Nuffield Foundation

Guide for applicants

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Section 1: About our grants

1.1 Introduction

The Nuffield Foundation is independent and our founding purpose is to advance social well-being. We do this by funding and undertaking rigorous research, encouraging innovation, and supporting the use of sound evidence to improve people's lives.

This Guide is for applicants to our main grants fund (the Research, Development and Analysis Fund) for our next application deadline in April 2026.

With up to £10 million a year available for funding, we invite applications for research and innovation capable of bringing insight, rigour, sound evidence and nuance to bear on one or more of the five priority questions identified in our **2025 Strategic Review:**

1. **How can we build a prosperous and fair society, where people are secure and can fulfil their potential?**
2. **How can we build an inclusive society, where people thrive and feel they belong, in the context of changing demography and ways of life?**
3. **How can we ensure that developments in science and technology work for people and society?**
4. **How can policies to address climate change be developed in a way that promotes a prosperous, fair and inclusive society?**

5. **How can we build and maintain the effective and trustworthy institutions that our society and democracy need?**

Over the next five years, these questions and the connections between them will guide our funding decisions and the work we undertake. The first two questions build on our established strengths of prioritising prosperity, inclusiveness and fairness, and addressing the inequalities, disadvantage, discrimination and vulnerabilities faced by people in our society.

Two newer themes for us are the implications of actions to tackle climate change for different groups, and the ways in which rapid developments in science and technology can best work for people and society. We have a more limited history of funding in these areas. We are also revisiting a core Nuffield theme exploring the effectiveness and accountability of public institutions, as well as trust in such institutions in a modern democratic society.

Education research remains a priority and we have set out our key areas of interest in Section 2.2. On the economy, work and welfare, we will continue to address questions of economic performance, inequality, and insecurity, as well as the changing nature of work. On justice, we will continue to focus on building an accessible, fair and effective justice system – concentrating principally on administrative, civil, family and youth justice – not least through our *Public Right to Justice* programme and working in partnership with the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (see Section 2.3).

We aim to be an open, collaborative and engaged funder, offering more than money. We work with our grant-holders to help maximise the impact of their projects. And as we deliver our strategy, we will be convening expertise, refining the focus of our themes and remaining alert to emerging issues. For future funding rounds we will provide further and updated guidance about the topics we wish to address.

1.2 What we expect from research that we fund

Relevance

All applications must be relevant to one or more of our five priority questions whatever the substantive topic area. Applicants need to make a clear case for the importance of the proposed project and how it would add to the existing knowledge base.

Applications should be directly concerned with UK issues and society. This includes work that draws on the diverse realities of place across the UK – whether at the national, regional or city level – as well as work using international comparisons to set UK policy and practice in a wider context and to illuminate promising alternative approaches.

If, after reading this Guide, prospective applicants remain unsure about their project's alignment with our areas of interest they can send a one-page summary of their proposal to **applications@nuffieldfoundation.org** and we will comment on potential topic fit.

Impact

Applications must demonstrate a clear path to how the research and related activities might improve people's lives in the UK.

We recognise that there are multiple routes to achieving impact and that advancements can come about because of the accumulation of evidence over time. Applications should be as specific as possible about what the project's potential routes to impact may be, even if the path is not certain. We consider five dimensions in which our work can have impact, although we do not expect applicants to aim for, or achieve, every dimension:

1. Informing change to policies, systems or legislation
2. Informing practice change
3. Advancing understanding or awareness of an issue
4. Changing attitudes or perceptions
5. Providing opportunity and building capability

Credible communications and engagement plans should identify the main audiences for the research, routes to reach them, and how the outputs and dissemination approach proposed advance the impact aims identified. These plans should include adequate resource for impact activities, and for project management.

Rigorous and appropriate method

While they may take many different forms, proposals to us must be impartial, objective and rigorous. Applicants should be open-minded to the outcomes of any research and committed to basing any conclusions or recommendations on what the evidence shows.

