience, water science, agri-science, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and cyber research.

In addition, travel grants are available in the priority area of regenerative medicine. These grants are offered in partnership with the Medical Research Council UK and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space, Israel.



The initiative is strongly endorsed and directed by the UK-Israel Science Council, a group of 25 leading scientists from both countries. The group contains Nobel Prize winners, members of the House of Lords, Presidents of universities and some of the most eminent and distinguished scientists in the world.

2. Overview of the funding opportunity

Researcher Links Travel Grants – UK / Israel are designed to enhance and strengthen links for future collaboration, build research capacity and enhance the researchers' career opportunities

The permitted duration of any visit is 4 - 24 weeks

Proposals may be for visits for research in regenerative medicine, nanoscience, neuroscience, water science, agri-science, AMR and cyber research.

3. Scope of the programme

The Researcher Links Travel Grants – UK / Israel have the following overarching objectives:

- Contribute to capacity building of early career researchers – The proposal should include a description of the capacity building potential of the project (both for the individual applicant, and other potential beneficiaries), and the longer term impact that the project could achieve.
- Establish new research links or develop existing links – Travel Grants are intended to either support new links, or to develop existing links with the potential for longer term sustainability. Applications to return to the research group where the applicant carried out their PhD research or have previously taught will only be considered if they clearly demonstrate the latter.

In their proposal applicants must include:

- the specific outputs anticipated from the visit
- an explanation of the benefit to researchers and their institutions
- exploration of any potential longer term benefit that might arise, thinking about who might benefit and how, and describing the actions that will be taken to ensure that potential impact is realised
- a clear description of how the individuals and research groups involved intend to sustain their collaboration.

Travel grants are not intended to cover travel costs for a conference abroad, or to fund travel as part of PhD/medical studies.

4. Eligibility

Applicants must be based either in the UK, or in one of the partner countries listed in Appendix 1, and must be a permanent employee affiliated with a recognised publicly funded research establishment or public or private Higher Education Institution, including teaching hospitals. For-profit organisations are not eligible to receive any grant funds. Please see a list of eligible UK research institutions at:

https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/eligible_uk_research_organisations_v.10.pdf.

This includes UK universities.

Applicants must be at an early stage of their careers. Both PhD and medical graduates (junior doctors) are eligible.

Medical graduates (junior doctors) are invited to apply for fellowships to gain either research or clinical experience. Applicants must have completed their foundation studies, and either already be on a training programme or in between foundation and training.

We define 'early career researcher' as being at the level of 'R2 – Recognised Researcher' or at the very beginning of R3 level as specified in the European Framework for Research Careers 'Towards a European framework for research careers' for guidance on early career researcher profiles

(https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/towards_a_european_framework_for_research_careers_final.pdf).

We would expect early career researchers to be at the beginning of their research careers and to have been awarded their PhD not more than 10 years prior to applying for the Travel Grants, but allowances can be made for career breaks or other extenuating circumstances. If a researcher does not hold a PhD, but has research experience equivalent to a PhD holder and works in a field where a PhD is not a prerequisite for established research activity, they will still be considered eligible. Please see Appendix 1 for country-specific exceptions.

If a researcher obtained their PhD within the past ten years but holds a senior position they may be considered a Senior Researcher and therefore not eligible.

Lead applicants on Institutional Links are not eligible for Travel Grants.

A supporting letter must be provided to confirm that the applicant will return to his/her home institution in a research capacity for at least six months after the end of the visit.

Applicants can be of any nationality, but they must be able to secure a visa for the country which they plan to visit (please see Appendix 1 for exceptions).

Travel may only be between the UK and partner country, but can be in either direction (please see Appendix 1 for exceptions).

Individual applicants who have previously received a Researcher Links Travel Grant are not eligible.

Only one application may be submitted per researcher. Duplicate applications are ineligible, even if they are to different countries.

Travel must take place between 01 February 2018 and 31 January 2019.

5. Funding

Applicants must provide a budget request with their proposal.

