

# Project specification

## *Consultancy services for inclusion panel*

Consultancy services to support the rapid development of the Health Foundation's 'inclusion panel', helping administer the prototype panel, iterating panel membership, capturing learning about the operation of the panel, and making recommendations on the viability of the panel and its long-term role.

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## **1.0 About the Health Foundation**

The Health Foundation is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and health care for people in the UK.

Our aim is a healthier population, supported by high quality health care that can be equitably accessed. We learn what works to make people's lives healthier and improve the health care system. From giving grants to those working at the front line to carrying out research and policy analysis, we shine a light on how to make successful change happen.

We make links between the knowledge we gain from working with those delivering health and health care and our research and analysis. Our aspiration is to create a virtuous circle, using what we know works on the ground to inform effective policymaking and vice versa.

We believe good health and health care are key to a flourishing society. Through sharing what we learn, collaborating with others and building people's skills and knowledge, we aim to make a difference and contribute to a healthier population.

## **2.0 Background to project**

In line with our mission to improve health and health care for all in the UK and address health inequalities, the Health Foundation has committed to developing an organisational approach to mainstreaming and embedding diversity and inclusion across the organisation and in the way and what it funds. As part of this commitment, the Foundation has set up its own Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Programme Board to make progress on embedding D&I across the organisation. However, we currently have limited institutional mechanisms for making sure that our externally-facing work, including our research agendas and the research questions we explore, are inclusive in their design and delivery.

COVID-19 has revealed the significant and devastating impact of inequality across the UK, with emerging evidence of a disproportionate impact on minority ethnic communities, a lack of data on people with learning disabilities, increased food poverty, and concerns around the impact of school closures on children in the most deprived areas. The Foundation is seeking to make significant contributions to the evidence base on COVID-19 and inequality by launching a rapid researcher-led call, our new [COVID-19 Research Programme](#) and reprioritising significant in-house analytical capacity to look at this issue in more depth.

While COVID-19 shines a stark light on health inequalities, it has also highlighted the muted voice of marginalised communities in many of the discussions around COVID-19. As a Foundation, we are committed to not perpetuating health inequalities by ignoring the experience, expertise and priorities of people and communities who experience poorer health outcomes. The Research team are looking to embed this commitment in the ongoing development of our research strategy, with the aim of making our practices and processes more inclusive and encouraging greater diversity in the research ecosystem.

We now have a real opportunity to ensure the work we do is more inclusive. By creating an inclusion panel to advise us on the research we plan, fund and commission, we believe we can enhance our ability to improve health for all – especially those most marginalised – while strengthening the D&I agenda taking place across the Foundation.

To fully benefit from panel members' expertise and insight while the Foundation develops its rapidly emerging research response to COVID-19, we must set up the panel at speed. We have proposed setting up a proof-of-concept prototype (or proto-panel) with a clear and specific remit to meet this short-term need. Initially, the panel will support the Foundation's rapid response to COVID-19 by advising us on the inclusivity of our COVID-19 Research Programme and research questions and help us understand the underlying mechanisms for

the outcomes we're seeing in the data. With ongoing input from colleagues across the Foundation and advice from external stakeholders, we plan to evolve the panel into a longer-term corporate resource.

This project specification is for consultancy services to support the rapid development of the inclusion panel, helping administer the proto-panel, iterating panel membership, capturing learning about the operation of the panel, and making recommendations on the viability of the panel and its long-term role.

**The budget for this work is a maximum of £30,000 (including VAT and expenses).**

## 2.1 Purpose of the panel

The inclusion panel will initially act as a reference group for teams across the Foundation as they develop their research and analytical questions around health inequalities in response to COVID-19.

The inclusion panel will not have decision-making powers, but will be expected to provide advice and guidance to teams to help:

- test and refine research and analysis questions
- generate ideas for further research and analysis or for new programmes of research
- improve the interpretation of results (sense-making)
- shed light on the mechanisms influencing the results.

