



# What Works for Children's Social Care

## Spark Grant Scheme Webinar FAQ 11 June 2021

If you are interested in booking a chat with members of the WWCSO team, you can fill out the [form at the bottom of the funding page of our website](#). Please do also feel free to reach out directly to us via email with any questions: [programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk](mailto:programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk)

Please note that following the webinar and individual conversations with interested applicants, the [Guidance for Candidates](#) and [Application Form](#) have been slightly amended to ensure that the eligibility criteria is as clear as possible. You will not be penalised if you submit the original version of the application form.

**Q1.** If I am an independent researcher and not affiliated with an HEI or IRO, am I eligible to apply?

**A1.** We would advise you to email us at [programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk](mailto:programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk) as soon as possible to discuss your eligibility.

**Q2.** Can I apply more than once?

**A2.** Candidates are allowed to submit more than one application to one round.

**Q3.** My ethics application is currently being reviewed, what do I do?

**A3.** Please specify this in the application form. Research requiring ethical approval must have the appropriate approvals in place before the launch date.

**Q4.** How do I obtain ethics approval?

**A4.** We would advise you to speak to your organisation about obtaining ethics approval. In cases where you are unable, you can submit to the WWCSO ethics committee. Please note that you must specify this in your application form.

**Q5.** Are international co-applicants/ collaborators allowed?

**A5.** Yes, international co-applicants and collaborators are allowed. However, please note that the research project will need to be focussed on the children's social care sector in England.

**Q6.** What do you mean by needing to gain supervisor/institutional approval?

**A6.** We require candidates to obtain a written approval letter from their supervisor or institution to confirm that they support the application and that, if funded, will grant them permission to take the required time to conduct this piece of research and provide support (i.e. with regards to



signing grant agreements, receiving funding, GDPR, access to resources, and providing practical support for the research).

**Q7.** I do not have a full-time permanent contract. Does that matter?

**A7.** No, it does not matter. We have no particular rule that you need to be on a permanent full-time contract to submit an application. However, you must ensure that you have the appropriate approvals from your supervisor/ institution and ongoing support from them for the duration of the research project.

**Q8.** Should I include VAT in my costing?

**A8.** Funds will be awarded as grants and therefore we would not expect costs to attract VAT.

**Q9.** What can I attach to the application form?

**A9.** We would expect to see a costing table, project timeline, CV of the lead applicant and where appropriate, supporting letter from supervisor or institution.

**Q10.** I am involved in another grant, can I still apply for this scheme?

**A10.** Individuals employed full-time on another Principal Investigator's grant must demonstrate they have time, as part of their employment, to undertake additional research activities. You must seek permission from the PI and the grant giving body before applying for the Spark Grant Scheme.

**Q11.** Does the Supervisor have to be a person in your area of research?

**A11.** No. They have to be more experienced researchers that have the credentials and experience to support you in managing your research generally.

**Q12.** Can my supervisor be a co-author on any of the publications arising from the funding?

**A12.** No, your supervisor is not to be involved in the research itself and, therefore, not to be on publications arising from the research.

**Q13.** I completed my Phd over 10 years ago, and have worked as a practitioner since. Am I eligible to apply?

**A13.** As you do not fall under our definition of ECR, you would only be eligible if you have at least four years research experience, have a proven track record of independently conducting research (e.g. publications in health and social care) and fall under 'researchers from an underrepresented background'.

**Q14.** Would the scheme cover a small-scale qualitative interview/focus group study aimed at identifying best practice/training needs for social workers around a particular issue?

**A14.** We are unlikely to fund this type of project. As an organisation, we are interested in 'what works' questions that help us understand the impact of a programme on a set of specific outcomes of interest. We recognise that it will not be feasible to run a full-scale randomised



controlled trial (RCT) in this time frame, however we hope to see projects that will begin to answer these questions. We are also interested in projects producing a useful research output.

**Q15.** If we are going to work with one or two Local Authorities to carry out an evaluation of one of their projects do we need a supporting letter from them or just the university?

**A15.** We do not require a supporting letter from the local authorities. However, it would be useful to explain what work you've already done to engage with the local authorities, the level of buy-in you have, and what additional steps will need to be put in place to ensure research can indeed be carried out in those sites (e.g. any research governance or internal ethics processes?).

**Q16.** I just wanted clarification on where the applicants must be based.

**A16.** The lead researcher can be anywhere in the UK, but the focus of the project must be related to the children's social care (CSC) system in England. Our funding comes from the Department for Education, whose remit is only the CSC system in England.

**Q17.** If the project aims to re-analyse EEF interventions for example, does the researcher need to have the approval of the data holder (e.g. EEF) before completing the proposal?

**A17.** It would be helpful to have this approval in advance and note this in your application. At a minimum, you should illustrate what the process, timeline and requirements are for securing this approval. Please note that all projects will have to be set up, conducted and completed within 12 months. It can take several months to receive approvals to access various data-sets, so please do take this time into account when applying.

**Q18.** I'm looking at a potential project with a service which includes young people who do not have a social worker, but in which there are disproportionate numbers of young people involved in CSC/LAC. Would this be eligible, particularly if the research was exploring the specific experiences of this group of young people?

**A18.** Yes this would be eligible, provided that the research is focused on improving the outcomes of young people in touch with the children's social care system.

**Q19.** Is there a set format or page limit for CVs?

**A19.** There is no set format for CVs, however we would appreciate CVs no longer than 3 pages.

**Q20.** Can you apply even if you're been awarded some small grants in the past?

**A20.** Yes you can still apply. Please make sure that you specify in the application form whether you have held or currently hold a grant. You must also specify that you will have the capacity to undertake another piece of research. Please also bear in mind that this funding scheme is to support researchers who are underrepresented in funding decisions, or who have relatively little experience in securing funding. If you are unsure whether you are eligible, please contact us at: [programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk](mailto:programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk)