

What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) Spark Grant Scheme

Guidance for Candidates

This document is intended to provide candidates with information about the Spark Grant Scheme.

Table of Contents

1. Background and purpose	2
2. Key Information	2
2.1 In Scope	2
2.2 Out of Scope	3
2.3 Funding	3
2.4 Eligibility	3
2.5 Process	4
2.6 Pre-submission support	5
3. Application Information	5
3.1 Budget	5
3.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	6
3.3 Assessment	7
3.4 Presentation	7
3.5 Successful candidates	8
3.6 Document Checklist	8
4. Post Award Information	8
4.1 Data Protection	9
4.2 Research ethics committee approval	10
4.3 Expectation/ ways of working	10
5. Further Information	11



1. Background and purpose

What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) is an independent charity that is dedicated to raising the standards and volume of good quality research in the sector. WWCSC is committed to providing an evidence base for social workers, leaders in the sector and policymakers to support children, young people and their families in touch with the children's social care system in England.

The purpose of this scheme is to fund new research in children's social care, conducted by people who might otherwise be under-represented in the research community, and/or who might struggle to get funding through other routes. The aim is to provide project leadership opportunities for researchers who have not had the experience.

We hope that these grants, although small, will provide opportunities for the next generation of social care research to lead projects that otherwise might not have been funded, to catalyse diversity in research, and to act as a springboard for larger grants in the future.

2. Key Information

2.1 In Scope

Funds available to facilitate projects which:

- 1) Analyse quantitative data to further our understanding of a specific issue within children's social care, and/or to update previously conducted analysis.
- 2) To conduct new, small scale research projects which aim to answer 'what works' questions. For example, this might include lab, or artefactual experiments, or small scale quasi-experimental projects using administrative data.
- 3) To work with professionals in the social care sector, and/or families and people with care experience to develop and pilot new programmes or interventions to support children and families. Pilot research might include surveys, interviews, or focus groups with service users or potential users, as well as professionals.

All proposed research projects must be focussed on children, young people and families in touch with the children's social care system in England.



2.2 Out of Scope

Grants are not intended to support researchers where there is no planned programme of activity to meet our clearly specified research objectives.

The scheme will not support costs associated with travel or fees associated with workshops or conferences. It is not intended that applicants submit applications purely to organise international conferences, whether held in the UK or overseas. Nor are grants intended solely to support attendance at open conferences organised by a third party or international organisation.

2.3 Funding

- The total funding available for this call is £200,000.
- Individual funding will be awarded up to a maximum of £25,000 in value and tenable for up to 12 months
- The funds will cover the cost of the expenses arising from a defined research project.
- The funds will be directly awarded to the lead organisation.

2.4 Eligibility

Awards are only open to applicants who are Early Career Researchers and/or are Researchers from underrepresented backgrounds. These awards are open to two categories and are not mutually exclusive.

Early Career Researchers:

We consider **Early Career Researchers** to be those who have completed their PhD within the last four years OR who have equivalent research experience. For applicants pursuing a PhD, please note that they should have submitted their PhD thesis before they can submit an application (although this can be prior to their viva). Please note the four years does not include any periods of maternity or paternity leave, or leave due to illness or other caring responsibilities, or periods of unemployment.

Researchers from underrepresented backgrounds:

For the purpose of this grant scheme, we are only considering researchers who have at least four year research experience. Researchers must demonstrate that they have a proven track record of independently conducting research, which they can demonstrate in their application (e.g. publications in health and social care). Please be reminded that the aim of this grant scheme is to support researchers who are underrepresented in funding decisions, or who may not have been successful in receiving grants or fellowships in the past, however we are willing to accept applications from researchers at any stage in their career.



Some specific examples of **researchers from underrepresented backgrounds** who we welcome proposals from include, but are not limited to:

- Researchers with lived experience of the children's social care system.
- Researchers from a minoritised ethnic group. We define 'minoritised ethnic groups' as anyone from an ethnic group that has less power or representation compared to other groups in society as a result of structural racism.
- Researchers with a disability.
- Researchers who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Researchers who may have taken a career break, returned from prolonged sick leave, or are reentering the workforce following caring responsibilities.

We are happy to consider researchers who have at least postgraduate research qualifications or equivalent research experience. These applicants can be at any stage of their research careers. For example, an individual in an established research post, and/or who has a track record of publications in health and social care.

We would encourage applications from researchers who are based at either an academic institution (HEI) or an independent research organisation (IRO) in the United Kingdom, and applications will require the approval of the applicant's employing institution and/or supervisor. Applicants are not limited to those of any particular status (e.g. Lecturer, Professor etc). Co-applicants may be from anywhere in the world, but the lead applicant must be ordinarily based in the UK.

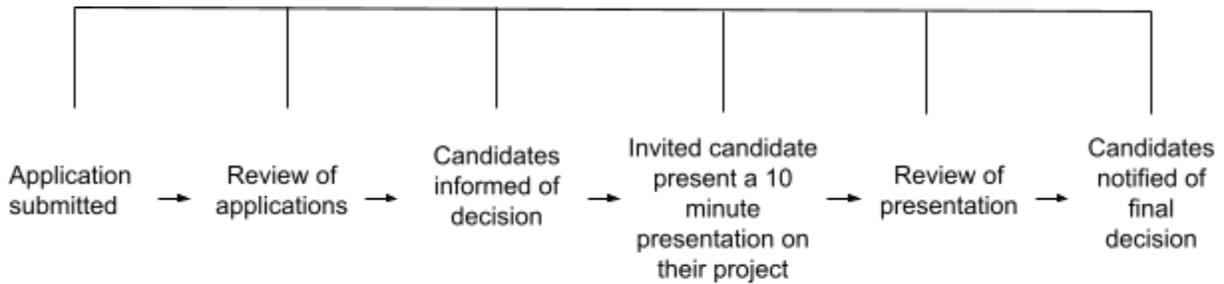
If your employment contract ends before or during your research period, we would recommend contacting your Research Office to find out if your institution is happy to support your application and administer any potential award.

If you are an independent researcher who is not affiliated with a UK academic or research institution, please get in touch with us by email at programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk as soon as you can to discuss your eligibility.

2.5 Process

This is a two-stage process. The deadline to complete the application form is **12pm, Thursday 15th July 2021**.

Please note that no application submitted after 12pm will be accepted.



Please note that we expect projects to **start in the first week of September 2021**.

2.6 Pre-submission support

To assist candidates with the application process, WWCSO will be holding a webinar and Q&A session on **Wednesday 9th June from 3-4pm**.

Topic: Spark Grant Scheme Information Webinar
Time: June 9, 2021 15:00 PM to 16:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://whatworks-csc-org-uk.zoom.us/j/94950233079?pwd=d0dMTEFzMC9MdIhYME8yUXdhUXNTdz09>

Meeting ID: 949 5023 3079

Passcode: 504409

We will also be offering candidates 1:1 support to apply for this scheme if needed. This additional support primarily aims to support candidates who have never applied for a research grant or fellowship - or those who have questions about the appropriateness of their proposed research questions or methodology. If you would like to book a slot for 1:1 support, please contact us at: programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk

3. Application Information

3.1 Budget

WWCSO will not pay Full Economic Costing (FEC) for Higher Education Institutions (HEI). If a grant is awarded, WWCSO will only cover the direct costs for HEI. Direct costs are costs specifically attributed to the research project activities i.e travels, salary costs, consumables, equipment etc. WWCSO will however



fund the overhead cost for non-HEI, but we do not expect overheads to exceed 60% as a proportion of salaries.

Please note that the funding provided through the Spark Grants scheme should not ordinarily be used to cover the cost of replacement teaching, payment in lieu of salary or dissemination costs such as publication, advertising and conference costs, computer kit and that the scheme is not covered within the FEC regime – the £25,000 is available to the award-holder only for direct research expenses.

In the application form, candidates will need to complete a costing table. The breakdown of the costs attributed to the project will need to be clearly detailed. This means it should include:

- Name of the PI and other project team members
- Directly allocated project team costs including FTE on the project and rate of salary band.
- Directly incurred costs such as equipment, consumables, travel and subsistence etc.
- Participant involvement costs such as travel, payment for time, any relevant training and support costs etc

3.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

At WWCS, we are committed to promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity both in terms of the people who work in WWCS and the people who lead, design and deliver the research. To achieve this, we are keen to work more closely with organisations which actively promote diversity and inclusion through their research.

As a researcher, you must ensure that your research is accessible, in terms of reaching children, young people and families from various backgrounds. For instance, this could include developing tailored topic guides to conduct qualitative focus groups with children, young people and parents who may have learning difficulties and disabilities. Conducting face-to-face interviews to account for participants with hearing loss would also be a good method in increasing the accessibility of your research. During the planning stage, we would encourage you to offer the option of one-to-one telephone interviews to avoid excluding people with limited or no access to technology. Also, where possible, we advise researchers to include interpreters in the costing and delivery of the evaluation for participants who do not speak English. Please see our [Accessibility Guidance](#) for further information.

If possible, we would also encourage you to work in collaboration with voluntary and community organisations. Involving individuals and stakeholders from underrepresented communities in advisory groups, steering groups and in other roles can be a key tool in helping to shape and influence the design,



delivery and interpretation of research and the dissemination of findings. We would expect that some of the expenses go towards making this happen (room hire, travel for participants who would otherwise not be able to join, compensation for those not attending as part of their normal job). Importantly, as a researcher, you should centre your evaluation activities on understanding community contexts and lived experiences through informal outreach activities and engagement.

Other important practices could include: making sure that your team is aware and acting against unconscious bias, providing diversity and inclusion training for all research staff, ensuring religious and cultural holidays are in calendars and taken into account for meetings and research visits etc.

All in all, your research should be focused on identifying and making accessible the latest evidence of many underrepresented groups' needs and experiences; designing culturally competent, suitable and robust interventions; consulting on, and evaluating the use of, implementation strategies to ensure that the targeted group(s) are addressed and their needs are met.

3.3 Assessment

Stage 1:

The applications will be reviewed by an internal panel who will assess the applications by following specific assessment criteria. Judgements will be based on the quality, importance and feasibility of the project proposals.

Stage 2:

Invited candidates will then be asked to prepare a 10-minute presentation on their project to the internal panel (further details will be provided to the invited candidate). The presentations will be reviewed by an internal panel.

3.4 Presentation

Invited candidates will be given the opportunity to present their projects to the internal panel. We anticipate candidates from a wide variety of research backgrounds. To help keep the presentation as structured as possible, we have produced a short guideline advising how to structure your presentation, and what content to include. This will be sent to the invited candidates. In short, the presentation should cover items such as: problem statement, proposed project, potential for impact, organisation. Please note that this is not a prescribed format, and you are welcome to rearrange the suggested items as you see fit.



The purpose of the presentation stage is to better understand the project and provide candidates with an opportunity to share relevant information that were not otherwise discussed in the application form. The internal panel will have the opportunity to ask clarifying questions to the candidate. The panel will be most interested to know about the timeline and associated activities, participant (service user) involvement, potential risks and mitigating actions, expected outcomes and the importance of the project in relation to children's social care. The panel will be no larger than four individuals, and will comprise members from our [advisory groups](#); this could include the Young Advisors Group, Stakeholder Advisory Group as well as WWCS staff. Insofar as is possible, we expect the panel to comprise of peers, in that panel members will be selected on the basis that they themselves would be eligible for this award.

The presentations will be conducted either in-person or remotely.

3.5 Successful candidates

Once successful candidates have been notified, the next steps will include the following:

Finalise grant condition:

Successful candidates will be required to sign a grant agreement, which outlines the terms and conditions of the WWCS grant. A collaborative approach between WWCS and the candidate will be adopted to agree on the project milestones/ deliverables.

Timelines:

WWCS would expect implementation of the project to begin no later than one month following award notification. We would expect to support a **maximum of 12 months** of project delivery.

3.6 Document Checklist

Before submitting to programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk, please make sure you attach the following:

- Application form
- Costing Table
- Project Timeline
- Lead applicant CV
- Supporting letter from supervisor or institution



4. Post Award Information

This section is intended to provide successful candidates with information about the post-award period. Once successful candidates have been notified, a formal kick-off meeting will be scheduled to provide more information on the following:

4.1 Data Protection

Each project must adhere to the requirements for processing personal data as specified in the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA18). You will need to include data protection practices as an embedded aspect of processing personal data. This will include such things as:

1. Having a plan for personal data protection from the very beginning of the project's inception.
2. Providing a Data Privacy Notice to each participant inclusive of the information required of [Article 13](#) and/or 14 of the GDPR (points 2 & 3 will be needed to inform the Privacy Notice)
3. Knowing you will need to get consent from a parent or legal guardian if you are processing any children's personal data.
4. Keeping a record of any high risk processing activities in accordance with [Article 30.5](#) of the GDPR.
5. Consider the geographic location of the data you are collecting and implement appropriate safeguards according to [Chapter 5](#) of the GDPR if data will be leaving the UK/EEA.
6. Conduct a [Data Protection Impact Assessment](#) (DPIA) on any high risk activities using personal data including the processing of children's data.
7. Make sure the data is kept secure and only accessible to those involved in the study who need to access it ([Article 32](#) and [Article 89.1](#) are important to be aware of). Minimise, pseudonymise or anonymise personal data where you can.
8. Making sure any data you collect is only used for the reason it was collected.
9. Define a retention period and a methodology for deleting the data at the end of the retention period.
10. Understanding the lawful basis for processing personal data and that consent for ethical purposes is not the same as consent for data protection purposes. It is most likely the processing of personal data in accordance with [Article 6](#) of the GDPR, will be either based on legitimate interest for societal benefit or for a performance of a task carried out in the public interest (it will be worth taking legal advice on this point).
11. Understanding the lawful basis for processing special category personal data in accordance with [Article 9](#) of the GDPR (it is recommended that you read and understand GDPR Article 9.2(j) and DPA18 [Schedule 1 Part 1.4\(a\),\(b\)&\(c\)](#)).



If you are awarded a grant, WWCS C will invite all successful applicants to a 90 minute training and Q&A session with our Data Protection Officer. The session will cover the topic of how to manage data protection compliance in a research setting. Further information can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) [Website](#).

It must be stated that any decisions you make are your sole responsibility and WWCS C takes no liability for any processing of personal data you undertake as part of your project.

4.2 Research ethics committee approval

Any research study that involves direct contact with service users, and/or care professionals may require ethical approval. Research projects must not start until this approval has been secured from a Research Ethics Committee. We would advise you to speak to your organisation about obtaining ethics approval. In cases where you are unable, you can submit to the WWCS C ethics committee. Please note that you must specify this in your proposal.

If ethics approval has already been obtained, please provide a copy of the letter of the approval. If it is currently being reviewed, please state when the decision is due.

4.3 Expectation/ ways of working

Award-holders will be responsible for the implementation and delivery of all parts of the proposed project, including research ethics approval, data collection, and coordinating and conducting qualitative/quantitative research and field work. We expect award-holders to produce final analysis reports as appropriate, and to produce useful research outputs. For each project, we require award-holders to sign a grant agreement, which lays out the expectations including required outputs and milestones/ deliverables.

As a condition of being granted an award, award-holders will be expected to provide progress updates on a quarterly basis. This will include:

1. Submitting a short one-page progress update to WWCS C;
2. Attending a progress network meeting with the other award-holders; this is intended to provide peer-support and networking opportunities. You may also be asked to present a short update on your project, if appropriate.

The scheme intends to facilitate a relationship between WWCS C and the award-holder that is supportive, collaborative and transparent. WWCS C will organise progress network meetings including ad-hoc individual



meetings with award-holders if deemed necessary, and particularly to provide support with regards to individual challenges and issues.

WWCSC will also be offering in-house support and resources to award-holders in order to build up their skills and training, in addition to providing feedback on produced outputs.

5. Further Information

We want to make sure that all candidates fully understand what is required in their application before they submit. If you need any further clarity on the application, we are more than happy to respond to any queries. All enquiries should be directed to WWCSC: programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk.