

Economic and Social Value of Health: Information Call

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Speaker Key

LC Liz Cairncross
LM Louise Marshall
RF Rocco Friebel
Q/A participants

Introduction

- LC Thank you, Courtney, good afternoon and welcome everyone to the Economic and Social Value of Health research programme information call, thanks for joining us. My name is Liz Cairncross. I'm a Research Manager at the Health Foundation and responsible for the delivery of the award programme. In the room with me today is..
- LM Louise Marshall, Senior Public Health Fellow at the Health Foundation and...
- RF Rocco Friebel, data analyst.
- LC The purpose of the call is to provide you with an overview of the research programme on the economic and social value of health in the UK and to go through what we are looking for in your applications. We'll also try to answer any questions you have got through the Q&A session. After the call, we'll follow up by putting a transcript of this call on the Economic and Social Value of Health research programme web page next week. This call is designed to clarify the parameters of the programme and to address some common questions that you have. Please note we cannot answer specific questions about your project but can provide general guidance and information. If as you complete the remainder of your application, you have any questions please submit them to us at the economicandsocialvalueofhealth@thehealth.org.uk email address. I will now hand you over to Louise who will give you a brief overview of the programme.

Overview of the programme

- LM Thank you Liz and thank you everyone for joining the call. The Health Foundation's Economic and Social Value of Health research programme is a researcher-led open call for proposals. Designed to build the evidence base for health being an asset for the economy and society in the UK. The current call forms a core part of our work portfolio on healthy lives which has been developed as part of our healthy lives strategy. The findings from this research will be used to inform the foundation's work to promote national and local policies that improve health and health equity, through action on the wider socioeconomic determinants of health. We have made £1.5 million available for research to advance our understanding and knowledge of the impact of individual's health on their own economic and social outcomes and the mechanisms and pathways at play. We're also potentially interested in the impact of the health of individuals on the economic and social outcomes of their immediate household where data allows. We define health broadly as both physical and mental health.

Through this research call we will not fund research into the impact of economic and social factors on health, nor will we fund return on investment studies of public health interventions.

While this is an open call and we have not stated priority areas through our scoping work, we have identified particular areas of interest for the programme which are as follows:

- the impact of individual health status across the life course, as well as single points in time on economic and social outcomes;
- understanding the mechanisms by which different individual health experiences, for example, enduring good or poor health or periodic episodes of poor health are translated into later economic and social outcomes;
- cross cohort comparisons, for example, the association of childhood or adolescence health on outcomes for different generations to test whether or not associations are changing across the generations given the changing socioeconomic context; and methods which explicitly attempt to test for causality, in terms of the impact of individual health on economic and social outcomes.

The projects that we fund through this research call will use UK longitudinal data plus other relevant sources to enable exploration of the temporal relationships between exposures (health) and outcomes (economic and social factors). This is to ensure that health exposures predate outcomes, a necessary prerequisite for implying causality and to provide insight into time exposure to outcomes. We are interested in the medium to long term impact of health status through the life course. However, given the importance to policy we would also expect identification of any shorter-term outcomes, and exploration of lag time to outcome. We are also interested in any impacts on the economic and social outcomes of the individual's immediate household members, where it is researchable.

Specifically, applications to this stream should seek to address issues of relevance to the understanding of good health status as an asset for the economy and society and to develop policy relevant knowledge and evidence. We expect that many of the projects will require strong multidisciplinary approaches. The budget for individual awards is £150,000 to £350,000 with a maximum duration of 36 months. I'll now hand you back to Liz who will explain the application process and lead us into the Q&A session.

Application and assessment process

LC Thanks, Louise, I'm going to briefly talk through the application and assessment process. The programme is an open award programme available to suitably qualified and experienced research teams based in the UK and elsewhere. We anticipate the lead will be a university or similar group with suitable research expertise, and we would encourage applications from multidisciplinary teams. The application is a single stage process and all applications must be submitted to us by the 12 noon on Friday 29th September. Applicants must complete an online research proposal application form which is available at aims.health.org.uk. If you

don't have an AIMS account already you will need to register first before you are able to access the Economic and Social Value of Health research programme application form. So please make sure you register as an organisation rather than an individual. We'd also ask that you familiarise yourselves with the online application portal at the earliest possible stage, as we may not be able to respond in a timely fashion to technical queries as the deadline for applications nears.

On the research programme web page, there is an applicant's user guide which explains how to register with AIMS and how to navigate the application form. Within the application form you will find there are mandatory fields that need to be completed before submission can be made. You may have already seen that each question has a word limit that the system does not allow you to exceed. We are unable to accept supplementary information attached and uploaded to your application form, apart from the documents requested in the form. So please ensure you answer all the questions on the form.

You will also find that declarations are required from the lead organisation before submission is possible. We do not require declarations from all partners, just the lead applicant. But it's important that you have agreement from all parties to partner on the project before submitting your application if you're putting in a joint application of that sort failure to do so may result in your applications being rejected. You must ensure that you click submit when you have finally completed your application. Simply saving it does not transfer it to our assessors and it will automatically be considered as incomplete and ineligible application. You will receive a confirmation email when you have successfully submitted your form.

