



## News Release

Immediate issue: Monday 14 May 2018

### **New £750k fund opens for research in gluten free food production and coeliac disease diagnostics and self-care**

Coeliac UK, the UK charity for people who need to live gluten free, along with Innovate UK, the UK's innovation agency is today, Monday 14 May 2018 open for applications from businesses and researchers to the £750,000 fund.

Researchers and businesses can apply for a share of the funding through three priority themes – healthcare diagnostics, digital self-care tools and better gluten free food production – with the grants ranging from £50k to £250k. For more information see [www.coeliac.org.uk/innovateuk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/innovateuk).

Earlier in the year, as part of the charity's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary activities, Coeliac UK launched a Research Fund and accompanying fundraising appeal, aiming to raise £5 million to change the future for people with coeliac disease and gluten related autoimmune conditions. More information see: [www.coeliac.org.uk/researchfund](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/researchfund).

The Fund has already received an injection of £500k from Innovate UK which in addition to £250k from the charity, will support this new research competition. Together with match funding from industry total spend on new research for a growing global market will be nearer £1m.

Sarah Sleet, chief executive of Coeliac UK said: "With the global diagnosis for coeliac disease increasing year on year, this is a chance for UK business and researchers to get ahead and develop competitive advantages in innovation which will be of benefit to a badly underserved patient group. We are thrilled to be working with Innovate UK to promote innovation that will have a real and positive impact on people's lives."

Calum Murray, head of agriculture and food at Innovate UK, said: "By funding great new ideas which will help diagnose and care for people with coeliac disease and by encouraging tasty new developments in gluten free food, this competition promises to make a real difference. Not just for those living with coeliac disease but it will help fuel innovation in our food and health sectors – crucial components of the government's industrial strategy. This competition

is a first for Innovate UK in how we have teamed up with the leading charity Coeliac UK to boost the funding available for fantastic new proposals from industry and academia.”

The three priority themes:

### **Coeliac disease diagnostics**

New methods of diagnosis which are less invasive, or that are accurate without eating gluten could improve diagnosis rates and lead to early effective treatment, in turn leading to better quality of life and reduced risk of complications for patients with the condition.

### **Enhanced quality of gluten free foods**

Creating more nutritious and affordable gluten free food could include; novel ingredients, foods with improved nutrient profiles and desired flavour texture characteristics, new methods of preservation, innovation in processing and manufacturing efficiency for lower cost options and technologies to improve shelf life.

### **Digitally supported self-care**

Coeliac disease is a serious autoimmune condition which requires lifelong management. Self-care using digital tools could provide a highly cost effective option for health management.

Find out more about this competition and to apply: [www.coeliac.org.uk/innovateuk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/innovateuk)

Ends

For more information please contact  
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### **Coeliac UK's Awareness Week Monday 14 – 20 May 2018**

- Coeliac UK is the national charity for people who need to live without gluten, whether due to coeliac disease or another medical condition requiring a gluten free diet.
- The charity was launched in 1968 and is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year
- Coeliac UK has already committed over £2 million to research projects since 2005 including ground breaking discoveries such as identifying genes associated with coeliac disease and other autoimmune conditions related to gluten. And, has also funded research towards a vaccine to restore immune tolerance to eating gluten.
- Coeliac disease is a serious illness where the body's immune system reacts to gluten found in food, making the body attack itself.
- Symptoms include diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, mouth ulcers, fatigue and anaemia.
- In undiagnosed, untreated coeliac disease there is a greater risk of complications including anaemia, osteoporosis, neurological conditions such as gluten ataxia and neuropathy, and although rare there's an increased risk of small bowel cancer and intestinal lymphoma.
- 1 in 100 people in the UK has coeliac disease
- Average time to diagnosis is 13 years.
- 1 in 4 people diagnosed with coeliac disease had previously been diagnosed with IBS.
- Gluten is a protein found in wheat (including spelt), rye and barley. Some people are also sensitive to oats. Obvious sources of gluten include breads, pastas, flours, cereals, cakes and biscuits. It is often used as an ingredient in many favourite foods such as fish fingers, sausages, gravies, sauces and soy sauce.
- Coeliac UK has a Helpline on 0333 332 2033 and further information can be found at [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk)