Frequently asked questions

Behavioural Insights Research Programme 2017

Updated 21 July 2017

Contents

NOTE: All applications to this research programme have to be submitted through our online application portal https://aims.health.org.uk. We advise all potential applicants to familiarise themselves <u>as early as possible</u> with the application process. The process is outlined in this FAQ document as well as in the AIMS user manual.

The deadline for applications is 12:00 on Friday 20 October 2017.

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Eligibility

Q1. Who is allowed to submit proposals? Is it just universities?

Any organisation that can demonstrate that they can carry out high quality research can submit a proposal within our remit; it is not limited to universities. However, applicants will need to demonstrate that those delivering the research have the necessary expertise and experience to do so.

Q2. Does the lead applicant need to be UK-based?

No, we will accept proposals from organisations based outside of the UK and/or collaborations with non-UK based researchers. However, the research must clearly relate to system efficiency and sustainability issues in health and social care that can have a direct impact on the quality of care in the UK. A non-UK based application would also need to demonstrate that the team undertaking the research has strong links into the respective communities of practice in the UK health care setting. In addition, a non-UK based application would need to demonstrate how management and communication processes would not suffer.

Q3. Can my proposal have partner organisations?

Yes, applicants can collaborate or subcontract, where appropriate, with partner organisations. We believe that in many cases multi-disciplinary research teams that work collaboratively with important stakeholders are best positioned to deliver the most impactful research. Please specify what role any partners will have, and indicate the current level of progress in developing the collaboration in your application.

Q4. Could two individuals, working for separate institutions, act as co-principal investigators?

We welcome applications from multidisciplinary and multisite teams with one or more co-principal investigator(s). However, for the purposes of the online application, the contracting and the project management processes, we require you to have only one named primary/lead contact for each application, and that person must be ultimately responsible for the delivery of the research.

Budgeting and research costs

Q5.   How long will the Health Foundation's funding last for this research?

We anticipate making grants for research projects lasting between two and three years. If your research idea will take slightly longer, we would still welcome an application. You will however need to be explicit in your application about why you need more time and what additional value it would bring.

Q6.   Will the funding begin from grant announcement or from the start of the research programme?

Funding will begin once the research starts and upon signing of a mutually agreed award agreement. Subsequent payments will be made contingent on agreed outputs, normally by way of annual and final award reports. It is anticipated that projects supported through these grants will begin towards the end of quarter two of 2018.

Q7.   What is the funding that I can apply for?

We anticipate funding a range of awards between £150,000 and £350,000.

You may submit an application below £150,000, but you should be able to justify how your project will support our objectives for this programme to make a significant contribution at that scale. In exceptional circumstances we may consider funding a research idea beyond our maximum of £350,000. You will however need to present an excellent case for this centred around the additional value and impact of the proposal.

Q8.   What costs can be included as 'research costs'?

You should include what you expect to be the items of direct expenditure required to carry out your research. Items commonly covered include travel costs for meetings, relevant conferences, data analysis support, transcription of interviews and focus groups, venue hire/refreshments for research meetings/focus groups, and travel costs for patient and health and social care staff to attend focus groups. You can include 'honorarium' payments for patient participants and some backfill payments for health and social care staff to participate in specific research activities but not where this would constitute covering the cost of the research team, or for any length of time beyond a few days.

Please note that as a charity we will fund only the full directly incurred costs of the research. We do not fund overheads. Furthermore, the research will be supported as a charitable grant and as such is not liable for VAT.

Q9.   Can we include salary costs for academic staff working on the project, salary costs that are directly allocated not directly incurred?

We expect that the majority of funding will be spent on the direct costs covering academic and/or researcher time spent on projects, which can include staff who are already employed

at the institution or new staff (directly allocated cost and directly incurred cost). However, we do not provide the funding for academic backfill or teaching replacement time in addition to the direct cost.

Q10. Do we cover staff with grant funding from elsewhere?

Yes, provided their time on this project is clearly allocated and budgeted.

Q11. Can we include the cost of PhD?

Yes, in principle, but you must provide a sufficiently experienced team and also consider whether part-funding is possible.

Q12. Can we include VAT from sub-contractors?

Yes – but only the directly attributable VAT. You may want to consider whether you can achieve better value for money by including a non-commercial sub-contractor instead.

Q13. Will the Health Foundation fund overheads?

No. As a charity we will fund only the full directly incurred and directly allocated costs of the research.

Q14. Can we include inflation in our costing?

All costs would need to be covered as part of the overall budget, including any inflationary increases. However as a charity we ask that future inflationary increases be based on the Retail Price Index as of April 2017. Please confirm in your application that this is the assumed inflation rate adopted in your budgeting.

Q15. Do you pay VAT?

No. The research will be supported as a charitable grant and as such is not liable for VAT.

Q16. Would you be prepared to part-fund a research project?

Yes, we have no objection to joint funding with an existing project or joint funder. However, we would need an idea of when and from whom the rest of the funding is likely to be secured in your proposal. Prior to any funding decision we would need clarity about where responsibility lay contractually in terms of research governance issues, intellectual property, publication and dissemination, etc.

