

# What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) Open Funding Round 3

## STAGE 1: GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

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## 1. Our Approach

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 and their families. A key way we achieve this aim is by funding the delivery of promising interventions and ensuring these are rigorously and independently evaluated.

### 1.1. Our Third Open Funding Round

The purpose of the Open Funding Round is to grow the evidence base in children's social care. This means that, as well as funding the roll-out of the intervention or programme, we will also be funding an independent evaluation, conducted by a member of our [Panel of Evaluators](#). Further details of this can be found in [Section 4](#) of this document. With this current Open Funding Round, WWCSC is looking to fund innovative programmes and/or interventions that focus on improving outcomes for children and families in contact with the children's social care system in England. We are particularly keen to receive applications in the following areas, although will fund projects as long as they fit within our remit:

- The children's social care workforce
- Children and young people's mental health
- Residential care
- Domestic abuse
- Risk and decision-making

## 2. The Opportunity

### 2.1. Scope

We will consider proposals for any programme or intervention, that are:

- **Committed to the development of Children's Social Care Services:** Your proposal should demonstrate how the intervention will improve outcomes for children and families who are, or who have been, in touch with Children's Social Care Services. This could include contact, referral, assessment; children who are the subject of Child in Need or Child Protection Plans; Children Looked After and/or; care leavers. Whilst we are willing to consider programmes which have a wider reach, the main focus of your programme must be on this cohort. Programmes may also focus on the Children's Social Care workforce, although your proposal should clearly demonstrate how this will affect the outcomes for children and families who are/have been in touch with Children's Services.
- **Innovative:** Your proposal should demonstrate how the intervention is innovative and clearly distinguishable from 'business as usual' activities.
- **Implementable:** Your proposal should explain in detail what is involved at each stage of delivery of the intervention, and demonstrate whether and how it can be implemented for delivery in Children's Social Care settings. Your proposal



should demonstrate that you've identified and engaged sites/ local authorities/ settings where your programme will be implemented.

- **Evaluable:** Our purpose is to grow the evidence base in Children's Social Care. We do this by evaluating interventions to understand whether they work, for who and under what conditions. We're looking to work with partners who are committed to understanding more about their programme and who are keen to work with us and an independent evaluator.
- **Sustainable:** Your proposal should demonstrate thinking about how the programme/intervention would continue beyond the funding period.
- **Generalisable as well as scalable:** Your proposal should demonstrate whether the intervention can be replicated at a larger scale and/or in other settings.
- **Value for money:** The proposed costs of the programme/intervention are reasonable in relation to the likely benefits to beneficiaries (and the public).

## 2.2. Eligibility Criteria

Applications can be submitted by Local Authorities, UK registered charities, third sector organisations, universities, social enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which will act as the beneficiary of the funds and will be responsible for the delivery of the project. We can only accept applications from legally constituted organisations, and not from individuals.

The proposed programme and/or intervention must be delivered in England and applicants will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of the Children's Social Care context and capacity to deliver in England.

Applications from children's social care services e.g. Local Authorities and third sector organisations are particularly welcomed, and we will support the application process as needed. We will also run Readiness for Trial (RTT) training sessions ([see below](#)) to help applicants prepare a stronger application. If you are not successful in this round, we may encourage you to participate in the first stages of our [Practice in Need of Evidence \(PINE\)](#) programme.

## 2.3. Funding

- Single awards will be funded at a maximum of £350k over a period of up to 18 months. The amount funded will depend on the scale and size of the programme conducted.
- Project implementation will start from September 2022 and run for a maximum of 18 months. This excludes a three-month set-up period between award and the start of programme delivery.
- In some cases, where large programmes are established or have already secured funding for expansion (and therefore do not require funding to cover delivery) we would consider funding the independent evaluation only, in addition to programme management and/or administrative costs for the programme delivery team to support evaluation activity as needed.



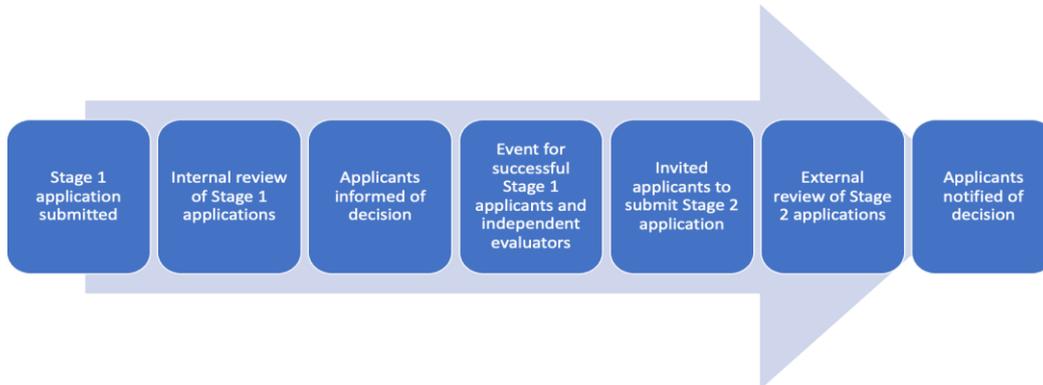
- The funds will be directly awarded to the lead organisation, but evidence of organisational capacity to receive and handle these funds will be sought prior to the award.

## 2.4. Application Process

### 2.4.1. Overview

This is a two-stage application process. Organisations will be required to submit their proposal for consideration by completing the Stage 1 application form. Successful applicants will be invited to a 'matching event', where we will seek to match applicants with independent evaluators from our [panel of evaluators](#). Together, the applicants and evaluators will develop an evaluation strategy to be submitted to an external funding panel during Stage 2.

Below we provide a summary chart of the application process.



### 2.4.2. Application Review

- Internal Review: Stage 1 applications will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria and scope described [above](#). Applications will be assessed internally by reviewers at WWCS, who will provide scores and comments independently of each other. The outline applications that meet the eligibility criteria and scores above the predetermined threshold will be invited to submit a Stage 2 application.
- External Review: Stage 2 applications will be reviewed by an External Panel of Reviewers. The External Panel of Reviewers will comprise individuals who have expertise relevant to the Children's Social Care sector and will provide recommendations for funding to WWCS. These experts will be independent of the WWCS Team, and we will ensure no conflicts of interest.

### 2.4.3. Application Outcomes and Feedback

WWCS are committed to providing feedback to all Stage 2 applicants. However, due to the large number of anticipated Stage 1 applications, we



cannot guarantee that we will be able to provide feedback to all unsuccessful applicants at this stage.

## 2.5. Important Dates

Below is the proposed timeline for decision for this funding round. This is subject to change and is intended as a guide only.

Activity	Dates
Opportunity Opens for Applications	<b>14 February 2022</b>
Briefing Webinar	<b>1 &amp; 22 March 2022</b>
Describing your Idea and Developing a Logic Model Workshops	<b>10:00-11.30 (GMT), 4 March 11.30-13:00 (GMT), 9 March</b>
Deadline for Submission of Stage 1 Applications	<b>12:00 (GMT), 4th April 2022</b>
<b>Internal Review</b>	
Readiness for Trial Training (RTT)	<b>April 2022</b>
Event for Evaluators and Stage 1 Applicants	<b>May 2022</b>
Invitations to Submit Stage 2 Applications	<b>June 2022</b>
Deadline for Submission of Stage 2 Applications	<b>12:00 (GMT), 14th July 2022</b>
<b>External Review</b>	
Successful Applicants Notified	<b>w/c 5 September 2022</b>
Projects to Begin	<b>September/October 2022</b>

**If you are interested in submitting an application either to this round or one in future, we recommend that you complete the expression of interest form on our [website](#) to receive regular updates regarding the Call.**

## 2.6. Pre-Submission Support

### 2.6.1. Briefing Webinar

WWCSC will host two webinars in March 2022 for all those who may be interested in submitting an application for this opportunity. The purpose of these sessions will be to:

- Provide an in-depth overview of the eligibility criteria and call.
- Provide an overview of the application process.
- Provide all potential applicants with the opportunity to ask questions about the call and application process.



If you are considering submitting an application, we encourage you to attend at least one of these sessions as they will provide tips on how best to present your proposal to benefit your application. These sessions will be held virtually.

Please register using the links below:

- 1 March 14:00-15:00 (GMT) - [Register here](#)
- 22 March 10:00-11:00 (GMT) - [Register here](#)

### **2.6.2. Describing your Idea and Developing a Logic Model Workshop**

In addition to this, WWCSC will host two workshops to assist potential applicants in shaping their ideas and developing a logic model.

If you would like to attend one of these workshops, please contact our Practice Team at: [practice@whatworks-csc.org.uk](mailto:practice@whatworks-csc.org.uk). This may be particularly useful for applicants from children's social care services e.g. Local Authorities and third sector organisations

### **2.6.3. Pre-Submission Support**

WWCSC are committed to ensuring that all applicants understand what is required in their application before they submit a proposal. If you need any further clarity on the application, we are more than happy to respond to any queries, provided that it does not relate to the content of the application. All enquiries should be directed to WWCSC: [programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk](mailto:programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk).

## **3. The Application Form**

### **3.1. Developing your Proposal**

The application form provides you with the relevant prompts to support your proposal. We recommend that you use the prompts to help focus your application. Your responses must be clear, concise and within the allocated word count. The reviewers reading your application should be clear about what you are proposing to develop and implement, at what scale, and how.



## **3.2. Lead Applicant and the Programme Team**

### **3.2.1. The Lead Applicant**

Where a group of organisations are applying for funding, one should be designated as the 'lead organisation/applicant'. The Lead Applicant host organisation will serve as the contractor/administrative lead if the proposal is funded. Therefore, if successful, the Lead Applicant must be willing to:

- Manage the contractual agreements among partners, collaborators and/or co-applicants.
- Serve as the key liaison between WWCS, the programme team and the evaluators.
- Take responsibility for final contract agreement and other documents.
- Respond to annual financial reconciliation exercises, provide the final financial reconciliation statement for the project and to provide ad hoc requests for financial information during the lifetime of the project.

### **3.2.2. Letter of Support**

Alongside your application, you should submit a one page letter of support which is signed by a senior member of the host organisation. Letters of support should include the following:

- Overall support for the project and commitment to evaluation.
- Commitment to joint working across the delivery partnership.
- Commitment to sharing data across the delivery partnership.
- Commitment to managing the contractual agreements and disbursement of funds among partners, collaborators and/or co-applicants.

### **3.2.3. Co-Applicants, Partnerships and Collaboration**

Other organisations and individuals that form part of the programme team must be included as Co-Applicants. Collaborators involved should also be listed.

Partnerships proposed in applications may build on existing relationships or represent the development of a new collaborative relationship. For existing partnerships, applications must provide details of projects/programmes that have been undertaken previously. In the case of new partnerships, applications must demonstrate that they have made contact with new partners. The roles and contributions of all members working as part of the partnership must be clearly stated within the application and reflect meaningful and quality collaboration.



Proposals that include international co-applicants and collaborators will be acceptable, but as mentioned above, the programme and/or intervention must be delivered in England.

#### **3.2.4. The Programme Team**

Applicants must demonstrate that the programme team has the necessary skills and expertise to deliver the proposed programme and/or intervention. A curriculum vitae (no more than two pages) for all members of the programme team must be provided as an appendix to your application. Furthermore, applicants should provide details (where applicable) of the following characteristics:

- Previous experience in obtaining funding and delivering successful outcomes from this funding.
- Demonstration of the ability to manage large funds and complex projects through established support functions (i.e data protection, legal, financial management).

#### **3.3. Budget and Costings**

The Stage 1 application form requires that you provide a summary overview of the budget to deliver the programme and/or intervention. The budget overview must include:

- A total figure for costs required to undertake the proposed research on the application form.
- We encourage all applicants to provide a summary of the following costs:
  - Programme development or set-up costs (if required)
  - Participant engagement/recruitment costs
  - Programme delivery costs
  - Project management and admin costs
  - Data management, collection and liaison with the evaluators
  - Other (please specify)

In order to support this process, we have provided a [Costings Template](#). Please download this and complete it as part of your application. You may amend this as you see fit.

The costing for the duration of the programme and/or intervention should be based on current prices and should not be inflated. Funds will be awarded as grants and therefore VAT is not applicable. These costs will be used to assess value for money. Applicants should only submit thorough, realistic and accurate costings.

A full justification of these costs will then be requested if the proposal moves to Stage 2. We acknowledge that there may be some changes in costs between Stage 1 and Stage 2, but any substantial changes in costing will need to be clearly justified in the application form.

Please note, WWCS will not pay Full Economic Costing (FEC) for Higher Education Institutions (HEI). Therefore, only direct costs for HEI will be covered. Direct costs are those specifically attributed to the programmes activities i.e. travels, salary costs,



consumables, equipment etc. WWCS will, however, fund the overhead cost for non-HEI, but we do not expect overheads to exceed 60% as a proportion of salaries. This will be set out on the budget section of the Stage 2 application form.

### **3.4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants and we aim to ensure that these values are also reflected in the programmes and/or interventions we fund. To achieve this, WWCS is keen to work closely with organisations which actively promote diversity and inclusion through their programmes/interventions.

In the Stage 1 application, we encourage applicants to explain how you will consider equality, diversity and inclusion in the development of the programme and/or intervention. The core focus of your project does not have to be on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), but you must consider how and where you will address EDI as prompted in the application. Applicants are also encouraged to ensure that adjustments should be reflected within the budget.

We are interested in a broad definition of diversity that includes the regional dimensions, neurodiversity, educational awarding gap and socio-economic factors as well as the [nine protected characteristics](#) in the [Equality Act 2010](#) listed below:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Applicants must ensure that any participation in the programme and/ or intervention does not present unintentional barriers and have a detrimental effect on any protected groups. We understand that not all organisations will have an active EDI policy or function and so WWCS can provide support if required.

In the Stage 2 application, we will invite applicants to submit an Equality Impact Assessment Form. Further guidance on this will be provided at Stage 2.

### **3.5. Co-Production**

We encourage the active engagement and participation of beneficiaries throughout your programme/intervention. We are eager to consider applications that have involved beneficiaries in the co-production or the co-designing of the programme/intervention. We would also advocate beneficiary participation in the delivery and/or oversight of the programme/intervention (e.g. steering or advisory groups), as participants in the evaluation process (e.g. interviewees). In your application, you must ensure you provide details of how these key stakeholders will be appropriately compensated.



### 3.6. Risks and Challenges and COVID-19

Throughout the proposal, applicants should demonstrate that they have considered risks and challenges, as well as mitigating measures in delivering the proposed programme and/or intervention. Some items to consider may include:

- Programme design e.g. acceptability of the intervention in proposed delivery settings.
- Referral and recruitment of participants to the programme e.g. difficulties in identifying suitable participants, low levels of uptake, etc.
- Data protection e.g. data sharing arrangements between partners.
- Data access and availability e.g. is data reliably recorded in standardised datasets for all programme beneficiaries.

A detailed risk register will be requested in the Stage 2 application.

We recognise that local authorities, researchers and other organisations are having to deal with uncertainty and change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. WWCS is committed to funding programmes and conducting research where we can, whilst ensuring that additional burden on local authorities and children's social care professionals is minimised. As such, applicants must ensure that COVID-19 mitigations to be built into the project as and where appropriate.

### 3.7. Data Protection

As part of the evaluation, applicants will be required to facilitate the access and sharing of data with evaluators. Therefore, each proposed programme and/or intervention 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 child'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. This will include conducting a screening process to outline why the decision not to conduct a DPIA, is accounted for. (We recommend conducting a DPIA as best practice for all projects)



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. Make 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\(a\),\(b\)&\(c\)](#)).

Within your application, applicants are requested to demonstrate their understanding for the need for good data management practices, as well as their willingness to support the evaluation partner to collect data.

Please note, the information you provide will not preclude you from application. If you are unfamiliar with the terms above, WWCS is able to provide further information and support on this where needed during the Briefing Webinar as well as if successful.

### **3.8. Due Diligence**

As part of the Stage 2 application process, WWCS will undertake a due diligence assessment to determine the appropriateness of potential or intended recipients of the grant. The assessment may include (but is not limited to):

- An assessment of the financial status, viability, and capacity to manage the grant.
- A review of the capacity, technical skills and relevant experience to manage activities funded by the grant.
- A review of safeguarding policies and practises to ensure that all children and vulnerable adults are appropriately safeguarded in the delivery of the funded programme.
- A review and assessment of compliance with data protection legal and regulatory processes.

Satisfactory completion of the assessment will be stipulated in the Grant Agreement as a condition for successful funding.



### 3.9. Submitting Your Application and Document Checklist

All completed applications should be completed and submitted to [programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk](mailto:programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk) by no later than 12:00 (GMT), 4th April 2022. Please attach the following items as part of your application:

- Completed Application form
- Summary Budget
- Project Timeline
- A 2-Page CV for the Lead Applicant as well as each member of your Programme Team
- A 1 page Letter of Support from Host Organisation

## 4. The Evaluation

Our purpose is to grow the evidence base in children's social care. We do this by evaluating programmes and/or interventions to understand whether they work, for who and under what conditions. All successful programmes will therefore be robustly evaluated by an independent evaluator, which will be appointed and funded by WWCS from its [Panel of Evaluators](#). Please note, that participation in and support of the evaluation activities is a condition of the grant funding.

### 4.1. Stage 1 Applications and Evaluation

The exact evaluation design will depend on the nature of the programme being tested. Designing a robust evaluation normally requires the project implementation plans to be adapted in some way to accommodate for the evaluation (e.g. participant recruitment, randomisation, data collection). While applicants are not expected to have a clear idea of how your programme and/or intervention may be evaluated in the Stage 1 application, we do ask that you are open to working with the evaluator to shape your project so that it can be robustly evaluated and a fair assessment of its impact can be made.

Although applicants are not asked to provide details of an Evaluation Plan in the Stage 1 Application, it is recommended that you demonstrate that you are open to being flexible about your delivery plan, budget and the number of settings you work with. For example, access to data will be the responsibility of the applicant, we therefore encourage you to make considerations for a 'Data Lead' or 'Data Manager' who can facilitate this process, within your proposal. To support the evaluator you may be asked to support in:

- Understanding and communicating the evaluation requirements to your stakeholders, which includes the children participating in your project and their parents or guardians.
- Collecting regular monitoring data from the beneficiaries taking part in your project. For example, that might include sharing and collecting questionnaires or surveys.



- Communicating regularly with the evaluator and collaborating on any issues that you experience when you're delivering your project.

#### **4.2. Appointing the Evaluator**

WWCSC will review applications, and will facilitate the applicants who are successful at Stage 1 to partner with independent evaluators from our panel. Applicants and evaluators will be given time to ensure that the delivery plan and the evaluation plan are well-coordinated.

#### **4.3. Readiness for Trial Training**

As a What Works Centre, our position is that all projects should be evaluated with a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT), unless there is a consensus that another design is more ethical, feasible, or cost-effective. This will involve random allocation of beneficiaries to either receive the programme, or not; those who do not receive the programme are part of a 'comparison' (control) group. The individuals in the control group will usually be receiving 'business as usual' support. While applicants will not be responsible for conducting and delivering the evaluation, it is important that those responsible for implementation of the programme and/or intervention at all levels - including frontline staff - understand and accept the requirements of taking part in such a trial.

To support organisations to facilitate an RCT, WWCSC will host a training event titled 'Readiness for Trial' (RTT). The purpose of this event will be to prepare delivery/intervention partners ahead of the evaluation, by building their general understanding of evaluation and the benefits of taking part in a trial both for children and for themselves, as well as the key risks, practicalities and commitment of a trial.

Please note that participation in this training will be required for all applicants whose proposals are progressed to Stage 2. Further details with regards to this training will be provided upon submission of your Stage 1 Application.