We are open to all social science and related methodologies. Our key test is that the method is credible, rigorous and appropriate for the question being addressed. We also look for a clearly articulated analytical framework that demonstrates understanding of the social context in which the research will be conducted. We welcome a wide range of methodologies and approaches, including:

Insights from existing research – This includes research reviews, synthesis, translation and critical evaluations of existing evidence, including meta-analyses and narrative reviews, to inform policy and practice or generate new research agendas. Translation activity might explore how different approaches can help practitioners better use existing or new data to improve outcomes or service provision.

Data collection and analysis – We welcome both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, including participatory research. Primary data collection is only funded when it is an integral part of a wider project. We do not fund large-scale data infrastructure projects.

Intervention development and early evaluation – The Foundation has a long track record of funding the development of evidence-based interventions and we currently support a variety in the field of education. We would also like to encourage more proposals in our other areas of interest (beyond education) that test new ideas and bring research and evaluation closer to real-world practice. Further detail of our expectations for intervention development and early evaluation is available in 'Additional information: Intervention development and early evaluation funding'

We are keen to support cross-disciplinary research, as well as experimental and innovative approaches. We are also looking for active engagement with the complexity of people's lives and are interested in funding more research that takes an intersectional approach to understanding and highlighting the inequalities, disadvantages, discrimination and vulnerabilities that people face, how they intersect and what should be done about them.

We also fund:

New institutional capability – We support new or emerging institutions where we wish to build stronger capacity to address a strategic issue that aligns with our purpose. We are open to providing funding to new or existing organisations, not necessarily academic institutions, looking to fill a significant evidence need or gap in one of our focus areas, and then deploy that insight to innovate and improve policy, practice and public understanding.

Other projects – This includes small-scale inquiries, working parties or similar to reach common ground on a priority policy or practice issue, and to research or identify a potentially workable way forward. We also welcome exploratory analysis of new data to inform the feasibility and potential for further analysis.

Expertise, experience and potential

Applications should demonstrate that the team possess the appropriate experience, expertise and potential to carry out the project as planned. We are not only interested in academic expertise: we are also looking for strong project management and impact/influencing skills in the teams that apply to us.

In addition to funding research that tackles society's most pressing challenges, we are committed to investing in the next generation of researchers. We expect our grant-holders to actively support early career researchers to develop in their careers, and applicants should explain how the capability of early career researchers will be enhanced through their project.

Through our Emerging Researchers Network, we offer some networking support and training to early-career researchers involved in our projects.

Value for money

Value for money considerations include whether the cost of the project is justified by the potential benefits and is in line with comparable research, as well as whether resources are being used in the best way to achieve the intended outcomes.

1.3 What we offer

Our expert grants teams work closely with grant-holders, collaborating throughout the project to help maximise the impact of each grant, including by providing templates for developing communication plans and stakeholder maps, and making connections with other Nuffield projects, programmes and activities.

This includes bringing together the research that we fund with the work we directly undertake through our expert centres (**the Nuffield Council on Bioethics**, **the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory** and **the Ada Lovelace Institute**) and our own strategic research projects, currently **Grown Up? Journeys to Adulthood** and **Public Right to Justice.** We are interested in applications that also consider these connections and align with themes emerging from them. More information about these programmes is available on our website, and we will update guidance with more specific funding priorities as these areas of work progress.

Grant size and duration

We accept applications up to £500,000.

Most of the grants we award are below £300,000.

Occasionally applications for up to £750,000 are accepted for consideration, but only if there is a strong case and good value for money. We recommend sending an enquiry to applications@nuffieldfoundation.org at the start of the application process if you would like to submit an application for over £500,000.

Smaller grants (under £15,000) are also available, and these may be fast-tracked if there is a case for an accelerated decision.

Funded projects usually last between six months and three years, but projects with shorter or longer timelines are occasionally funded.

Other funding opportunities

Our **Strategic Fund** is for ambitious cross-cutting projects – typically in the range of £1m-£3m. We are looking for new, transformative ideas that are capable of anticipating and addressing the most significant themes and developments shaping the UK public policy agenda. Please refer to the Strategic Fund: Guide for applicants. The next application deadline is 16 March 2026.

The Racial Diversity UK programme enables work taking a fresh look at how changing patterns of racial diversity and disparity, particularly as shaped by the UK's colonial past, develop and shape society – both now and in the coming decades. It aims to improve understanding of the barriers and pathways to a racially just and inclusive society. The programme has its own **funding page** on our website which includes information about the specific priority areas for each funding round. The next application deadline will be in October 2026.

The Oliver Bird Fund supports initiatives that improve the social and economic well-being of people living with musculoskeletal conditions. We are exploring broadening the fund's focus to also include other disabilities and health conditions, including mental health, that are increasing in prevalence and significantly affecting people's lives. In line with our overall focus on shared prosperity, our aim is to boost employment, tackle poverty, and widen access to support. The next application deadline is to be confirmed.

1.4 Overview of the application process

There are two stages:

1. **Outline application** – to test the idea and proposed approach.
2. **Full applications** – invited if the outline is successful

On average, 1 in 10 *Outline* applicants are invited to submit a *Full application*.

Success rates for *Full applications* vary from round to round, but generally, around half of *Full applications* secure funding.

Decisions are based on **rigour, relevance and potential for impact**, and available funding.

Timing and assessment:

Applications can currently be submitted at **any time** through our website.

Shortlisting happens twice a year – spring and autumn. Please keep an eye on our website for deadline dates.

Shortlisting decisions are made **around two months** after the outline deadline.

Final decisions are made in:

November for spring applications.

May for autumn applications.

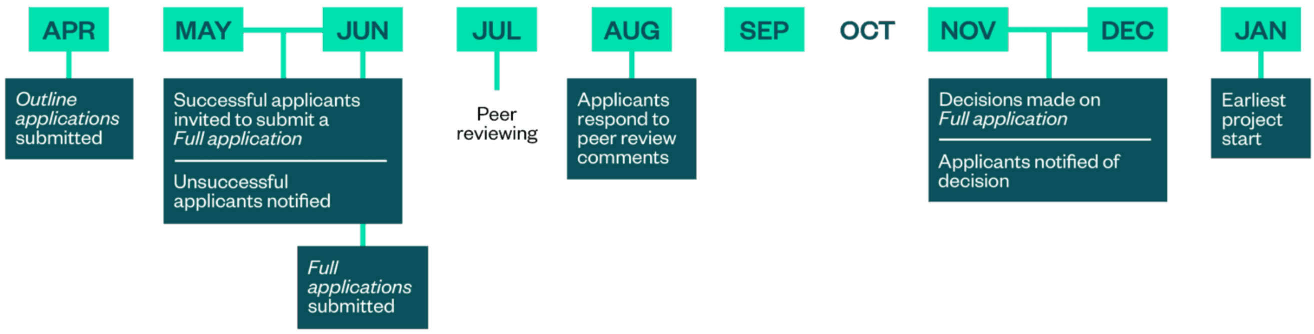
Review and Grant award:

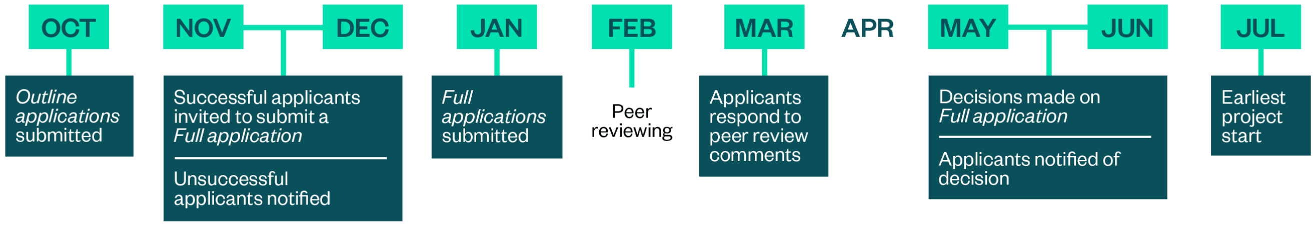
If a *Full application* passes initial internal assessment, it goes to **external peer review.**

