

## Rapid reviews of evidence in children's social care: Call for proposals

What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) is funding a series of rapid reviews. We are seeking proposals from research teams with expertise in undertaking rapid systematic reviews, and with knowledge of the sector.

These reviews will be used specifically to inform the decisions and recommendations of the [Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#), and more broadly, to help build the evidence base in children's social care, and inform decisions about the research and projects that we fund and conduct.

We are particularly interested in funding reviews on a number of specific topics, and will be releasing calls for these separately over the coming months.

**The first of these that we are looking to fund is on: The quality of child protection decision making and risk assessment.**

### Background

The National Child Safeguarding Review Panel has found that the quality of decision making and risk assessment was a factor in many cases in which a child or children were killed or seriously injured.

WWCSC is looking for proposals to carry out a rapid review that looks to address some of the questions raised in the National Panel's report, including:

1. The prevalence of high and low quality decision making;
2. The features of high quality decision making;
3. The extent to which risk is either under-or-over estimated;
4. The role of information sharing, experience of social workers, caseload levels, supervision, organisational structures and cultures in decision making;
5. Interventions (such as training and multi-agency working) that improve decision making.

### What is a Rapid Review?

A rapid review is a tool for collating the available research evidence on a certain topic / issue, as comprehensively as possible, within the constraints of a given timetable. This is done by setting parameters around the review to ensure the amount of evidence reviewed is manageable within the timeline.

WWCSC's approach is for rapid reviews to be systematic but focussed, and include consideration of quality.



- **Systematic:** Following a clear and replicable method identify evidence on a given topic that is as comprehensive / exhaustive as possible within your specified parameters – i.e. specifying in advance your research question, search terms, sources/databases to search and inclusion/exclusion criteria.
- **Focussed:** The rapid element involves using clear and focussed parameters to ensure the amount of evidence you identify and include is manageable e.g. using a narrow research question, searching a narrow set of dates or sources, using a narrow set of inclusion / exclusion criteria (e.g. location of research, type or quality of study)
- **Quality:** Systematic and rapid reviews should always include assessment of the quality of the evidence you are reviewing

## Expectations

Conducting a rapid review under this funding stream will involve:

- Agreeing the scope of the review and the proposed research question(s) with the WWCS research team;
- Submitting and publishing a protocol for the methods used in the rapid review;
- Submitting a rapid review report that will be peer reviewed independently, and reviewed internally by the WWCS research team;
- Incorporating comments from WWCS and peer reviewers to ensure the review is of high quality and robust, and meets WWCS's expectations;
- Final report to be published on the WWCS website.

## Budget

The total budget for this rapid review should not exceed **£20,000**, and value for money will be taken into account when assessing applications.

Evaluations will be awarded as grants, so VAT is not applicable. Please note that we will not cover the FEC cost for HEIs and indirect costs for these organisations should not be included in your budget. We will fund overhead costs for non-HEIs, but we do not expect overheads to exceed 60% as a proportion of salaries.

## Timelines

We expect reviews to be submitted to WWCS for peer review within 4 months of the grant being issued, and would expect work to begin by 31 May 2021 at the latest. Please see below for indicative timelines:

Activity	Due date
Call live	Thursday 29 April
Call closes	Thursday 20 May, 9AM
Successful applicant notified	Early w/c 24 May



Work to commence	By 31 May 2021
Protocol submitted to WWCS for review and approval	W/c 21 June
Rapid review submitted for peer review and WWCS internal review	Mid-Late September
Final review ready for publishing	October



## Application

To apply, please submit a proposal to [programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk](mailto:programmes@whatworks-csc.org.uk) by **9am Thursday, May 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**, although we would encourage you to submit proposals sooner, if possible.

Your proposal should total **no more than 4 sides of A4** and include the following:

1. Proposed research question and title for your review (making reference to the participants, interventions, comparators and outcomes (PICO)).
2. Background and rationale for your proposed review.
3. A brief outline of your proposed methodology to conducting the rapid review, including:
  - a. Study selection criteria (inclusion/exclusion), report characteristics, study characteristics, and limits (e.g. including study type, timeframe of existing research, geographical region, language etc);
  - b. Study outcomes;
  - c. Proposed search strategy (i.e. selection of databases);
  - d. Proposed analytical approach.
4. An overview of your core team's relevant skills and experience, as well as knowledge and understanding of the area.
5. Your proposed timeline for the work.
6. A suggested budget, including a detailed breakdown of these costs, stating the number of days or % FTE allocated to each staff member per research activity, and the costs associated.



## Assessment criteria

The WWCSO will assess applications on a rolling basis. Applications will be assessed by the WWCSO's internal research and programmes teams, according to the following criteria.

Research questions and rationale:

- Clearly specified research questions that will be addressed by the review. These should reference the participants, interventions, comparators and outcomes (PICO).
- Clear rationale for the proposed research questions

Proposed methodology and approach includes:

- Suitable and clearly defined approach/methods, which can appropriately answer the specified research questions. This should refer to the proposed search strategy and study selection criteria.
- Consideration of the scope of the review. This includes considering key limits/constraints of conducting this rapid review, and articulates what it will and will not be able to look at within this review.
- Inclusion of a proposed analytical approach.
- Outlined approach adheres to methodological standards for rapid reviews.

Project team:

- Expertise and experience of the suggested core project team:
  - Evidence of undertaking previous rapid/systematic reviews or similar work;
  - Knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, and of key issues in this research area.

Budget and timelines:

- The proposal represents good value for money;
- Timelines are achievable, and meet the necessary criteria (a final draft should be available to WWCSO for peer review within 4 months of the grant being issued).