

## Expressions of interest: Evidence Review Service

Also included:

- Expression of interest form
- Evidence Review Service Call-off Agreement

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February 2025

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## About the Health Foundation

The Health Foundation is an independent charitable organisation working to build a healthier UK.

We will play our part in building a healthier nation by focusing on three key priorities:

<b>Improving people's health and reducing inequalities</b>	<p>We will work with others to improve people's health and reduce inequalities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• increasing understanding about the economic and societal benefits of good health</li><li>• focusing on the key role of economic, social and environmental factors in shaping health and driving inequalities</li><li>• working with stakeholders to build cross-sector support and mobilise action for the changes needed to promote healthier lives.</li></ul>
<b>Supporting radical innovation and improvement in health and care services</b>	<p>We will support radical innovation and improvement in health and care services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• promoting and evaluating new approaches to improve and transform services</li><li>• helping to build an ecosystem for the generation, spread and adoption of new ideas and innovations</li><li>• strengthening cultures and capability to deliver change among health and care professionals, organisations and systems.</li></ul>
<b>Providing evidence and analysis to improve health and care policy</b>	<p>We will provide evidence and analysis to improve health and care policy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• publishing high-quality research</li><li>• producing analysis, insights and commentary to inform discussion and debate</li><li>• working with stakeholders to develop long-term thinking and solutions to the challenges facing the health and care system.</li></ul>

We are also continuing to develop our thinking and practice on the ways we can have a positive impact on our mission through how we work, particularly through the following three cross-cutting themes:

**Equity, diversity and inclusion:** We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion as an employer, a funder, and in our contributions to health and care policy and practice in the UK. Download our [equality and diversity policy](#).

**Public participation:** We're also developing how we engage and involve people – individuals and communities – in what we do. We want to embed public participation more consistently and more widely across our work, to realise the benefit of multiple and diverse

perspectives.

**Environmental sustainability:** We are committed to our environmental sustainability work, through both our research and analysis, and through our grant programmes.

Further details about the organisation can be found at [www.health.org.uk](http://www.health.org.uk).

## Summary

The Health Foundation is seeking providers to express an interest in becoming a supplier for its new Evidence Review Service, which will provide different types of high-quality evidence reviews on a wide range of topics in a timely and efficient manner.

Interested applicants should provide basic information about their organisation and details about their:

- expertise on specific health-related topic areas
- experience in delivering different types of evidence review.

Successful providers will be added to a list of preferred suppliers using the selection criteria in the 'How to apply' section. When there is a new evidence review commission, the Health Foundation will invite suitable providers to submit a short tender response for the work. These tenders will then be assessed and a supplier selected based on criteria including quality of service, ability to meet the brief and value for money.

## Background to the current evidence review framework

A Rapid Evidence Review (RER) framework was set up by the Health Foundation in 2019 to offer a streamlined and efficient procurement method for commissioning evidence reviews. This framework allowed for a pre-approved group of providers to bid to complete evidence reviews to a pre-agreed specification on pre-agreed terms.

In 2023, following the transition to the Health Foundation's 2023–25 strategy, a consultation process to assess whether the existing RER framework was meeting the needs of the evolving organisation was carried out. The recommendation following the consultation was to launch a new service offering a broader range of evidence review services from a wider range of suppliers.

## Requirements

### Services included

The new Evidence Review Service will cover reviews that either:

- **inform internal thinking** – these reviews will be scoping or lighter touch reviews and will not be published externally in their own right and are not intended to be cited in other published work
- **inform other published work** (eg, long reads or journal articles) – these are reviews that **would/could be published** in their own right and are developed through a robust methodology.

