

# Policy Research Unit to drive improving health and reducing inequalities in Scotland

Information call

24 August 2023



# Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Background
- The Policy Research Unit
- Application and selection process
- Submitted questions
- Open Q&A
- Close



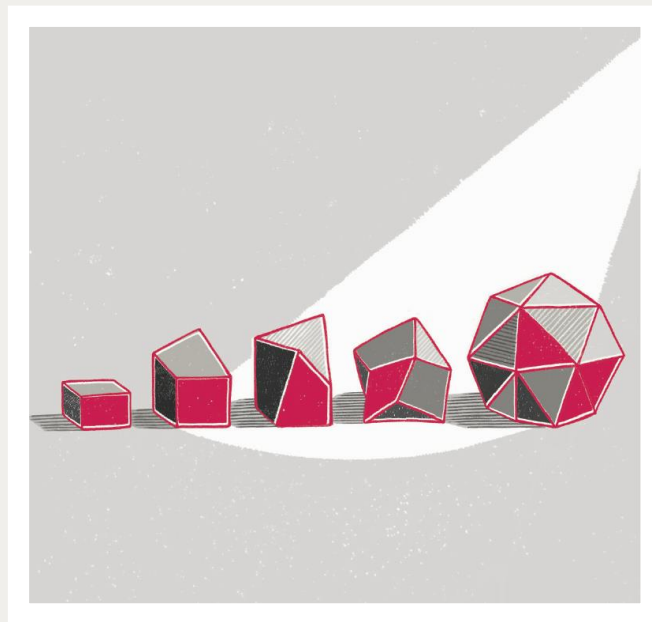
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# Background

# About us

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

We connect what works on the ground with effective policymaking and vice versa



We shine a light on  
how to make successful  
change happen

# Overview (1/2)

The final report of our review into the state of health and health inequalities in Scotland, Leave no one behind, highlighted:

- a lack of improvement in health and socioeconomic factors that support health in the decade before the pandemic and, in many cases, widening inequalities
- concerning signs that people living in the most disadvantaged areas are being left behind
- a lack of an independent evidence-based commentary in Scottish policy development and discourse
- an identified 'implementation gap' between policy intent and the experience on the ground.

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# Overview (2/2)

- This next phase of work will align with Health Foundation values and our strategic priorities:
  - increasing understanding about the economic and societal benefits of good health
  - focusing on the key role of economic, social and environmental factors in shaping health and driving inequalities
  - working with stakeholders to build cross-sector support and mobilise action for the changes needed to promote healthier lives.
- The work will be delivered by a new Policy Research Unit based in Scotland to help maintain the principle that the work is developed and owned by Scotland.
- Up to £1.2m in grant funding is available to establish the unit and develop and deliver the 3-year programme of activity.

# Long-term aims of the Health Foundation

- Increased public awareness and debate about the action needed to improve health and address inequalities
- Greater adoption among decision-makers of the policy approaches needed to improve health and address inequalities
- More effective delivery and implementation of policy to address the implementation gap
- A cross-sector approach to taking action in Scotland to improve health and reduce inequalities
- Further developing the Health Foundation's presence, influence and engagement in Scotland



# The Policy Research Unit

# Funding for the Policy Research Unit

- The grant funding is anticipated to support:
  - a senior role to lead and shape the work of the unit and engage with stakeholders across the Scottish policy community
  - provide additional capacity for research and analysis
  - project management and wider functions such as admin, contract governance, meetings, publications and events
  - externally commissioned partners to deliver parts of the work as required.

# Key areas of work

## Policy Research Unit

### Tackling the implementation gap

- Understand barriers to implementation
- developing actionable policy recommendations

### Providing policy and insights

- Independent and critical voice in Scotland
- scrutiny and input to policy development

### Collaboration across the delivery system

- Engage stakeholders across sectors including the public
- Influence senior leaders and decision makers

# Delivery approach

- Design phase: including developing delivery plans and recruitment of staff to the unit
- Action phase: delivery of work from Spring 2024 to end of 2026
- The unit will be supported by a senior advisor, communications agency commissioned by the Health Foundation and a steering group.