When applications are received by the Health Foundation, they will be assessed internally, looking at eligibility and fit with the programme criteria as outlined in the notes for applicants. If you are unsuccessful at this stage, you will be notified by the end of October by email. Unfortunately, detailed individual feedback cannot be provided to all applicants due to the anticipated number of applications. Following this, the successful long listed applications will be sent for peer review by experts in the fields selected as relevant individual applications. Please ensure that you include the details of at least one peer reviewer in your application. Those that are successful at this stage will be invited for an interview at the Health Foundation offices, after which we will aim to select a number of preferred applicants. Interviews for the awards will take place on Wednesday 6th December and Thursday 7th December.

So, to summarise the deadline for your applications is 12 noon on Friday 29th September. The electronic system will not accept applications after that time. Please ensure you factor in enough time to get the required signatures in place by this deadline. We advise you start your application on the system at least a week before the deadline.

Assessments will be carried out through October and November and interviews will take place over the sixth and seventh of December. So please ensure you're

available for interview on those days, as we are unable to offer alternative interview dates and final decisions will be made in mid-December.

Best practice for completing your proposal

Now I'm going to run through some of the frequently asked questions that have come up. Much of this may sound obvious but there are some key elements that are omitted from applications.

First ensure your proposal seeks to address a clearly defined gap in the knowledge. You need to convincingly describe the question you are trying to address. You will need to refer to evidence in order to convince the assessors and demonstrate how your research will address the gap in knowledge. The notes for applicants provides a summary of where these gaps exist.

Second, ensure your proposal provides a suitable methodology to address the questions you are seeking to address. Although we expect many proposals will involve analysis of longitudinal data sets, we are also interested in research involving qualitative methods.

Third, ensure you complete all sections of the tender response in particular proposals will be assessed using the following criteria: that the proposal directly addresses our area of interest or areas of interest; a clearly defined gap in the knowledge that the research is seeking to address; application of robust and appropriate methodology; a thorough understanding of the data requirements for the project, including a proactive approach to implementing appropriate information governance and data security arrangements; usefulness and generalisability of anticipated findings; understanding of the policy landscape and potential policy impact; appropriate project management approach and risk management and quality assurance approaches; value for money; and relevant experience and expertise of the team.

Please note that while we have areas of particular interest, there are no priority areas so your answer to 4.2 on the application form should be a zero.

Fourthly, are you involving the right people? When you come to set this out be clear about the rationale for who you involve in the project team and why. As I've mentioned we are keen to support multidisciplinary research. Project teams will need to demonstrate that they have research and analytical skills relevant to the project and a partnership with any relevant stakeholders.

Fifth, have you allowed enough time to access the data required for your project and do you have the required information governance in place? We are aware that accessing the data required for some research projects particularly if data linkage is involved can be a lengthy and involved process. You will need to demonstrate in your application that you have a thorough understanding of data and information governance of the project and have allowed for this in your timeline.

Sixth, ensure that you provide an accurate and realistic costing for the research. Please ensure you include all relevant costing in your proposal as outlined in the supplied budget template. As Louise, has already mentioned, the budget for each project is in a range of £150,000 to £350,000. In exceptional circumstances, we may consider funding a research idea beyond that maximum. But you will however need to present an excellent case for this, based on the additional value and impact of the proposal. Please note that as a charity we will fund only the 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.

Seventh, thinking about the research. This is an important area that you will be asked about in some detail if you're invited to interview. You should begin thinking early about how you plan to share learning from the research. With policy makers and decision makers responsible for key areas of economic and social policy at all levels. As well as the academic research community commissioners and third sector organisations that work on the economic and social policy.

Finally, if you have more than one research idea you are more than welcome to submit more than one application. However, it is important that you demonstrate in each proposal sufficient capacity to undertake the different projects. We would also expect to see a coherent rationale from multiple applications and a justification for each separate project. That's all that I wanted to say so we'll now open out to questions, over to you, Courtney.

Question and answer session¹

Q1 Hello, I've seen in your paperwork and you said again today there's an emphasis on existing longitudinal data sets and you've said that you're also interested in qualitative methods. I'm interested in putting through a multidisciplinary proposal but also using some experimental methods with [biochemical measures] as the primary data.

Within this budget, it would be quite small scale, so it wouldn't be able to tie up directly to the [longitudinal] datasets that you're directing people to - would that be acceptable within a strong research proposal?

What we're thinking of proposing is to identify some mechanisms at cellular level so in a sense it would be proof of concept and method. So it would be relatively small but directly to mechanism rather than associational.

LC That sounds to me like that would be outside of the remit as the core really, I think we're looking for a link with [economic and social] development over time I think. I should also say really, we weren't planning to talk about individual projects today

¹ Question and answer session has been edited for clarity of reading and to maintain call participants' anonymity

it was a more generalisable information about aspects of the process and so on. But that sounds to me like it's outside of our remit.

Q2 Hi, I just wanted to quickly ask about the geographical focus of the call. I understand the foundation has a UK focus, but would you allow the use of non-UK data? Perhaps given the precondition that the findings would be generalisable to the UK.

LC I think although we're open to applications from teams outside the UK, we do want the research to be based on UK data.

Q3 Would you be willing to look at an application that looks at socioeconomic inequalities, as well as regional differences within the UK? Does that fall within the remit?

LC Yes certainly, that would be OK.

LM We're very keen to consider relative as well as absolute health, so yes that would certainly fall within the remit.

Q4 I just wanted to confirm whether health covered health behaviours as well? You mentioned obesity in the call but a lot of it's focused on health rather than health behaviours in the call.

Q4 [We would propose looking at] the effect of behaviours on socioeconomic outcomes, so for example alcohol consumption on later life outcomes.

LM Yes potentially [however as mentioned earlier we are not looking to fund research into the value of public health interventions].

Q4 Thanks and could I just also just an additional the one dataset we might consider for some people the data was collected at the same time so some people might think it's cross sectional. But the dataset includes data that covers the whole of people's lives so the longitudinal element is there. So there's retrospective data as it were collected.

LC Yes if the longitudinal element is there yes.

Q5 I have two questions actually if it's okay one is about impact partners and would they be involved, would you prefer them to be involved more whilst scoping the questions and investigation? Or would they make use of the analysis so that would be my first question.

LC I think involvement in scoping would sound like a good idea if you're thinking about impact as well.

Q5 So both are okay?

LC Yes.

Q5 And my second question is: would it be better to look into multiple datasets or into one dataset but in more detail?

- LC I think it would depend on your specific question and the best way of answering that specific question, and justifying your approach in your proposal. As Louise said it's quite an open call.
- Q6 **Hello, I'm calling from a third sector organisation so it seems like you have an expectation that this research would be led by a university. How solid is that expectation? And also, if there was to be a joint application with say a third sector organisation and a university is there any way that you would facilitate that process? Or maybe that's something that we would have to create ourselves.**
- LC We'd be very happy to receive applications from non-university researchers. I think the question there is making sure that there's sufficient expertise and experience in the team. I think in terms of facilitating partnership I don't think we would be able to help you with that.
- Q7 **I have a question about the datasets that you've given in the notes for applicants, and I just wondered if they were mandatory datasets that had to be used? Or if it was alright to use a dataset that we already have, so long as it's longitudinal?**
- LC Absolutely, yes, they were just there as a guide to the kinds of things that were out there.
- Q7 **I have one more question, are you looking for a multi-centre study? I was wondering if you had one study that was conducted in one regional area and the results of that could be generalisable to the rest of the UK. Would that be appropriate or would it be preferable to have a multicentre study?**
- LM I think that would be appropriate, as you say, considering generalisability.
- Q8 **Hi, I [wanted to ask] about the role of co-funding and also the involvement of government stakeholders? I was wondering if having secured existing resource and then looking for additional funding from this call to be able to expand the scope of work whether that was a possibility and how that would be perceived? And also, the Health Foundation's view of having existing government partners involved in this project?**
- LC We're quite happy to joint fund with an existing project or joint funder, as long as we're clear what our contribution is for. You will need to provide details of when and from whom the rest of the funding is likely to be secured, and prior to a funding decision, we will need clarity about where responsibility lies contractually in terms of research governance, intellectual property, publication and dissemination etc.
- Q9 **Hello, my question is about working with the Health Foundation and I can see in the notes for applicants that any successful applicant will be expected to attend advisory board meetings, which would be great. But I'm sure there's a lot of other things that could be done throughout the life of the project and I was just wondering if you had any more information about what that relationship might look like.**

LC We would normally expect to have a fairly close relationship. The research manager involved would be taking an interest and want to maintain a relationship with the research team, for example, by meeting with successful teams, and receiving an annual report on progress. There are a range of opportunities for engagement – such as events like round tables, blogs etc. Depending on the progress of an individual project, there are opportunities for engagement.

Q8 Presumably in the application we make suggestions as to how we would see dissemination but also you might have your own programme dissemination activities?

LC Yes that's right, and we will also pay for open access publications.

Q9 I wondered whether you're interested in patient perspectives and a patient organisation being part of the multidisciplinary team and is this included in the criteria of the selection? In terms of patient perceptions and their viewpoints, if you're looking at the longitudinal study too and people's personal experiences that might be important?

We're very interested to have qualitative aspects to the research. You mentioned 'patient' perspectives though – we wouldn't want the work to be healthcare focused, but we are definitely interested in qualitative aspects to the research to help us understand some of the mechanisms or pathways by which health influences economic and social outcomes, so it would depend on what those perspectives are being used for and representing.

LC Thank you very much, Courtney. If you have any further questions, please feel free to email us at: economicandsocialvalueofhealth@health.org.uk. We're looking forward to receiving your applications by 29 September, thank you very much for giving us some very interesting questions.