After final assessment, a grant may be awarded – sometimes with **conditions.**

Projects should start **at least two months** after the decision month (May or November).

More detail is provided in Sections 3 to 7 of this Guide.





Section 2: What we fund

Our priority questions

Click on each question to learn more.

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1 [How can we build a prosperous and fair society, where people are secure and can fulfil their potential?]

Despite its underlying strengths, the UK economy is mired in unprecedented stagnation which has undermined living standards and entrenched inequalities. Many acute societal challenges flow from, or are accentuated by, sustained economic underperformance.

The Nuffield Foundation will continue to pursue questions of fairness, opportunity and human potential in our funded work. Building on Strategic Fund projects, including The IFS Deaton Review of Inequalities and The Economy 2030 Inquiry, we want to deepen understanding of the interaction between economic and social problems.

This relationship runs in both directions. We are interested in identifying the routes through which improved economic performance – such as increased investment, productivity or employment – could alleviate social challenges such as poverty, insecurity and inactivity. This could mean examining how specific tax, industrial, trade and competition policies might contribute towards this. Equally, we want to identify the routes through which effective and life-improving social policies (such as training, support for those with health conditions, or adequate income insurance) could themselves foster growth and shared prosperity.

Education, a longstanding priority for the Foundation, plays a vital role, as improving skills and capabilities, learning outcomes, teaching quality and access can boost individual life chances and support broader economic growth.

Our work on justice is also key – and includes how access to fair and effective legal processes can affect individual life chances and shape a prosperous and fair society.

We are also keen to understand the transition from adolescence to adulthood, especially the drivers behind more prolonged and complex transitions, and their implications for areas like the labour market or housing.

Particular questions we would like to consider include:

- How does economic policy and performance shape outcomes – including for living standards, poverty, social mobility, and the distribution of wealth for different people, groups and places?
- What are the sharpest insecurities that particular groups face in the labour market, housing and their interactions with the welfare state; how do these insecurities compound, and how might they be addressed?
- How can our education and care systems best equip children and young people to thrive and reach their potential; and what support does the current generation of young people need to make the transition to adulthood?
- How can employers and public services better support the rising numbers of people with significant health conditions or disabilities to undertake fulfilling work and secure a decent standard of living?
- What trade-offs arise in the dual pursuit of rising prosperity and greater equality, and how can they best be managed?

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2 How can we build an inclusive society, where people thrive and feel they belong, in the context of changing demography and ways of life?

The make-up of UK society is changing rapidly. The number of over-85s is set to nearly double by 2045, while fertility rates across Britain are at their lowest since records began. The UK has become more diverse in a variety of ways, including in terms of race, religion and family structures. These trends are evolving in different ways in different places. They affect not only material and financial circumstances, but also people's sense of belonging, psychological wellbeing and relationships. Successful policies for a more inclusive society – and decisions on public services such as education, justice, healthcare and welfare – must be built on a clear understanding of all these dynamics.

We want to explore the drivers of demographic change, as well as the resulting pressures on, and implications for, state and society. We want to ask how the UK can adjust to an ageing society (as we have done in the project Living Well in Later Life in Bradford) – with more care and more support to work longer alongside a fairer settlement between generations. We are also interested in how longer transitions to adulthood are both shaped by and contributing to demographic change, and the effect that this has on key life events such as entering the workforce.

Building on our **Understanding Communities programme**, we will renew our focus on what makes for successful communities in this shifting context – including factors affecting social cohesion, the housing market and the local environment. We wish to develop our interest in the role of place in shaping opportunities, identities and belonging. And we are keen to explore the role of differences in the composition of places – such as population, social infrastructures and economic inheritance – in shaping their futures.

We continue to be interested in understanding the causes and consequences of people's involvement in the justice system and the inequalities people may face there, as well as tackling educational disadvantage and vulnerability.

We want to understand what an inclusive society looks like from different people's perspectives and are interested in research focusing on inequalities between groups or communities, including those with legally protected characteristics and other characteristics such as social class, neurodiversity, migration status and care experience. We will continue to consider how intersecting characteristics – for example, race and ethnicity, gender, disability and class – reflect the multiplicity of experiences that shape people's identities and outcomes.

Particular questions we would like to consider include:

- What does the changing age structure of the UK mean for society, public services and government; how are changes in fertility, migration and other factors driving this; and what role, if any, should policy play in changing these trends?
- Given these trends and changes within the UK, what are the barriers and pathways to a racially just and inclusive society in the decades ahead? We are keen to explore children and young people's experiences of education and their pathways to educational and employment opportunities; disparities in access to, affordability and quality of, housing; the economic and social determinants of disparities in mental and physical health outcomes; and people's experiences of, and outcomes from, contact with the justice system.
- What are the direct and indirect impacts of the UK's current housing market on individuals, communities and the economy; what scale of change is required; and what sorts of policies might deliver it?
- What levels of care are needed for an ageing UK population and how should it be provided and funded? Is there scope for greater technological and/or social innovation to lead to new care models, and what ethical issues may arise from this?
- How should the provision of public goods and services interact with and take account of local communities, including local identities and social ties?

3 How can we ensure that developments in science and technology work for people and society?

The rapid development and deployment of new technologies is unfolding faster than our collective ability to understand their societal impacts, benefits and harms. There are lags in understanding as policymakers, businesses and individuals look to identify advances, verify the claims made about them, and grapple with potential uses and limitations.

We want to help develop effective and agile models of governance capable of securing trust and maximising societal benefits. This includes regulation and regulators that can keep pace with developments. We are resolved to build evidence about how, and whether, key technologies work, as well as about how they are being used, and with what human impact.

Our work will examine the choices facing policymakers and practitioners, particularly in areas such as education, justice, welfare, health and social care. These include specific concerns about access to technologies and those who may miss out on them – as well as more general inequalities that could arise from rapid adoption – and how we might mitigate these. In the education system, we are interested in how these technologies are shaping teaching and learning, and how this might evolve. In the welfare and justice systems, we are interested in how they are affecting access, fairness and outcomes, and in the factors affecting their use. We are also particularly interested in the benefits/harms of digital technology for young people, as the first generation to be entirely born into the digital age. Across all these areas, we are keen to support research that explores how policy and practice might respond.

More broadly, we follow in the strong Nuffield tradition of concern with the interplay between science, technology and social change, as well as their relational and social impacts. We are interested in funding research that intersects with the interests of our centres — the Nuffield Council on Bioethics and the Ada Lovelace Institute as well as projects tackling broader issues in these areas.

Particular questions we would like to consider include:

- How can we identify, foster and support regulatory frameworks to be based upon ethical principles, so that they both encompass rapidly developing science and reflect changing societal values?
- How are evolving technologies reshaping the nature of education and work; and what can we learn from how the use of data and AI technologies is affecting the workforce, and service design and delivery – particularly in different parts of the public sector?
- How can new science and technology be adopted in an equitable way, with a clear understanding of its impact on different groups in society?

- How are technologies affecting people's sense of identity and agency, and the ways they communicate and relate to one another?
- How can futures, foresight and horizon-scanning tools be deployed to improve policies and systems?

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4 How can policies to address climate change be developed in a way that promotes a prosperous, fair and inclusive society?

The world is significantly off-track to limit global warming to 1.5°C. This demands urgent global action and a domestic commitment to forge a path to net zero by 2050. Yet just as the need to confront difficult choices presses harder, the domestic and international consensus on climate action is fraying.

Climate policies represent a new focus for the Nuffield Foundation: we have not previously funded a body of research on their implications. Our interest here is distinct. Others fund research into specific mitigation or adaptation approaches, whether scientific, regulatory, engineering or commercial. Our natural focus is instead the distributional consequences of climate strategies.

This might cover the implications of 'net zero' for different groups in society as housing, energy and transport are decarbonised; and what needs to be done to secure a transition that is equitable as well as capable of commanding public support. We also want to explore the risks and opportunities that climate change poses for our economy and jobs market, as well as their implications for public services, including the education, justice and welfare systems. And we are interested in more local and regional environmental issues, such as air and water quality, and the ways in which they affect different groups and communities.

Particular questions we would like to consider include:

- Where might mitigation and adaptation actions risk deepening existing inequalities or create new vulnerabilities, and how can this be mitigated?
- How should we prepare for the societal and economic stresses arising from changes to the climate, and what reforms to our systems of social protection are needed to increase resilience and ensure equity?
- How will climate change policies affect investment levels and employment in the future?
- What are the social and distributional implications of more localised environmental issues such as air and water quality – and of policies to address them?

How can education ensure that future generations are equipped with the right knowledge and skills on climate and environment issues?

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5 How can we build and maintain the effective and trustworthy institutions that our society and democracy needs?

Effective institutions underpin cohesive societies but public trust in key governing authorities in the UK is severely strained. Misinformation, an increasingly polarised public discourse, and rising signs of reduced state capacity all add to the challenge. More broadly, there is a pressing need for insight on how to foster effective institutions that can anchor local communities, improve decision-making and bolster trust in our systems of governance. In education, we are interested in effectiveness and accountability across the whole system, and how it might deliver better outcomes.

The Foundation has a history of funding research into different types of institutions, as well as directly incubating and building new capability. We want to renew and redouble this endeavour. We want to learn from past experience, identify factors that can nurture trust in institutions, explore the scope for improving systems, and consider building new institutional capacity.

Within this, we have a longstanding focus on justice as a pillar of a fair society. The justice system is a cornerstone of public trust in the state and rule of law. It underpins everyday social and economic life by protecting people's rights, resolving disputes and providing redress.

Particular questions we would like to consider include:

- What factors shape levels of trust in institutions, especially those whose decisions shape people's lives?
- How can national and local institutions best combine the need for technical expertise with accessibility, legitimacy, and accountability in decision-making?
- What are the most effective and appropriate ways of enabling the public to have meaningful engagement and 'voice' in different institutional settings?
- How can new and traditional sources of data best be harnessed by public institutions to achieve better outcomes for citizens?
- What should the role of the justice system be in ensuring the quality, accountability and legality of institutions and their decision-making

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2.2 Focus on education

Our interests in education span all five priority questions and the full life course, from the early years (including babies and even pre-natal), through school, to further and higher education, and lifelong learning. Across these we are interested in:

- **People's** opportunities, journeys and life chances, and how these depend on their characteristics and circumstances.
- The **policies** that affect these journeys, and how these might be improved or even fundamentally reformed.
- Educational **practice** in early years settings, school classrooms, colleges, universities and workplaces, as well as in the home and community.

Most proposals with a focus on education should address one or more of the following four themes:

- Skills and capabilities for learning, work and life.
- Educational disadvantage: causes, consequences, and solutions.
- Young people's opportunities, choices and pathways.
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning

Skills and capabilities for learning, work and life

We seek applications to explore the skills and capabilities that equip people to live and work well in a fast-changing world. These include:

- Oral language, literacy and wider communication skills.
- Numeracy, quantitative and data skills.
- Scientific inquiry and analytical thinking.
- Social and emotional skills, such as self-regulation and empathy.
- Capabilities required for physical and mental well-being.
- Essential transferable skills, such as problem-solving, interpersonal skills, collaboration, creativity and leadership.
- Digital skills and their relationship to other skills, including how increasing use of digital technologies and media affects children's learning and development.