The inclusion panel will help strengthen our understanding of different forms of inequality and intersectionality, enabling us to make a more meaningful contribution to this space. The inclusion panel will recruit individuals from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in research (eg researchers or research participants from ethnic minorities) who have a better understanding of the health, health care or social care needs of those underrepresented groups and can guide our research accordingly. As some groups or communities are more likely to be adversely affected by COVID-19, involving researchers and systems leaders with expertise in the inequalities facing these communities should improve the quality and impact of the research we fund.

## 2.2 Panel delivery

To fully benefit from panel members' expertise and insight while we actively develop our response to COVID-19, we must set up the proto-panel at speed. The project is currently being managed by the Research team, but we are looking to rapidly recruit a consultant to boost capacity and to draw on their experience of building networks with seldom-heard voices. The consultant will help us make sure that the proto-panel is well managed by providing excellent secretariat support, coordinating panel meetings, agendas and minutes, managing panel meetings virtually, improving existing panel documentation (eg TORs, conflict of interest policies, code of conducts) and developing new documentation as appropriate. The consultant will also be responsible for refreshing the panel membership periodically and helping ensure that members' participation is a positive experience (eg by helping us understand and remove potential barriers to participation). The initial remit of the proto-panel will be limited to help manage the inflow of requests and gradually expanded once we have a better idea of demand.

The proto-panel will act as proof of concept for the inclusion panel, providing valuable insight into the viability of the inclusion panel and its future role. The consultant will be tasked with developing the proto-panel iteratively using PDSA (plan, do, study, act) cycles or alternative

development methods, and refreshing the proto-panel membership in line with its evolving scope and remit. The project team and the consultant will engage with external stakeholders (including researchers, policy professionals and public engagement experts) for independent advice on the development and delivery of the inclusion panel.

Our plan is to keep the proto-panel running for at least 12 months – in parallel with the duration of awards arising from the COVID-19 Research Programme – by which time we hope to have a more fully-formed model for the inclusion panel with a better understanding of its scope, operation and long-term value. The consultant will report to us at the end of this period, when we will seek approval to continue to run the inclusion panel.

<b>Details of the work</b>	Aims and objectives	To support the rapid development of the inclusion panel, help administer the proto-panel, iterate panel membership, capture learning about the operation of the panel, and make recommendations on the viability of the panel and its long-term role.
	Overview of the work required	<p>The Health Foundation plans to commission the supplier to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage the proto-panel by coordinating panel meetings, agendas and minutes.</li> <li>• Develop the proto-panel iteratively using PDSA (plan, do, study, act) cycles or alternative development methods.</li> <li>• Refresh membership of the proto-panel by recruiting a diverse range of people with professional and personal experience of health inequalities on to the proto-panel and helping ensure their membership is a positive experience.</li> <li>• Review and improve existing panel documentation (eg TORs, conflict of interest policies, code of conducts).</li> <li>• Provide written documentation capturing learning from the operation of the proto-panel and other external stakeholder engagement. This will contain recommendations that the Foundation can use to plan for the development of a permanent inclusion panel.</li> </ul>
	Accountability	<p><b>The supplier's responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We expect frequent updates from the chosen supplier and we will want to meet or speak with the chosen supplier regularly. Initially, we anticipate holding weekly project meetings via Skype/Zoom.</li> <li>• The supplier will be responsible for managing the proto-panel, coordinating panel meetings, agendas and minutes.</li> <li>• The supplier will be responsible for reviewing and improving existing panel documentation. The supplier will be responsible for making/recommending the</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reasonable adjustments required for individuals with particular impairments.</li> <li>• We anticipate the supplier will recruit new people with relevant professional and personal experience on to the proto-panel.</li> <li>• The supplier will be responsible for establishing contact with potential panel members and communicating with existing panel members unless otherwise agreed.</li> <li>• We anticipate the supplier will engage with a diverse range of external stakeholders (including researchers, policy professionals and public engagement experts) to obtain independent advice on the ongoing development and delivery of the proto-panel.</li> <li>• The supplier will be responsible for providing written documentation that captures learning from the operation of the proto-panel and other external stakeholder engagement.</li> <li>• The supplier will develop recommendations for the Foundation on the viability of a permanent inclusion panel and key development considerations.</li> <li>• Applicants are responsible for making sure their proposals make reasonable allowances for the time required to fulfil these obligations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Our responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work with the chosen supplier to confirm the design of the work before the work begins, including any changes needed on the project plan (eg milestones and dates). The work will be overseen by a Research Manager, with input provided by a User Group from the Health Foundation.</li> <li>• We will identify and recruit individuals to the first iteration of the proto-panel.</li> <li>• We will work with the supplier to ensure plans for iterating panel membership are appropriate.</li> <li>• We will provide the supplier with our existing panel documentation.</li> <li>• We will work with the supplier to ensure reasonable adjustments for panel members with particular impairments can be appropriately made. We will work with the supplier to engage with external stakeholders (including researchers, policy professionals and public engagement experts).</li> <li>• We will work with the supplier to ensure written documentation capturing learning from the operation of the proto-panel and other external stakeholder engagement is appropriate.</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work with the supplier to ensure recommendations made to the Foundation are appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverables</b>	Delivery requirements	<p><b>Proto-panel management</b></p> <p>Upon selection the supplier will be responsible for all activities related to proto-panel management. This will include coordinating meetings, agendas, minutes etc.</p> <p>The supplier will be responsible for ensuring the proto-panel is an inclusive and positive experience for its members by making/recommending the reasonable adjustments required for individuals with particular impairments.</p>
		<p><b>Iterating proto-panel membership</b></p> <p>The first set of members of the proto-panel will be recruited by the Health Foundation prior to the selection of the successful supplier.</p> <p>The supplier will develop the proto-panel iteratively using PDSA (plan, do, study, act) cycles or alternative development methods.</p> <p>We expect the supplier to refresh panel membership in line with its evolving scope and remit and to recruit a diverse range of people with professional and personal experience of health inequalities on to the proto-panel.</p> <p>The supplier will be responsible for recruitment of new panel members to the proto-panel, in consultation with the project team.</p>
		<p><b>Improvement of proto-panel documentation</b></p> <p>We will provide the supplier with working documentation for the proto-panel (eg TORs, conflict of interest policies, code of conducts).</p> <p>The supplier will be responsible for improving the documentation in line with the evolving scope and remit of the proto-panel, in consultation with the project team.</p>
		<p><b>Capturing learning about the operation of the proto-panel</b></p> <p>The supplier will engage with external stakeholders (including researchers, policy professionals and public engagement experts) to obtain independent advice on the ongoing development and delivery of the inclusion panel.</p> <p>We expect the supplier to provide written documentation capturing learning from the operation of the proto-panel and other external stakeholder engagement. This will be used by</p>

		<p>the Foundation to consider the viability of a permanent inclusion panel.</p> <p>The documentation will make recommendations on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the costs and benefits of a permanent inclusion panel and its long-term role.</li> <li>• the recruitment of new panel members to the permanent inclusion panel.</li> <li>• The reasonable adjustments required for individuals with particular impairments.</li> </ul> <p>The supplier will have discretion over the content and structure of the documentation.</p>																		
	Outcomes	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Milestone</th><th>Date</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Deadline for proposal submissions</td><td>13 July 2020</td></tr> <tr> <td>Interviews and selection</td><td>16 July 2020</td></tr> <tr> <td>Inception meeting</td><td>w/c 20 July 2020</td></tr> <tr> <td>First proto-panel meeting</td><td>w/c 27 July 2020</td></tr> <tr> <td>Deadline for finalised panel documentation</td><td>September 2020</td></tr> <tr> <td>Deadline for second iteration of proto-panel</td><td>November 2020</td></tr> <tr> <td>Deadline for third iteration of proto-panel</td><td>March 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>Deadline for documentation capturing learning</td><td>June 2021</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Milestone	Date	Deadline for proposal submissions	13 July 2020	Interviews and selection	16 July 2020	Inception meeting	w/c 20 July 2020	First proto-panel meeting	w/c 27 July 2020	Deadline for finalised panel documentation	September 2020	Deadline for second iteration of proto-panel	November 2020	Deadline for third iteration of proto-panel	March 2021	Deadline for documentation capturing learning	June 2021
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### 3.0 Instructions for tender responses