Q17. Are proposals for grants required to be accompanied by matched funding contributions from service partners?

We will favour proposals that can demonstrate a strong commitment to the research from service partners, including a matched funding contribution. It is not a requirement that proposals have matched funding.

Scope and focus of the research

Q18. Can aspects of my research be based on non-health care or non-UK experiences?

We are not looking to support entire research programmes which do not have a focus on health and social care systems in the UK. However, we will consider research that has a component of investigation in non-UK health and social care provided that you can clearly demonstrate the applicability and relevance of your research idea to improving efficiency and reducing waste within the UK context.

Q19. Will the programme fund methodological research?

Yes. However, we do not expect methodological research to be the only focus of the proposal and would expect to see methodological research accompanied by an applied component within your research programme.

Q20. Our research idea aligns closely to more than one of the Health Foundation's priority areas, is this okay?

Yes, we welcome research ideas that cross-cut areas of interest; however, you will be asked to select only one priority area on the online application form so please be clear as to which one of the three areas your proposal primarily focuses on.

Q21. Do I need to address all three priority areas or would it suffice to address just one?

The research does not need to focus on more than one priority area as set out in the guidance. We would however expect proposals to be strongly relevant to at least one of the three areas. You will be asked to select only one priority area on the online application form so please be clear as to which one of the three areas your proposal primarily focuses on.

Q22. Do I need to address all of the questions in the relevant priority area in the 'Notes for applicants' document?

The research does not need to focus on all of our areas of interest set out in the 'Notes for applicants'. We would however expect proposals to be relevant to at least one of the priority areas. You should make clear how your proposal relates to any relevant areas of interest in your application.

Q23. I have an idea but notice that you are focusing on health care services and not social care. My idea will lead to savings in social care – is this something you would be interested in?

Yes, we recognise that often changes in the health care system can bring about improved efficiency and reduced waste in social care and vice versa. In this research call we are predominantly interested in research ideas where the behavioural intervention is targeted at professionals in the health care system, so we would also be interested in projects which operate at the interface between health and social care. You should be clear in your proposal where efficiencies would accrue and how they would be measured.

Q24. Do I need to have obtained ethical approval for my proposal prior to submitting my application?

No, not at the time of submitting your application. However, you should factor the estimated time required into your research plan. In addition, our application form asks that you carefully consider data acquisition into your project timelines; please ensure that you answer this section of the form thoroughly.

Q25. I'm very clear about the outputs from my research in the early part of my proposed programme but there may be a number of different options and avenues of investigation that may emerge as the research progresses – is this okay?

Yes, we expect that some research programmes outputs and trajectories for investigation will be contingent on emerging findings from the initial stages of the research. You should be clear in your proposal where this is likely and illustrate in as much detail as possible the range of potential lines of enquiry that may emerge. We believe that such flexibility allows us and the researchers to maximise the impact of their work.

Q26. Are you looking to fund clinical research?

No, we are looking to fund original research into behavioural ways to reduce inefficiency and waste in health care services in the UK. We are not seeking to fund any clinical trials. We will not support research focused on the development of new treatments, though the research may be set within a specific clinical setting.

Q27. Will you fund the development of health ICTs, software or systems through this programme?

The focus of this research programme is on funding original research into behavioural interventions or 'nudges' that have potential to increase efficiency and reduce waste in UK health care services. We do not intend to fund the development and testing of entirely new health ICTs, software or systems (whether apps, mobile platforms, decision support systems, etc), as this would not represent prudent use of our limited funds.

However, we would consider supporting research that proposes to research the application of already developed technologies in an innovative way where there are likely to be knowledge gains and improvements of broad applicability in health care services.

The application process

Q28. I've applied to the Health Foundation for funding before and have not had to use an online system. Can I submit a proposal any other way?

No, only applications submitted through our new online application portal https://aims.health.org.uk will be considered for assessment. We would ask that you familiarise yourself with the online application portal at an early stage of your application as we may not be able to respond to any technical queries in a timely fashion in the days prior to the deadline for applications. As such, we are encouraging early proposal submission to avoid any disappointment. The key documents supporting the application process are this FAQ, the 'Notes for applicants', the 'Application form guidance' and the associated AIMS user manual.

The application form can be downloaded as a Word file, making it possible to work on your application remotely; however, you are required to make your final submission through the online system. Please note that tables, diagrams or mathematical formulas do not always neatly cut and paste into the online portal and should be submitted as attachments.

Q29. Who should be the primary contact on the application?

The primary contact (including the email address) on your application will be the person who will receive all future communication and correspondence with regards to your application. We are advising that irrespective of who submits the online application, the primary contact (and their email address) should be the principal investigator or another person responsible for the overall delivery of the proposed research programme. It is critical that this person has the capacity to check and respond to their emails in a timely fashion as this is the way in which the Health Foundation will communicate the progress of your application.

Q30. Should I apply for the Behavioural Insights Research Programme as an individual or an organisation?

When using the online application portal, you must apply to the Behavioural Insights Research Programme as an organisation, not an individual. When starting the application process, you will be asked to first register as a user. When doing this, ensure that you tick the 'with an organisation' box before you click 'register'. Once logged in, please ensure that you create an organisation (this and your individual details will then be linked to your new account). You may then start to create an application in the organisation's name. This is the only way to apply to the Behavioural Insights Research Programme. If you cannot find the scheme in the 'create application' drop-down menu, it will be because you are trying to create an application on behalf of yourself as an individual rather than the organisation. Please note that the email you register and apply with will receive all communication regarding your application, so please ensure you have registered with the most appropriate email address.

Q31. Can an applicant submit more than one proposal?

Yes, an applicant is welcome to submit more than one proposal; however, they will need to clearly demonstrate that they have the capacity to undertake more than one research programme if successful. Each application will then have the same organisation but may have the same or different lead applicants.

Q32. I'm having problems completing my online form, what should I do?

In the first instance please check that you have completed all the mandatory fields in the online form – it might be helpful to take a written note or screenshot of which questions require review before you re-enter the form.

If this has not resolved your problem, please refer to the AIMS user manual. If you have a technical issue, eg problems with registering and logging in or confusing error messages, please email behaviour@health.org.uk and we will aim to reply within five working days.

If, however, you have queries about the actual programme or the application process which have not been answered in these FAQs, please email behaviour@health.org.uk and we will aim to reply within five working days and, if appropriate, will also update the FAQs document.

Q33. Some of the questions such as the proposed programme of research section have a character limit. Do these character limits include or exclude references?

The character limit refers only to the programme design response box, and excludes references. There is a separate section on the online application form that allows you to include references for certain questions; these have no maximum character count.

Q34. Can we include additional material, such as consultation papers or toolkits, as an appendix?

No. In the interest of fairness, we discourage applicants from submitting applications of different volume and therefore no appendices are allowed. However, there are some questions on the online form where we allow the option to attach a file. Please note that in all cases the file type and size are restricted and we will discard any attachments that have not been asked for.

Q35. Will I be able to get feedback on my application if it has been unsuccessful?

Proposals that are successful in progressing to the peer review stage of assessment will receive the anonymised peer reviewer feedback. All research teams that we interview will have the opportunity for verbal feedback. Unfortunately, as we expect interest to be high in this call, we do not have the resources to provide feedback to the other unsuccessful proposals (ie those that were unsuccessful in getting to peer review stage).

Management and communication

Q36. If successful, when is it expected that research will begin, and when is the earliest that funds would be made available?

We expect projects funded through the open call to begin towards the end of quarter two of 2018. We will come to an agreement with each research team on the exact scheduling of the award payments as part of the finalisation of the research protocol and contracting process; generally speaking the first payment for a grant agreement is made soon after signing of the grant agreement.

Q37. What is the Health Foundation's approach to the management of the research grants, and requirements for reporting and engagement while the research is being carried out?

We are an engaged funder, and are interested in working with the successful research teams to understand and support their work while it is ongoing. Staff from our Research Department and elsewhere in the organisation may be interested in meeting with the successful research teams, and will be available to support and advise on the write-up of the findings. We expect successful research teams to keep us updated on their progress, including through an annual grant report.

We will be actively looking to build relationships and share information between the research teams funded through this programme. For example, we may host seminars and/or collaborative learning events that the successful research teams will be required to attend.

Q38. Who owns the intellectual property rights from the research?

Our grant agreements are constructed so that you would own the rights to the intellectual property but you would license the Health Foundation to be able to use the intellectual property. This is so that we can, in partnership with the researchers, help support dissemination of the research and maximise impact in line with our charitable objectives.

Q39. What are the Health Foundation's expectations regarding publication and communication of the findings from this research?

We expect successful research teams to communicate the progress of their work from an early stage, and will be actively seeking to build linkages and share information where appropriate between the teams funded through this programme.

The formal outputs from each project will be an annual award report, an end of award report and a final research report. We would also expect award holders to publish their work in academic journals and to present their work at meetings and conferences. The Health Foundation has a policy of supporting open access publication fees for strategically relevant publications. These are decided on an individual basis and as such, we ask that applicants do not include the cost of open access publishing in their proposals.

The audience for this research is broad, and includes system leaders, policy makers, clinicians, managers and researchers. We expect research funded through this programme to be widely communicated, especially through leading peer review journals and

conferences. We would also encourage researchers to consider innovative methods of communication where appropriate.

For tips and guidance on how to effectively communicate your research, including how to write a comprehensive communications plan, please see our toolkit, 'Communicating your research'.

Q40. How important is the policy relevance of the research?

Successful applications must be policy relevant and have the potential to have an impact on policy. Teams are expected to be able and prepared to work with us to engage with, and influence, policymakers. Applicants must demonstrate a good understanding of the policy landscape.