# Application and selection process

# Eligibility

- The programme is available to an experienced policy research partner based in Scotland, with knowledge and expertise in Scotland-specific issues and context. Proposals can include collaboration between different institutions or organisations.

# Assessment criteria

- Mission alignment with the Health Foundation aims to improve health and reduce inequalities
- Rigour and independence, and a history of delivering similar work
- Expertise in health, the determinants of health including income, employment and housing
- Experience of project and programme management of research programmes of a similar scale
- Experience of engaging with policymakers and contributing to policy impact.
- Financial stability and long-term viability of the organisation (due diligence may be undertaken on shortlisted organisations)
- Commitment to being a living wage employer
- Commitment to embedding principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in one's work

# Application process

- The Health Foundation uses [Salesforce Grants](#) to receive and assess applications. Guidance is available on navigating the applicant portal. To apply you will need to:
  - answer the questions on our applicant portal
  - upload an indicative budget to the portal using the Health Foundation template (download this from the application portal)
  - upload a project plan document. Please note, the project plan will be reviewed as part of our assessment process. We can accept Word files and PDFs.



# Application timetable

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Closing date for applications	12.00, Wednesday 27 September 2023
Notification of outcome of application	Friday 13 October 2023
Interviews	Friday 20 October 2023
Final decision	17.00, Monday 23 October 2023
Start date	As early as possible

# Next steps

- Responses to questions asked today will be included in a 'Frequently asked questions' document that will be added to the ITT webpage.
- This presentation will also be added to the webpage.
- Feel free to email us at any point before the deadline if you have further questions or queries – [healthylives.tenders@health.org.uk](mailto:healthylives.tenders@health.org.uk).

# Submitted questions

# Submitted questions (1/2)

Theme	Questions	Response
Budget	Can you confirm whether overhead costs can be included, or only direct costs of research?	<p>We will fund overheads on a project for charities or not-for-profit organisations (eligible organisations) or for research organisations that subcontract to an eligible organisation. Overheads cannot exceed 15% of the direct project costs. We will also fund overheads for research organisations but only to the extent that these overheads cannot be recovered from a central fund, such as the QR Funding or Charity Research Support Fund.</p> <p>Commercial organisations should contact us separately.</p>
Budget	The call for applications mentions a detailed budget for the first 6 months and an indicative budget for the remaining part of the programme. Could you discuss the timescales and approval process for that please, so we can plan that into our application?	<p>We would like applicants to submit an outline budget covering the full 3-year programme. We expect a detailed budget for the period of the design phase (which may take anywhere up to 6 months) and indicative costs for the remainder of the programme.</p> <p>The successful organisation will submit a revised budget with detailed costings for the full 3-year period at the end of the design phase.</p> <p>The unit is expected to formally launch early 2024 but no later than June 2024.</p>

# Submitted questions (2/2)

Theme	Questions	Response
Branding	What is the expectation of the Foundation regarding branding of the unit?	<p>The branding and name of the unit would be part of decisions finalised during the design phase.</p> <p>Our expectation is that the unit's name and branding would clearly link the unit to the Health Foundation.</p>
Unit team and partners	One question I have is about involvement of researchers who already have Scottish government advisory roles. On the one hand, this would enable the unit to work well in influencing policy at government level but on the other hand may not square with the need for the unit to have an independent voice. What would you advise?	<p>The independence of the unit is important, though we recognise and expect that experts will have some level of engagement with policymakers.</p> <p>It would be important for any potential conflicts of interest to be acknowledged and available publicly.</p> <p>Proposals would need to demonstrate that the unit would maintain independence in its activity.</p> <p>This would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and depend on the level of involvement and relationship the researcher has with the unit and in the government advisory role.</p>

Open Q&A

# Thank you

See the programme webpage for further details  
or email [healthylives.tenders@health.org.uk](mailto:healthylives.tenders@health.org.uk)