This new service will provide different types of reviews, as set out in the following table:

<b>Evidence method</b>	<b>Purpose<sup>1</sup></b>
Scoping review	Exploratory reviews typically addressing a broader question than a systematic review or rapid evidence review. They assess the extent of available evidence to highlight gaps. These do not include detailed critical appraisal of the evidence.
Rapid evidence review	An evidence review aiming to quickly produce a rigorous synthesis on a pre-defined, focused research question. Not as exhaustive or extensive as a systematic review and some steps may be simplified or omitted, eg, one reviewer rather than two.
Full literature review	An evidence review using clear and reproducible methods that are selected with a view to minimising bias, thus providing more reliable findings from which conclusions can be drawn and decisions made.

The supplier will be responsible for designing, managing and conducting the evidence review, and producing a report or other output as required.

This will require a project team with experience in conducting the relevant type of evidence review, as well as the ability to write in a clear and concise way. In some cases, the team may require a general understanding of the policy context.

We expect to commission reviews that cover multiple types of research question (see table below for some examples).

<b>Type of research question</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Mapping	What current literature is there about exploring retention in the health care workforce?  What evidence is there about the impact of seven-day working in acute care, including urgent/emergency care?	We expect the majority of reviews to map academic and current grey literature on a given topic. We may require providers to review quality or take a view on the evidence base.
Effectiveness of interventions	Quality Improvement Collaboratives – do they work?	We may require reviews that are able to answer questions about what works and effectiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> Definitions taken from 'What are the different types of review?' (covidence.org), accessed 25 April 2024.

How to...	How are Growth Accounting approaches used to measure and analyse productivity in the health care workforce in the UK?	We may require reviews exploring methodological approaches.
Barriers to intervention	What are the barriers to GPs' use of evidence-based medicine?	We may require reviews that look at barriers to given interventions.

Similarly, we expect reviews to cover a wide range of topics within health and health care and that fit within our three current strategic priorities (see 'About the Health Foundation').

Teams across the Health Foundation work on a wide range of topic areas, including:

- NHS finances
- Productivity
- NHS workforce
- Service improvement
- Health policy/service reform
- Innovation
- Quality
- Population health
- Data analytics
- Artificial intelligence in health care
- Inequalities in health and health care and wider determinants of health
- Health policy literature
- Health and health care in all four nations of the UK (specifically Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland).

As such, we are looking to recruit providers who have specialist expertise in conducting reviews in one or more of these areas. The requirements and selection criteria will be set out for each individual project brief and expertise in any of the above areas may not be essential if you feel confident in conducting reviews across a wide range of disciplines. However, for some reviews, we may ask the provider to demonstrate experience in a specific policy landscape, so please indicate any areas of expertise in your application.

Providers will need to be able to work collaboratively with staff from across the Health Foundation. Although your main contact will be within the research team, the staff working on each review will vary.

## Review specifications

It is difficult to classify the exact specification of all reviews, as we expect some variance depending on the commission, but we generally expect the following:

- Interim findings to be made available at agreed points during the project.
- Reviews to cover both grey and peer-reviewed literature, as appropriate.
- Reviews to be delivered in a range of formats as required, such as slide decks, written reports and verbal presentations.

- Reviews to be based on the requirements set out in the brief and to represent good value for money for the Health Foundation.

Exact specifications on scope, such as literature to include and exclude, will be discussed with the provider when each review is commissioned. We expect the provider to take a collaborative and flexible approach to delivery.

### **Commissioning evidence reviews**

The Health Foundation will notify applicants if their expression of interest application is successful.

Successful applicants will be invited to accept the Call-off agreement, with our standard terms and conditions, to be part of this service. Agreeing to these terms and conditions will mean that the provider will only need to approve a short schedule of work if successful in winning a bid.

The Health Foundation will notify successful providers when the new Evidence Review Service is active. Individual reviews will then be commissioned via the following process:

- A notification may be sent to providers that are part of this service to highlight an upcoming review to gauge interest. The notification will provide key details such as type of review, timeframe and topic area.
- We will follow our tendering rules when deciding who on the provider list to invite to bid for specific pieces of work. All tenders issued using this service will either be advertised to all or some suppliers on the list, or in some instances based on expertise, directly with one provider.
- Providers will be invited to submit a brief proposal using a short proposal form and budget information using a standard template. An internal panel will assess the bid/s based on the selection criteria.
- The proposal details and budget will be confirmed in writing with the successful supplier and this, alongside the pre-agreed call-off agreement, will set out the terms for that piece of work.