The Travel Grant is calculated using three flat rate categories: Travel, Subsistence and Consumables.

Additional support based on direct costs can be requested to contribute towards extra costs of the visit associated with childcare or special needs. These will be approved on a case by case basis.

Please see Appendix 4 for maximum amounts that can be requested in each budget category for each country and for details on financial reporting.

The flat rates are designed to make funding easier to manage. Successful applicants will be able to use underspend under one budget category to cover the costs under a different category, (e.g. any underspend on the budget to cover the travel can be used to cover other costs for subsistence), providing the total budget is not exceeded.

Please note that although the grant contribution will be calculated using flat rate contributions, researchers and their institutions will be asked to keep and submit receipts and invoices to demonstrate their spend until 31 December 2022.

Full checks of supporting documentation will be carried out on a proportion of the grants.

Further monitoring and evaluation will also be carried out, to be specified in the Grant Agreement.

Please also note that the final value of the award will be specified in the Grant Agreement. The British Council and partner funders will not increase the value of an award at a later stage.

Travel: travel costs for the researcher travelling to the country where the visit takes place. This also covers costs for luggage and travel insurance as well as local transport on the day of travel. International (economy return) airfares should be booked as far in advance as possible to minimise costs.

Subsistence: costs for accommodation and other daily expenses for the visiting researcher such as phone and local transport. Subsistence is calculated using unit costs for each week (1 month is intended as 4 weeks), and is specific to the country of destination.

Consumables: a small amount can be requested to cover consumables for fellowships of 4 months and above only. For fellowships of less than 4 months or for higher consumable costs, it is expected that the host laboratory or department will provide any additional resources.

Successful applicants must make their own travel and accommodation arrangements. The British Council cannot give advice on visas or insurance.

Payment of the grant

Payments will be processed in two instalments:

- Pre-financing payment: a 90% pre financing payment will be paid within 30 days of signature of the Grant Agreement and provision of accurate bank details and invoice.
- Post-visit payment or recovery of the balance: 10% payment, or a recovery, on approval by the British Council of the final report submitted by the applicant. If the visit has not taken place, or if the duration is shorter than planned, resulting in a reduction in costs, the final payment may be withheld and if necessary the entire grant, or a proportion of it, recovered.

Successful applicants must submit a final report within 30 days of their visit as a condition of the grant. A final report template will be sent to successful applicants and will include a financial and a narrative part.

As the Researcher Links Travel Grant is calculated using flat rates, successful applicants will not need to submit detailed receipts for each category of expenditure but only proof that the visit took place, (e.g. boarding cards, accommodation) and a signed certificate of attendance from the host institution.

If there is insufficient evidence in the final report that the visit took place as proposed in the application, then additional information may be requested prior to the final payment, or any underspend of the grant may need to be returned to the British Council.

Underspend

In cases where beneficiaries have spent less than the budget awarded, underspend cannot be used for further research activity unless agreed by the British Council. Requests to utilise underspend should be sent to UK-ResearcherLinks@britishcouncil.org with a letter of support from the host institution before additional expenditure occurs.

6. Ethics and research governance

It is essential that all legal and professional codes of practice are followed in conducting work supported under this Programme. Applicants must ensure the proposed activity will be carried out to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity. Specifically, applications that involve research on animals, human participants, human tissue or patient/participant data must be accompanied by necessary permission certificates from the relevant local ethical review committees/authorities in the UK and the partner country, or an undertaking to obtain this permission in advance of the activity commencing. Failure to do so will result in applications being rendered ineligible and any funding already committed through this Programme being rescinded.

Please refer to the Research Councils UK 'Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct' (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/researchers/grc/>), the InterAcademy Partnership report 'Doing Global Science: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in the Global Research Enterprise' (<http://www.interacademycouncil.net/24026/29429.aspx>) or contact us at UK-ResearcherLinks@britishcouncil.org for further guidance.

7. Diversity

The British Council is committed to equal opportunities and diversity in all our activities. This includes avoidance of bias due to gender, disability, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or religious belief.