- 3.1 Please submit your tender response using the Response form and Budget template available on the website.
- 3.2 The Foundation reserves the right to adjust or change the selection criteria at its discretion. The Foundation also reserves the right to accept or reject any and all responses at its discretion, and to negotiate the terms of any subsequent agreement.
- 3.3 This work specification is not an offer to enter into an agreement with the Foundation, it is a request to receive proposals from third parties interested in providing the deliverables outlined. Such proposals will be considered and treated by the Foundation as offers to enter into an agreement. The Foundation may reject all proposals, in whole or in part, and/or enter into negotiations with any other party to provide such services whether it responds to this specification and request for response or not.

- 3.4 The Foundation will not be responsible for any costs incurred by you in responding to this specification and will not be under any obligation to you with regard to the subject matter of this specification.
- 3.5 The Foundation is not obliged to disclose anything about the successful bidders, but will endeavour to provide feedback, if possible, to unsuccessful bidders.
- 3.6 Your bid is to remain open for a minimum of 100 days from the proposal response date.
- 3.7 You may, without prejudice to yourself, modify your proposal by written request, provided the request is received by the Foundation prior to the proposal response date. Following withdrawal of your proposal, you may submit a new proposal, provided delivery is effected prior to the established proposal response date.
- 3.8 Please note that any proposals received which fail to meet the specified criteria contained in it will not be considered for this project.

#### **4.0 Selection criteria**

- 4.1 Responses will be evaluated by the Foundation using the following criteria in no particular order:
  - Skills and expertise in the management and delivery of similar groups, panels, or boards.
  - Knowledge and awareness of health inequalities and/or diversity and inclusion challenges, including ensuring supporting materials, events and meetings are accessible and that language is appropriate etc.
  - Demonstrable experience of working with patients and/or people with lived experience.
  - Appropriateness of proposed approach.
  - Appropriate project management, risk management and quality assurance expertise.
  - Demonstrable capacity to deliver projects at a rapid pace, on budget and to the required standard.
  - Ability to adapt to evolving needs or changing environments and flex resource capabilities as appropriate.
  - Ability to work collaboratively with a broad range of stakeholders, including people with lived experience who do not have specialist public health or research knowledge.
  - Strong communication skills.
  - Value for money.
- 4.2 It is important to the Foundation that the chosen supplier can demonstrate that the right calibre of staff will be assigned to the project; therefore, the project leader who will be responsible for the project should be present during the panel interviews if you are selected.

#### **5.0 Selection process**

- 5.1 Please email electronic copies of your completed Response form and Budget template plus any accompanying documents to Hardeep Aiden, Research Manager at [hardeep.aiden@health.org.uk](mailto:hardeep.aiden@health.org.uk) by 18:00, Monday 13 July 2020.
- 5.2 A response to your application will be made by 18:00, Tuesday 14 July 2020.
- 5.3 Interviews will be held via Zoom on Thursday 16 July 2020.

- 5.4 Final decision will be communicated by 18:00, Friday 17 July 2020.
- 5.5 Start date to be agreed following the final decision (and would be as soon as practicable).

## **6.0 Confidentiality**

- 6.1 By reading/responding to this document you accept that your organisation and staff will treat information as confidential and will not disclose to any third party without prior written permission being obtained from the Foundation.
- 6.2 Suppliers may be requested to complete a non-disclosure agreement.

## **7.0 Conflicts of interest**

- 7.1 The Foundation's conflicts of interest policy describe how it will deal with any conflicts which arise as a result of the work which the charity undertakes. All external applicants intending to submit tenders to the Foundation should familiarise themselves with the contents of the conflicts of interest policy as part of the tendering process and declare any interests that are relevant to the nature of the work they are bidding for. The policy can be found and downloaded from the Foundation's website at the following location: [https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-05/health-foundation\\_conflicts-of-interest-policy-and-procedure\\_updated-april-2020.pdf](https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-05/health-foundation_conflicts-of-interest-policy-and-procedure_updated-april-2020.pdf)