Given the nature of the service, we cannot guarantee that all providers on the evidence review provider list will be invited to bid for work. We expect to commission between two and four reviews a year (the Health Foundation reserves the right to commission outside of this evidence review supplier list if considered necessary to deliver the required review).

### **Costs**

We are seeking value for money and providers should therefore propose a budget that meets the requirements set out in the brief. Costs will therefore vary. For example, we expect a rapid evidence review that is for internal use only to cost in the region of £30,000–£40,000. To help us understand the value for money that each application represents, we will ask you to share day rates for staff who may work on this project. Depending on your organisation, that may be for specific roles (please do not include names), or may be representative of level of seniority etc.

### **Submitting your tender and selection process**

## How to apply

Please complete the expression of interest form by **12.00 (midday), Friday 4 April 2025**.  
**We will not accept proposals submitted after this time.**

Email the completed expression of interest form to: [evidencereviews@health.org.uk](mailto:evidencereviews@health.org.uk).

Applicants can submit any questions to us by emailing [evidencereviews@health.org.uk](mailto:evidencereviews@health.org.uk) by **17.00, Friday 7 March 2025**.

Questions and responses will then be provided anonymously in a Frequently asked questions document on the Health Foundation's website.

## Assessment and selection

Assessment of applications will take place during April 2025. Your application will be assessed by representatives from the Health Foundation.

We plan to inform applicants whether they have been successful during the week commencing **19 May 2025**.

Proposals will be assessed using the criteria set out below.

## Selection criteria

Responses will be evaluated by the Health Foundation using the following criteria (in no particular order):

- Ability to meet the requirements of the service, including expertise your organisation has in designing, managing and conducting different types of evidence reviews.
- Ability to conduct reviews in health and health care (including any specific areas of policy expertise).
- Ability to answer multiple types of research question.
- Access to appropriate sources of evidence.
- Ability to deliver within specified timescales.
- Ability to deliver reviews in a range of formats.
- The quality and clarity of the response form.
- Financial stability and long-term viability of the organisation.

## Instructions for tender responses

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.

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.



Your application is to remain open for a minimum of 180 days from the proposal response date.

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 affected prior to the established proposal response date.

Please note that any proposals received which fail to meet the specified criteria contained in this invitation to tender will not be considered for this project.

## **Confidentiality**

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.

Under certain conditions, providers may need to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) or a data sharing agreement, based on the nature of the information being exchanged.

## **Conflicts of interest**

The Foundation's conflicts of interest policy describes how it will deal with any conflicts which arise as a result of the work which the Foundation 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/who-the-health-foundation-works-with>

## **Timetable**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Wednesday 19 February 2025	Expression of interest opportunity launched
Friday 7 March 2025	Any questions submitted via email to <a href="mailto:evidencereviews@health.org.uk">evidencereviews@health.org.uk</a>
w/c 17 March 2025	Responses to questions posted on website
12.00 (midday), Friday 4 April 2025	Deadline for submissions
w/c 19 May 2025	Final decision communicated

We will not be holding interviews for acceptance onto the service, however we may ask you for answers to specific questions.

The start date of the new service will be communicated to successful applicants as soon as possible.

## **Questions**

If you have any queries relating to the tendering process or the nature of the service required, please email to [evidencereviews@health.org.uk](mailto:evidencereviews@health.org.uk) by **17.00, Friday 7 March 2025**. We will aim to reply to queries within five working days.

## **Contract arrangements**

The Health Foundation's Call-off agreement with our standard terms and conditions to join this service is attached to this invitation to tender. Please ensure that you have read the document and confirm your agreement to the terms and conditions. Any queries about these terms and conditions should be detailed in your application.