The British Council encourages applications from people from under-represented groups. Applicants may apply for funding to cover extra costs for such participation, (e.g. childcare costs, costs of support for those with disabilities).

Please include requests for such support in the budget submitted with your application.

Please contact us at UK-ResearcherLinks@britishcouncil.org for further information on funding, and for more on the British Council's approach, see our Equality Policy at: https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/equality_policy_1.doc.

8. Submission process

The submission deadline is 16:00 UK time on 13 June 2017. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

The deadline applies to all parts of your application, including upload of fully completed supporting documentation. Any applications which are not submitted *in full* by the deadline, with all required supporting documents, will be considered *ineligible*. Appeals against this decision will not be accepted.

Applicants must submit a completed online application form via the British Council system. Email submissions will not be accepted. The online form and a Word version can be found on the opportunity webpage:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/science/current-opportunities>

The online application form is available [here](#).

(<https://apply.gmt.britishcouncil.org/outreach/workbench.ofml>).

To commence your online application you will be required to register as a new user or if you registered in a previous call, simply log into your existing account with your login and password. As a new registrant, please refer to our Step by Step Guide (<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/science/current-opportunities>). You will receive a password enabling you to log on to the application system. There are British Council application forms for several different programmes available.

Please ensure you select Apply for a Researcher Links Travel Grant. (The system will only allow you to select one application so it is very important to select the correct application at this time).

Submissions by email will not be accepted. The online form allows applicants to enter information and save it for a later date until final submission. There are strict character limits for each section which cannot be exceeded. Any problems with the online system should be reported before the application deadline to: UK-ResearcherLinks@britishcouncil.org.

In addition to filling in the online form, applicants are required to upload the following documents, by the deadline. Late submission of supporting documents, or submission of documents which do not comply with these requirements, will render the application ineligible. The documents are:

1. A signed letter of support from the Head of Department (or equivalent) of your current home institution. This should include:
 - how your institution will help you prepare for the visit
 - arrangements for support during your visit
 - how your institution will support you in sustaining the link
 - confirmation that your home institution is willing to sign the grant agreement and be responsible for managing the funds awarded to the successful applicant
 - confirmation that the applicant will return to their home institution in a research capacity for at least six months after the end of the visit.

The letter should be written on headed paper in Word or pdf format, and has to be attached and submitted online together with the application form.

2. A signed letter of invitation from the Head of Department (or equivalent) of the host institution where the visit will take place. This should include:
 - information on how the host institution will help the applicant prepare for the visit

- arrangements for support during the visit (waiving of bench fees, support for finding accommodation and any language training needed, induction to the institution, etc.)
- support to the research, including how the researcher will be integrated into the research group

The letter should be written on headed paper in Word or pdf format, and has to be attached and submitted online together with the application form.

The statements of support from the two Heads of Department should also include comments on the following questions:

- Why is the research important, especially with respect to the international development impact?
- Why do you want to make contact with this institution?
- How will the link be sustained?

Before the completed application form can be submitted to the system, applicants will be asked to confirm in the online form that they have complied with British Council policies on prevention of fraud, bribery, money laundering and addressed any other financial and reputational risk that may affect a transparent and fair grant award process. See:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/transparency/policies/anti-fraud-and-corruption>

Important: Once you submit your application you will not be able to edit your application in any way and you will not be permitted to create a second application. Please also be advised that the UK Researcher Links Team do not have permission to make changes to your application.

Once the online application is submitted, applicants will receive a confirmation email containing the application reference ID number and a pdf copy of the application and supporting documents. This acts as acknowledgement of receipt by the British Council system. This reference number must be used in all communications with the British Council. Applicants who have not received an automated email confirmation should contact the British Council at UK-ResearcherLinks@britishcouncil.org.

9. Selection process

Selection begins with an eligibility check by the British Council against the eligibility criteria given in these Guidelines, including Appendix 1 and the Eligibility Checklist at Appendix 2.

Eligible proposals then undergo independent external quality review on the basis of quality, fit to development needs and country priorities and the overarching Researcher Links objectives.

