

# LOVE YOUR BRAIN

## Building a Supportive Framework For Brain Research in Ireland

### Manifesto for Brain Research in Ireland

Brain research is an area of emerging opportunity in Ireland, but the sector is affected by significant challenges which impact on the entire research landscape. The factors impacting on the strength and sustainability of this work in Ireland are reflected across the research landscape and require systemic change. A coalition of research institutes and representative bodies have come together to highlight **SIX KEY PRIORITIES** and associated **ASKS** which, if delivered, will greatly facilitate and enhance Ireland's potential in this area going forward.



Irish  
Brain  
Council



# Priority 1

## INCREASED DEDICATED RESEARCH FUNDING FOR NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH, INCLUDING BASIC RESEARCH

### ASK

#### Invest more public funding in Brain Research

Our coalition supports the call by Health Research Charities Ireland for greater overall public investment in biomedical research in Ireland, as well as the requirement to target

some of this investment to brain disease areas. Sustained public funding for brain health and research is critical to develop vital infrastructure and attract private and international investment. Funding challenges include a disproportionately low allocation of the overall research spend across Europe, including Ireland, to brain disease in comparison to other disease areas. In a review of investment in health research 2011-2015 across 9 Irish funding agencies, only 11% of health research funding was invested in neurological research in contrast to the high prevalence of neurological disorders affecting over 800,000 people in Ireland. Other issues include the challenge of attracting international research funding to Ireland and ongoing threats to funding for basic neuroscience research.

### WHY?

## LEADERSHIP AND CO-ORDINATION

# Priority 2

### WHY?

Our coalition endorses the need for a focused strategy for clinical research, addressing key areas of legislative support, funding and infrastructure to support research. There is a lack of leadership at national level to support research and translate findings into improved patient care and practice within the health services. There is a critical need for a clear vision and strategy for clinical research in Ireland.

### ASK

**Implement the HSE research strategy to translate health research into successful clinical practice**

## Priority 3

### INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

#### ASK

**Provide adequate infrastructure and resources to support epidemiology, clinical evaluation and genomics research.**

support for population-based registers that collect data from all patients, and access to emerging technologies including advanced neuroimaging, and functional tools for gene manipulation will be essential to remain competitive.

#### WHY?

Ireland is ideally suited to population-based research in brain disorders. Investment in and development of new technologies and information systems to support brain health and research are vital to capitalise on niche areas where Ireland can be a world leader. The development of unique patient identifiers, electronic patient records,

### LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

## Priority 4

#### WHY?

Legislative change, policy implementation and overall leadership are required to support and develop brain health and research in Ireland. Important legislative developments are required to support research into brain conditions and provide important assurance for members of the public in areas such as oversight and ethics, data protection, the use of human tissue, access to innovative new medicines and other areas.

#### ASK

**Develop and implement legislation to support genomics-based and biomedical brain research**

## Priority 5

### CREATING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH

#### ASK

**Enable people to pursue a career in neuroscience by developing core infrastructure and structured networks**

both within and between disciplines is vital. The creation of economies of scale in accessing emerging technologies, ensuring competitiveness, attracting international research and providing training and information through the network structure is of vital importance.

#### WHY?

Developing networks and establishing appropriate career pathways to support researchers are crucial in strengthening and retaining research capacity in relation to brain health and research in Ireland. Support for networks

### SUPPORTING INITIATIVES WHICH FACILITATE PUBLIC & PATIENT INVOLVEMENT AT ALL STAGES OF RESEARCH

## Priority 6

#### WHY?

Patient involvement describes a variety of ways in which researchers engage with people for whom their research holds relevance. There is a growing body of evidence that involving patients in research projects improves the quality, relevance and/or speed of that research. It is important that patients are facilitated to become involved at all stages of the research process so that they inform research questions, have input into the design of research protocols and play an active role in translating findings into practice. To facilitate this, it is vital to support patient organisations to develop and realise their potential as vital partners in health research in Ireland.

#### ASK

**Support and promote patient and public involvement in research**