

What Works Centre for Children Social Care (WWCSC) Open Funding Round 2

Frequently Asked Questions

This note provides answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) relating to WWCSC grant funding and is intended to supplement the [guidance document](#).

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Scope and Remit

What is the scope of the funding round?

WWCSC **will** provide funding to support interventions and/or programmes that are:

- Focussed on improving 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; those subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan and/or; Children Looked After. Whilst we are willing to consider programmes which have a wider reach, the main focus of your programme must be on this cohort.
- Innovative and clearly distinguishable from 'business as usual': this could be a new programme or intervention entirely (as long as it meets the other requirements listed below) or more established.
- Well developed. As a minimum, you must be able to explain in detail what is involved at each stage of delivery, but ideally you would have some preliminary evidence of the programme or intervention's effectiveness.
- Can be implemented for delivery in children's social care settings in England within approximately 3 months of the award date. You do not need to have identified sites/local authorities/settings to implement in at this stage.
- No longer than 12 months. This is the maximum delivery period we are able to support under this funding round.
- Scalable to other settings.

For further clarity on whether your proposal fits within the scope of this call, please email: programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk.

What is outside the scope of the funding round?

WWCSC will **not** provide funding to support:

- Early stage or theoretical exploratory research projects: we are looking to focus more on interventions and applied solutions.
- Business as usual services.
- Commercial product development (e.g. tools or apps) intended to be sold by organisations for profit.
- Descriptive analyses or re-analysis of existing datasets as part of this funding round.



- Evaluations: WWCSC will separately fund an independent evaluation for each successful programme through its [Panel of Evaluators](#).

What is the remit of the funding round?

For this funding round, WWCSC is looking to fund innovative programmes and/or interventions that focus on improving outcomes for children and families in touch with the children's social care system.

However, there are **two topic areas** we are particularly keen to encourage you to apply for, these are outlined in the highlight notice on the call:

- 1) **Pre-birth and infants** - programmes specifically focussing on assessment, support, and/or specialist services focussing on pre-birth and/or children up to the age of two years old.
- 2) Supporting children and families from **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups**.

While this funding round will consider any programme or topic area that falls within our remit and scope, we are particularly keen on ensuring that these key priority areas are explored, and that their evidence base is further developed. We also encourage applicants to read our eligibility and assessment criteria before submitting (this is provided in the guidance document).

For further clarity on whether your proposal fits within our remit, please email: programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk.

How likely are you to fund a programme with a focus outside of the highlight notice?

All applications submitted will be assessed against the eligibility and criteria laid out in the [guidance](#). Therefore, as long as your application meets the necessary criteria and demonstrates the importance of your chosen topic area in relation to the outcomes of children, young people and families who are or have been in touch with children's social care, we would consider funding the programme.

What do you mean by 'evidence-based practice'?

We consider evidence-based practice to be children's social work and related services which are designed and delivered in a way that is informed by the research on what works (and what does not) to support children, young people and their families. Please refer to our [website](#) for more information on our evidence store, which summarises the existing evidence base in children's social care - this is something we hope to add to and grow over time.



Can I submit an application for a systematic review?

For this funding round, we will **not** be funding systematic reviews.

Evaluation

What do you mean by ‘impact evaluation’?

Impact evaluation refers to an assessment of how an intervention (or programme) affects outcomes of interest. The aim of an impact evaluation is to determine whether the intervention is having its intended effect (and/or any unintended effects) and for this information to then be used to inform decision-making on whether the intervention should be amended, stopped (if it is already in use and shown to be ineffective or harmful) or further scaled-up (if it is shown to be effective).

What will the evaluation involve? What methodologies do you use?

We fund a wide range of different programmes which require different evaluation designs; this includes pilots, randomised controlled trials and quasi-experimental studies.

What is involved will vary according to the type of evaluation - but broadly the evaluation will likely involve:

- Analysis of existing administrative data which is already recorded and/or;
- Analysis of data which needs to be collected, for example through a wellbeing survey;
- Interviews and/or focus groups.

Evaluators are responsible for these activities, but project teams will be expected to input into discussions on the evaluation design at the outset and to support the above activities, for example, by facilitating access to data and/or key stakeholders to participate in interviews or focus groups.

What is a randomised controlled trial (RCT)? Can I choose another evaluation design?

Randomised controlled trials are used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention through randomly assigning individuals to either receive the intervention, or an alternative (this alternative will often be ‘business as usual’) and comparing the outcomes between the groups. The evaluation design will be subject to rigorous ethical scrutiny and approval.

WWCSC strives to produce the best possible evidence to support decision-making in children’s social care - and in some cases, an RCT will provide this. The independent evaluator will be



responsible for the design of the evaluation, and determine which methodology is most appropriate.

We therefore require all applicants to be willing for their programme/intervention to be evaluated using an RCT.

Who will evaluate my programme?

An independent evaluator will be appointed by WWCS from our [Panel of Evaluators](#).

Application process

How will the process be structured?

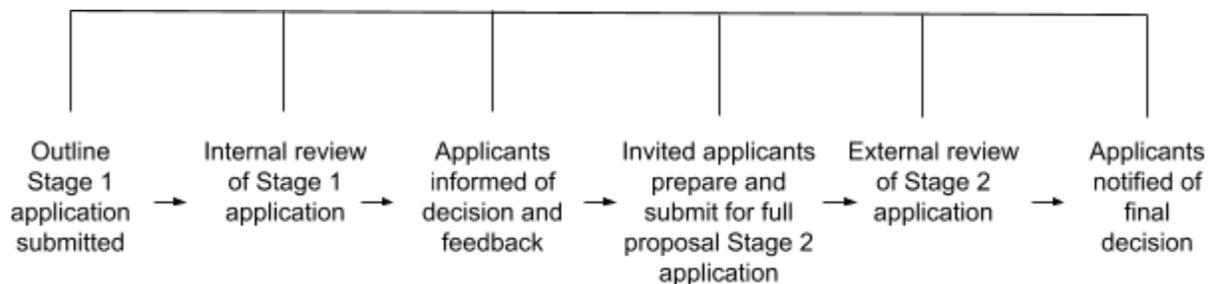
The application process will be structured into two stages.

Stage 1 application

Outline stage: we ask anyone who is interested to come forward with their idea, by following the application [guidance](#). The outline applications will be reviewed by our internal Programmes Team, to determine to what extent they meet the criteria.

Stage 2 application

Full proposals stage: The outline applications that were successful will be invited to submit a full proposal, where more detailed questions will be asked. These proposals will be reviewed by an external funding panel and final decisions will be signed off by the WWCS's Chief Executive and/or Board of Trustees.





I am unsure whether to apply for another funding scheme.

Applicants must choose the most appropriate funding scheme in the context of the scope, eligibility and criteria for each scheme. If you are unsure, please get in touch with us at: programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk.

How will the reviewers assess my programme?

The outline applications (Stage 1) will be reviewed against the eligibility and assessment criteria laid out in the guidance. Each outline application will be assessed by two 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 full proposal (Stage 2) application.

Full proposals will first be reviewed internally to ensure no information is missing, and then be reviewed by an external funding panel recruited especially for this purpose. The funding panel will review the proposals according to the set assessment criteria and a decision will be made on whether the proposal should be recommended for funding.

Will you be able to share with us a previously successful example application?

Unfortunately, we are not able to share a previously successful example application.

When will I be notified of the outcome of my application?

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their stage 1 application approximately 3-5 weeks after the call closes. As for Stage 2 applications, outcome notification is likely to be received between 4-6 weeks after the call closes.

Will I be allowed to include many acronyms in my application?

Applicants should be mindful to not exceed the maximum word limit. Also, acronyms should only be used when the term is regularly used throughout the application. Please do not assume that the reader will know what the acronym means. Be clear in defining when it is first used.

Will you be sharing feedback on my application?

Wherever possible, WWCS intends to provide helpful feedback to both successful and unsuccessful applicants. We are committed to providing feedback to all Stage 2 applicants. However, as we expect a large number of Stage 1 applications, we will provide feedback to Stage 1 applicants by request only.



Eligibility

Who can apply for funding?

This funding round is open to:

- Local Authorities
- Charities
- Social Enterprises
- Higher Education Institutions
- SMEs

We would particularly encourage applications from local authorities and other providers of children's social services.

Please note that the funding will be awarded as grants, so VAT is not applicable.

Can you accept applications from individuals or community groups?

Unfortunately, we are only able to accept applications from legally constituted organisations. Individuals and community groups which are not considered legally constituted organisations are ineligible.

Can an organisation outside of England submit an application?

Yes, organisations outside England can submit an application, but the programme or intervention would need to be delivered in England. Please make sure you clearly state this in your application form. You will be expected to demonstrate your understanding of the children's social care context and your capacity to deliver in England.

Will you fund my PhD?

No, we do not fund any PhD research projects or studentships through our funding programme. It is possible, however, for a PhD student to be listed as part of the programme team.

Are international co-applicants/collaborators allowed?

Yes, international co-applicants and collaborators are allowed. However, please note that the programme will need to be delivered in England.



Can I submit more than one application in a round?

Applicants are allowed to submit more than one application to one round. Please remember that all applications will need to demonstrate a clear approach on how they intend to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

Can an unsuccessful application reapply for the next round?

Applicants are allowed to reapply. However, please be aware that addressing the feedback points from the previous unsuccessful application may not result in funding.

Can an early career researcher be the lead applicant?

We encourage early career researchers to apply as lead applicants. We assess the strength of the research team as a whole, meaning that the lead applicant can be relatively less experienced provided that there is a strong, experienced and sufficient research team supporting the early researcher. This must also be clearly stated in the application form.

Will you accept programmes which are very small-scale or which are specific to a particular local need?

We are looking to fund programmes that can be scaled up, if found to be effective. Our Practice in Need of Evidence (PINE) programme may be more appropriate for interventions, which are not yet ready for scaling or have not yet had the opportunity to demonstrate evidence of promise. PINE aims to support organisations in their early steps towards building the evidence base for their intervention by providing practical support and consultation. Please refer to our [website](#) for more information.

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

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 organisation.

I am very happy with my programme design. What happens if I am not comfortable with the independent evaluators recommending changes to it?

As all programmes will need to comply with a robust evaluation, if organisations are not willing to participate in a mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative) impact evaluation, and the possibility of an intervention being randomised to participants, the proposal will not be considered.



Will I need to have done preliminary work before I can apply?

It is very unlikely that a programme that needs more scoping and development will be successful in this programme because there would be inadequate detail for the reviewers, and it will be harder to roll out within 3-6 months.

Can I include my CV into the application form?

You will not be required to include your CV for the outline Stage 1 application. Should your application make it to Stage 2, members of the programme team will have the opportunity to include CVs as an attachment. Each CVs should not be longer than 3 pages.

Costing

What is the funding limit for the funding round?

The funding limit per award is capped at £400k.

Can a programme cost over the funding limit be requested?

No, unfortunately the maximum funding we can provide is £400k.

However, large programmes which are already established or have secured funding for expansion - and therefore do not require funding to cover delivery - are welcome to apply for funding for an independent evaluation (awarded separately), in addition to programme management and/or administrative costs for the programme delivery team to support evaluation activity as needed through this funding call.

What costs will you cover?

We only cover the direct costs of the programme i.e. staff costs, equipment, consumables, travel etc. If you need clarity on our funding eligibility, please email: programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk.

Can we claim salary costs for collaborators?

You can claim the salary costs of all members who will be working on the programme. Please note that in the outline Stage 1 application, you will only be asked to provide an estimation of



costing and if your application is shortlisted, you will be required to provide a breakdown of the costs and a clear justification for the resources requested.

I am an international collaborator. Can you cover my salary cost?

Yes, we cover the salary costs of all programme members, including international collaborators.

Do I need to justify all costs?

Yes, all costs requested must be clearly justified. The justification for the proposed costs will be reviewed as part of the assessment criteria. For Stage 1 applications we would expect this to be a brief summary.

Will you cover the FEC costs for Higher Education Institutes or overheads for other organisations?

We will not cover the FEC cost for HEI and indirect costs should not be included in your budget. This is largely due to the Charity Support Fund that exists precisely to contribute to the indirect costs of research funded by charities at universities. More information can be found [here](#).

We will fund overhead costs for non-HEIs, but we do not expect overheads to exceed 60% as a proportion of salaries.

We will ask for a more detailed breakdown in the cost section of the Stage 2 application form.

Do you fund first class travel costs?

No, we do not fund first class travel. The most suitable and cost effective method of travel should be used.

Should I include VAT?

Funds will be awarded as grants and therefore all eligible costs should be provided **excluding** VAT.