Eligible applications will be assessed in the UK by one of five Review Panels:

- Biological and Medical Sciences
- Environment, Agriculture and Food Sciences
- Engineering and Physical Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Arts and Humanities.

Applicants must indicate in their online application form which Review Panel their application should be assessed by, and the subject(s) their research covers. Up to three (3) subject areas can be selected in priority order, but the applicant must indicate only one Review Panel.

Proposals are assessed by two reviewers against the criteria at Appendix 3. The Review Panel then gives each application a final score from 0 to 60 and ranks them. Those receiving a final score from the Panel meeting of less than 30 will be considered not fundable. However, please note that achieving an average score equal to or above the threshold does not mean that the proposal will be funded.

The final selection decision will be made in-country in collaboration with national stakeholders and partner funding organisations. Country-specific priorities and challenge areas will be considered in the final decision, in addition to the general assessment criteria under this Programme. Please see Appendix 1 for priority and challenge areas by country.

Proposals do not have the obligation to articulate relevance to economic development and social welfare of low- to middle income countries benefitting low income and vulnerable populations.

Notification of results

Applicants whose application is rejected at the eligibility stage may have 1 week to appeal against the decision. Successful applicants will be notified approximately 4 months after the call deadline.

10. Data protection

The British Council will use the information that you are providing for the purposes of processing your application, making any awards, monitoring and review of any award.

We shall share any necessary data on your application our funding partners in your country in order to assist with management of the application process; any decisions on grants will be made in collaboration with them.

Organisation details, where collected, are used for monitoring and evaluation and statistical purposes. Gender information, where collected, is used solely in preparing statistical reports.

The British Council collects country of origin for reporting and statistical purposes and to contact you within your own country.

Under UK Data Protection law you have the right to ask for a copy of the information we hold on you, and the right to ask us to correct any inaccuracies in that information. If you want more information about this please contact your local British Council office or the Data Protection Team infogovernance@britishcouncil.org or see our website: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/privacy-cookies/data-protection>

Contact details

All queries or comments about this call should be addressed to the Researcher Links email address UK-ResearcherLinks@britishcouncil.org.

11. Applicant screening

In order to comply with UK government legislation, the British Council may at any point during the application process, carry out searches of relevant third party screening databases to ensure that neither the applicant nor any of the applicant's employees, partners, directors, shareholders is listed:

- as an individual or entity with whom national or supranational bodies have decreed organisations should not have financial dealings
- as being wanted by Interpol or any national law enforcement body in connection with crime
- as being subject to regulatory action by a national or international enforcement body
- as being subject to export, trade or procurement controls or (in the case of an individual) as being disqualified from being a company director
- as being a heightened risk individual or organisation, or (in the case of an individual) a politically exposed person.

If the applicant or any other party is listed in a Screening Database for any of the reasons set out above, the British Council will assess the applicant as ineligible to apply for this grant call.

The applicant must provide the British Council with all information reasonably requested by the British Council to complete the screening searches.

Please read the text to this effect on the application form and tick the box to show that you understand this.

12. Contractual requirements

- The contracting authority is the British Council which includes any subsidiary companies and other organisations that control or are controlled by the British Council from time to time (see: www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/structure/status).
- The successful applicants will be expected to undertake activities in the UK and in Israel.
- The British Council is subject to the requirements of the UK Freedom of Information Act, ("FOIA"). Please indicate in your application whether FOIA also applies to your organisation, so that we can reflect this in the Grant Agreement should you be successful in your application.
- The British Council's contractual approach in respect of the grant (Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement) ("Grant Agreement") is set out here: www.britishcouncil.org/education/science/current-opportunities/travel-grants-april-2017 By submitting a response to this call for applications, you are agreeing to be bound by the terms of these guidelines and the Grant Agreement without further negotiation or amendment.
- In the event that you have any concerns or queries in relation to the Grant Agreement, you should submit a clarification request to UK-ResearcherLinks@britishcouncil.org in accordance with the provisions of this call for applications by the application deadline. The British Council reserves the right not to make any changes to the Grant Agreement.
- The British Council is under no obligation to consider any clarifications / amendments to the Grant Agreement requested following the application deadline.

