

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

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

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1. Introduction

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. Supporting promising programmes and pairing them with rigorous evaluations, is a key component of what we do at WWCSC to help us achieve this. For this 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.

2. Key Information

2.1 Funding

- Individual awards will be funded at a maximum of £400k over a period of up to 12 months. The amount funded will depend on the scale and size of the programme conducted.
- Programme delivery duration is up to 12 months in length. This **excludes** the approx. 3 months set-up period between award and 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, 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.

2.2 Deadline

Outline application (**Stage 1**) deadline: **Friday October 16th 2020, 12pm**

Full proposal application (**Stage 2**) deadline: **Friday December 4th 2020, 12pm**

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

2.3 Eligibility

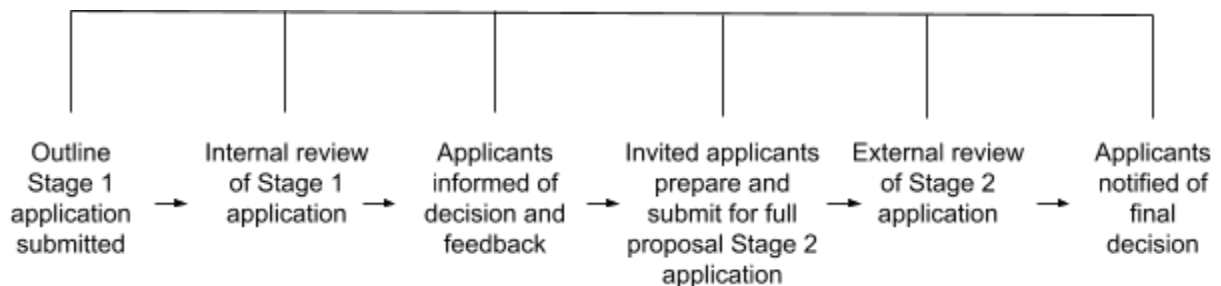
Applications can be submitted by **local authorities, charities, third sector organisations, universities, social enterprises, SMEs**, which will act as the beneficiary of the funds and will be in charge of the delivery of the programme. We can only accept applications from legally constituted organisations, and not from individuals. Organisations do not have to be based in



England but the programmes would need to be delivered in England. Please make sure that you state this in your application.

Applications from children’s social care services e.g. local authorities and third sector organisations are particularly welcomed.

2.4 Process



2.5 Criteria

Assessment for outline application:

- Appropriateness of the proposed programme, including whether:
 - ❑ The programme fits within the remit of this call and aligns with our priorities;
 - ❑ The programme has potential to directly benefit the outcomes of children, young people and families who have or have had a social worker;
 - ❑ The rationale for the particular programme has been clearly presented and is backed up with theory and/or evidence;
 - ❑ The programme is well developed and defined;
 - ❑ The expected benefits identified are tangible and testable;
 - ❑ The programme is likely to be affordable and attractive to proposed settings;
 - ❑ The model has potential to be replicated at a larger scale in the future (e.g. scaled nationally);
 - ❑ The programme is clearly distinguishable from ‘business as usual’;
 - ❑ The evaluation of the programme will add distinct value to existing knowledge on the topic area.

- Capacity and experience of the programme team and organisation, including:
 - ❑ The eligibility of the lead organisation;
 - ❑ The appropriateness and added-value of proposed project partners (if applicable);



- The expertise and experience of the programme team and lead applicant;
 - The capacity to deliver the programme at an appropriate scale, in an appropriate number of settings.
- Cost and timeframe
 - The resources requested are reasonable and proportionate to the potential impact of the proposed programme;
 - The resources requested represent good value for money;
 - The timeframe for the programme is reasonable, and meets the necessary criteria.

2.6 COVID-19

During this uncertain time, WWCS is still 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.

We recognise that local authorities, researchers and other organisations are having to deal with uncertainty and ever-changing circumstances, so we will try to be as flexible as possible as a funder and to work with you to ensure timelines are achievable.

3. General Information

3.1 Programme Team

Relevant experience and expertise of the programme team will need to be clearly outlined in the outline application form. We will not be accepting CVs in supplement to the outline application form (Stage 1). At Stage 2, members of the programme team will have the opportunity to include CVs as an attachment. Each CVs should be no longer than 3 pages.

Applicants are required to make sure that, before submitting the application, they have discussed with their programme team the coordination and delivery of the programme. The signature box, which is associated with the application, must be signed by the lead applicant to confirm that the information, especially the budget section, of the application is complete and correct.



3.2 Budget

The proposed budget of the programme will need to be stated in the outline application form (Stage 1). The justification and breakdown of the budget will need to be clearly explained in the full proposal application form (Stage 2).

WWCSC will not pay Full Economic Costing (FEC) for Higher Education Institutions (HEI). Therefore, **direct costs for HEI will only be covered**. Direct costs are costs specifically attributed to the programmes activities i.e travels, salary costs, consumables, equipment etc. WWCSC 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.

Applicants should submit a rational and accurate costing in their application form. Whilst we acknowledge that there may be some changes in costs between Stage 1 and Stage 2, we would not expect costs to differ significantly between the outline and full application forms. Any substantial changes in costing will need to be clearly justified in the application form.

Costings must be given in their current prices and should not be inflated.

3.3 Outcome

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 and feedback is likely to be received between 4-6 weeks after the call closes.

Wherever possible, WWCSC 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.

3.4 Evaluation

All successful programmes will be robustly evaluated by an independent evaluator, which will be appointed and funded by WWCSC from its [Panel of Evaluators](#). This evaluation will likely include both an impact evaluation as well as an implementation and process evaluation. You do not need to include evaluation plans in your proposal or budget, and you should be open to being flexible about your delivery plan, budget and the number of settings you work with. Where appropriate, the evaluation methodology could include a randomised controlled trial, which provides the best possible evidence of whether a programme works. This involves random



allocation of beneficiaries to either receive the programme, or not; those who do not receive the programme provide a 'comparison' group. All evaluation plans will be subjected to rigorous ethical approval. While the applicants will not be responsible for delivering the evaluation, please note that participation in and support of the evaluation activities is a condition of the grant funding.

3.5 Reviewers

Outline Stage 1 applications will be reviewed by staff at What Works for Children's Social Care who will determine the extent to which they meet the assessment criteria.

Full proposal Stage 2 applications will be reviewed by an **external funding panel** who will assess the application by following specific assessment criteria. We will invite individuals who have expertise relevant to the topic areas to undertake appropriate review of the applications and provide recommendations for funding to WWCSC. These experts will be independent of the WWCSC team, and have no conflicts of interest.

3.6 Successful applicants

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

Finalising the idea:

A collaborative approach between WWCSC and the applicant to finalise the intervention or programme, and agree the final budget. WWCSC will also work with the programme team to issue the grant agreement.

Evaluation:

All successful programmes will be robustly evaluated by an independent evaluator. Organisations from the Centre's [Panel of Evaluators](#) will be eligible to bid to lead the evaluation on each of the selected programmes, and will be appointed and funded by WWCSC.

The programme delivery organisation will not be responsible for delivering any evaluation activities, however, they will be required to participate in and support the on-going evaluation. Once an evaluator is appointed, a kick-off meeting will be arranged between the delivery partner's programme team, the evaluator and WWCSC.

Timelines:

WWCSC would expect implementation of the programme or intervention to begin within three months of notification of award. We would expect to support and be able to evaluate up to a **maximum of 12 months** of programme delivery.



4. Further Information

We want to make sure that all applicants 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, provided that it does not relate to the content of the application. All enquiries should be directed to WWCS: programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk.