

# Invitation to tender: Research partners for a commission on work and health

## Frequently asked questions

**Last updated: 14 September 2023**

### Application process

**Is there a template to complete our response?**

Applications should be submitted via our online portal. You can find the tender response form on the portal.

**Can we include overheads in the budget template?**

We only want to see day rates for team members in the budget template.

**Will interviews be in person?**

We intend to hold the interviews in person with the applicant team, but we can arrange for a remote interview if this is preferred.

**How many teams do you expect to shortlist for interview?**

The number of shortlisted applicants depends on the quality and the scope of the bids. For example if we have three excellent bids to answer all four papers, we could invite them all, or we might invite more applicants if they only want to work on a specific paper).

**Will there be an advantage if you apply for more papers?**

We are looking for the best proposal for each paper, so if you have expertise on one issue you have an equal chance to another applicant who is bidding for multiple papers.

**If we were to use different strategic approaches for two or more themes and there is overlap between the themes, would you prefer a combined review or separate reviews?**

Whichever approach works best. If multiple themes are interlinked and you feel there is a strong argument for combining the reviews, we will consider it. However, you should only submit one application to cover all the themes you want to work on – not separate applications.

Note: If you apply to work on two or more themes, and we feel that at least one of those themes should be covered by another supplier, we may still ask you to undertake the remaining themes.

**We intend to apply for multiple themes but there doesn't seem to be anywhere to add the additional information.**

If you intend to apply for four or more themes you are welcome to upload an additional document of up to six pages. For one to three themes, please limit your additional document

to three pages.

**Will you accept bids from individuals?**

We are looking to work with organisations rather than individual researchers. If you are a freelancer, we suggest you collaborate with an organisation with whom you have a relationship (eg a think tank or academic centre) to submit a joint proposal.

**Will you accept bids from partnerships or consortia?**

We welcome organisations working with partners to bring in additional expertise. There will also be opportunities to work with other research partners where appropriate.

**If experiences are predominantly private sector-based, would this count against a bid?**

No.

**Can collaboration be built around a team from different countries?**

Yes, but the lead partner should be in the UK.

**Who will be assessing the bids and conducting the interview panel?**

Bids will be assessed (shortlisted) and interviews conducted by Health Foundation staff and a panel of external peer and public reviewers. They will all sign non-disclosure agreements to maintain the confidentiality of your bid.

**What is the format of the interview? Will we need to present a project pitch?**

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview, which will include a presentation of the proposal, set questions related to the selection criteria, and a more open discussion. The initial application should be submitted via the portal. Additional documents may be uploaded but we do not expect slides.

**When is the closing date?**

The closing date is 12.00 (midday), Monday 18 September 2023.

**Is it possible to get an extension to allow for summer holidays?**

Unfortunately we cannot offer extensions. We have kept the application window open for 9.5 weeks to allow time for proposals to be developed around holidays.

**If we need to request amendments to the standard contract clauses, would you want these to be mentioned in the bid documents?**

If you think any clauses could be problematic, please flag these to us in advance via email. We won't action any amendments unless we contract with you, and we are happy with the proposed amendments.

## Project and research design

**Does the Health Foundation have academic partners in place?**

We do not have an academic partner in place. We will form an advisory group to support the research programme, which will include academics as well as other experts. The research team must have sufficient knowledge and skills to deliver the research but does not have to include academics.

**Does the research cover all four nations?**

We expect the commission to cover all four UK nations. However some data collection, policy and service delivery is devolved so we accept that not all research can cover the whole UK. Please consider how other nations can be reflected, eg through literature reviews.

**Are there any existing datasets that you have or are aware of which you expect to be leveraged for this project?**

Key datasets are likely to include the Labour Force Survey and other standard household datasets like Understanding Society. We encourage proposals that include use of wider sources, including the use of administrative data, to ensure they add to the existing evidence base and bring fresh perspectives. We ask bidders to identify the required data and explain how they can access it.

**Would it be possible to clarify what types of data collection would be considered by the Health Foundation as appropriate for this project? We noticed that the ITT is for desk-based research (ie evidence reviews and secondary data analysis) but qualitative interviews are mentioned later in the document.**

We expect that it will primarily consist of secondary data analysis and academic/grey literature reviews and likely also include policy analysis, expert interviews and roundtables. Qualitative research (eg focus groups) may also be appropriate.

**Would involving policy/government departments at this stage be acceptable/desirable? Or do you anticipate that being more of a role after key research areas have been identified?**

This would be acceptable if there is balance in the choice of advisers and transparency about their role. Our programme advisory group will include government representatives, but we are keen to maintain the commission's independence.

**Would you want us to publish our review protocol(s) online?**

We are always supportive of open and transparent research methods, but the decision to publish protocols online will rest with each research partner.

**Would it be acceptable to reference 'new thinking' even if it's not published work?**

Yes, it is fine to cite blogs, articles and personal communications where relevant.

**Regarding theme 2, it would also be great to hear whether the Health Foundation has a specific definition of 'local area' for the purposes of this project (region, local authority area, MSOAs, etc). Obviously, this will be dependent on the data available, but it would be helpful to hear if you have any preferences.**

We would expect you to define 'local areas' in the way that is most relevant for your research question(s).

## Project delivery

**When is the work expected to begin?**

Work on the research papers is expected to begin in Q4 2023 (ideally in October) so that there are findings and publications being released through 2024. However, the work may be staggered, with some projects starting later depending on capacity.

**You said you are expecting projects to run from October to September 2024. If we can't start until later, will we still get 12 months?**

No. We hope all teams will start their work in Q4 2024, but we appreciate there may be delays due to prior commitments, recruitment, etc. The deadline is September 2024 as we want to produce an interim report in Q4 2024 (to influence political parties ahead of the next general election) and this work will feed into it.

**You've said you can be flexible with regards to the content of our proposals, but can you be flexible once work has commenced?**

If you think something is missing from the subthemes, we are happy to hear from you. We may update the subthemes if we think it's appropriate. Once contracts are signed, we don't expect to make substantial changes, but we may ask for small adjustments to make sure that the work of each research partner aligns (eg to avoid duplication of effort).

**What is the budget for the tender?**

The overall budget for research is £240,000 including VAT. This may be split unevenly between the projects, depending on the scale of the proposed work. Value for money will be a criterion for selection but the lowest cost option will not necessarily be preferred. A key consideration is whether proposals are funded adequately to deliver to a high standard.

**What is the approval/sign-off process for outputs?**

Analysis and research would be developed with input from the advisory group, commissioners, Health Foundation-based secretariat and appropriate external reviewers. Final outputs would be reviewed and agreed with the Health Foundation-based secretariat.

**Are initial reports expected to suggest policy recommendations, or are recommendations only to come from the final Health Foundation report?**

We expect each thematic paper to discuss policy implications as appropriate.

**Will the Health Foundation publish the thematic papers or are we publishing the papers independently?**

The research partners will be expected to publish their papers via their own established channels. Any press releases should be agreed in consultation with our communications team. We will signpost to individual papers via the commission/Health Foundation website.

Note: We will not be signing off any reports.

**Is there a specific time period that the Health Foundation would expect the commissioned research to focus on when selecting material to analyse and report?**

No, but we are interested in long-term trends (not just post-pandemic changes). Please justify your chosen time period in your proposal.

**Would the work include post-publication activities? In other words, can we allocate activities to happen after September 2024?**

Provisionally yes, but it depends on the timing of the next general election. The research partners may be able to allocate activities around election time, but we will need people to be flexible with regards to timing.

We will pay for publications to be made open access after September 2024. We can also pay for team representatives to attend/present at events that were not included in the original budget.

**How will outputs be published?**

It is envisaged that suppliers will publish their own reports. These should include the Health Foundation and commission logos as standard, along with supplied text or infographics that explain the commission and how the output relates.

**When will the suppliers be paid?**

The payment schedule will be agreed at contracting stage, but would normally be at key milestones through the project and on completion.