APPENDIX 1: COUNTRY-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

In addition to the guidance given in the main body of this document, further conditions may apply to individual participating countries. These are specified in the table below. Please refer to this appendix for more information before developing your proposal.

Note on the definition of early career researchers: For the purpose of this call, we define 'early career researcher' as being at the level of 'R2 – Recognised Researcher' or at the very beginning of R3 level as specified in the European Framework for Research Careers 'Towards a European framework for research careers' for guidance on early career researcher profiles: https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/towards_a_european_framework_for_research_careers_final.pdf.

We would expect early career researchers to be at the beginning of their research careers and to have been awarded their PhD not more than 10 years prior to applying for the Travel Grants, but allowances can be made for career breaks or other extenuating circumstances. If a researcher does not hold a PhD, but has research experience equivalent to a PhD holder and works in a field where a PhD is not a prerequisite for established research activity, they will still be considered eligible.

Medical graduates (junior doctors) must have completed their foundation studies, and either already be on a training programme or in between foundation and training.

Note on country/partner research priorities: Proposals must be within the research challenge areas listed in Section 4. If countries have specified research priorities within these areas they are listed below.

1. ISRAEL	
National co-funder:	For travel grants in regenerative medicine, the programme is in partnership with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space, Israel and the MRC UK
Minimum duration:	4 weeks
Maximum duration:	24 weeks
Research priorities:	Regenerative medicine, neuroscience, nanoscience, water science, agri-science, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and cyber research.
Additional eligibility criteria:	
1. PhD Students	
For all UK / Israel travel grants PhD students are eligible.	
2. MD	
For the travel grants in Regenerative Medicine, medical graduates as well as PhDs are eligible to apply	

APPENDIX 2: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA CHECKLIST

Eligibility criteria checklist	
The application has been submitted by the applicant by the published deadline.	
The applicant has enclosed the two (2) supporting letters required.	
The application form is completed in full and complies with instructions given.	
The application form and supporting documents have been completed in English.	
The applicant has submitted only one (1) application under this call for Travel Grant proposals (April 2017).	
<p>The applicant is an early career researcher, MD or PhD student. (<i>The term 'early career researcher' refers to researchers at the beginning of their research careers. We would expect early career researchers to have been awarded their PhD not more than 10 years prior to applying for the Travel Grant, but allowances can be made for career breaks or other extenuating circumstances. If a researcher does not hold a PhD, but has research experience equivalent to a PhD holder and works in a field where a PhD is not a prerequisite for established research activity, they will still be considered eligible</i>).</p> <p>Medical graduates have completed their foundation studies, and are either already on a training programme or in between foundation and training.</p>	
The mobility will take place between 01 February 2018 and 31 January 2019.	
The applicant will return to his/her home institution in a research/clinical capacity for at least six months after the end of the visit (demonstrated via the supporting letter from the institution).	
The home institution is a recognised publicly funded research establishment or Higher Education Institution, including teaching hospitals (can include private Universities).	
The host institution is a recognised publicly funded research establishment or Higher Education Institution, including teaching hospitals (can include private Universities).	
The applicant has not received a Researcher Links Travel Grant within earlier Calls.	
The home institution must have the capacity to administer a grant and satisfy British Council requirements to prevent bribery, fraud and professional misconduct. Applicants will confirm that they comply to British Council requirements by responding to pre-submission questions in the online application form	

APPENDIX 3: SCORING SYSTEM

Assessment of the quality and development relevance of the proposals will be performed by panel members in the UK, and the final funding decisions will be made in discussion with British Council country office and in-country partners, if applicable. Proposals with an average score of less than 30 points are considered not fundable.

Section 1: Relevance to economic development and social welfare	Score	Range
Not Applicable	N/A	N/A

Section 2: Research/clinical quality and background	Score	Range
		0–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The academic importance and timeliness of the research topic/clinical experience is clearly demonstrated. The applicant has sufficient relevant experience to undertake the proposed research visit/clinical experience and achieve the stated objectives. The collaborating institutions are of appropriate academic standing. 	<p>20 points: Meets all criteria to an exceptional level</p> <p>16 to 19 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a very high level</p> <p>11 to 15 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a high level</p> <p>6 to 10 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to an adequate level</p> <p>1 to 5 points: Meets some of the criteria to an adequate level</p> <p>0 points: Fails to meet any of the criteria to an adequate level.</p>	

Section 3: Research/clinical visit and proposal	Score	Range
		0–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The description of the proposed research / clinical visit includes clear, feasible and realistic objectives and outputs. There is clear evidence that the proposed research/clinical visit supports new links or significantly extends and develops existing links. The benefits and relevance of the collaboration to the UK and partner country institution, and to the research/clinical experience itself, are clearly described. If the applicant is returning to visit the research/clinical group where she/he carried out their PhD research/medical studies or previously taught, there is clear evidence that the proposed research / clinical visit will expand added value to the collaboration. There is strong evidence of support from both the home and host institutions. 	20 points: Meets all criteria to an exceptional level 16 to 19 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a very high level 11 to 15 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a high level 6 to 10 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to an adequate level 1 to 5 points: Meets some of the criteria to an adequate level 0 points: Fails to meet any of the criteria to an adequate level.	

Section 4: Sustainability and capacity building	Score	Range
		0–20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal includes a clear and feasible description of how the individuals and research/clinical groups involved intend to sustain their collaboration over the longer term. The potential in terms of professional development and capacity building for the applicant and other potential beneficiaries is clearly described. 	20 points: Meets all criteria to an exceptional level 16 to 19 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a very high level 11 to 15 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to a high level 6 to 10 points: Meets the majority of the criteria to an adequate level 1 to 5 points: Meets some of the criteria to an adequate level 0 points: Fails to meet any of the criteria to an adequate level.	
Total score for quality assessment (Section 1 + Section 2 + Section 3)	Score	Range
		0–60

APPENDIX 4: BUDGET

Researcher Links Travel Grants are intended to be a contribution to the travel and subsistence that researchers incur during their visit. Contributions towards these costs have been calculated using flat rates, depending on the country of the proposed visit and the duration of the visit. Please note that the unit costs given below constitute the maximum amounts that can be requested in each category and that all budget requests will be assessed for feasibility and appropriateness. While the maximum contribution cannot be exceeded, applicants can request less, in which case the amount requested cannot be increased at a later stage.

A small amount, see table below can be requested to cover consumables for fellowships of 16 weeks and above only. Above this amount or for travel under 16 weeks, it is expected that the receiving laboratory or department will provide any additional resources. The maximum amounts for each part of the grant, and the maximum total grant that can be requested are shown in the table below, but it is expected that the requested budget reflects the actual costs expected to be incurred.

Additional support based on direct costs can be requested to contribute towards extra childcare costs associated with the visit (up to a maximum of 5% of the subsistence costs requested) and special needs.

Support for special needs should be requested in writing (UK-ResearcherLinks@britishcouncil.org). Requests will be assessed and agreed on an individual basis.

Subsistence amounts have been calculated referring to EC Programmes and British Council local information.

Please note that the grant must not be used to cover staff costs.

Direction of travel and rates:

Country of departure	Country of destination	Maximum travel costs	Accommodation and subsistence* (per 1 week)	Maximum consumables/ bench fees per 1 week(only available for 16 weeks or more)	Maximum total cost					
					4 week /1-month visit	8 week / 2-month visit	12 week /3-month visit	16 week / 4-month visit	20 week / 5 month visit	24 week / 6-month visit
United Kingdom	Israel	£550	£500	£125	£2,550	£4,550	£6,550	£10,550	£13,050	£15,550
Israel	United Kingdom	£550	£500	£125	£2,550	£4,550	£6,550	£10,550	£13,050	£15,550