- The skills and knowledge that children and young people will need to live sustainably and to mitigate against and adapt to the climate and environmental crises.

We are interested in the full range of factors that shape these skills and capabilities throughout a person's life and its transitions. These could include curricula and qualifications, interventions for children, families or educators, student-oriented programmes, extracurricular activities, and employer and community engagement.

Educational disadvantage: causes, consequences, and solutions

We are interested in projects that investigate the prevalence of – and interrelationships between – the various forms of educational disadvantage and vulnerability that can cause children and young people to fall behind, become locked into trajectories of low achievement, or face difficulties fulfilling their potential. These include disadvantage and vulnerabilities related to:

- Special educational needs and disabilities, including those associated with neurodiversity and physical and mental health conditions.
- Socio-economic circumstances and parents' employment status.
- Racism, other forms of discrimination and structural inequalities.
- Geography or place.
- Parenting and the home environment, including housing-related issues, family conflict, and a lack of digital or material resources.
- Being in care or leaving care

We are especially interested in the early identification of these needs and risks, and in the relationship between education institutions and the wider ecosystem of support services for children and young people experiencing disadvantage. We also have a particular interest in access to and take-up of different types of early years education and care provision among children and families experiencing different types of disadvantage and vulnerability.

Young people's opportunities, choices and pathways

We aim to improve the evidence base concerning young people's opportunities, choices and pathways at key points in their progression through education and training into work; the factors that determine these; and how they relate to outcomes in later life, including employment, earnings and well-being. Key areas of focus include:

- Pre-16 subject and course choices.
- The post-16 tertiary landscape, encompassing the full range of vocational, technical, further and higher education provision across the UK.
- Mechanisms for enhancing learning outcomes, such as work experience or placements.
- Careers information, advice and guidance.
- Young people's aspirations about future work and life.
- The role of employers in shaping and delivering education and training, and in supporting young people to enter and thrive in work.

Improving the quality of teaching and learning

Across the education system, we seek to improve understanding of – and access to – highquality teaching and learning. Key areas of focus include:

- Issues relating to the education workforces, such as recruitment, retention, working conditions, pay, status, qualifications and professional development.
- Pedagogical practice.
- Curriculum, qualifications and assessment.
- The opportunities and risks for education from digital technologies, including AI, building on our recent **landscape review** and **further work on education and AI**.
- Attendance, engagement and behaviour.
- Admissions, inclusion and belonging.
- Organisational issues such as funding, governance, accountability and regulation.

In the early years, we have a particular interest in improvement in quality and conditions in the private, voluntary and independent sectors and in provision for under-3s. Across our interests in education, we are keen to support better dissemination and use of research evidence to inform professional practice.

2.3 Focus on justice

An effective, fair and accessible justice system is fundamental to social and economic wellbeing. Our ***Public Right to Justice*** programme underlines that, while the public have the notional right to such a system, this is often compromised in practice. The programme confronts the challenges and explores possible solutions, giving a more explicit and directional focus to the work we support in this topic area. As with our wider work on justice, it principally focuses on administrative, civil, and family justice, though considers other areas including criminal justice (especially youth justice) where relevant. We are particularly focused on the circumstances of disadvantaged people and the points where they encounter the justice system.

We particularly consider:

- The extent to which people's legal needs are being met.
- Experiences of contacts with the justice system, and how to improve these.
- Potential reforms to make the system more user-focused, open and representative.
- How system governance and resourcing might be improved.
- Lessons from previous attempts to reform the system and improve these areas.

While the work is centred on the needs and experiences of citizens, we also examine how structures of the system affect those experiences and broader effectiveness. This is a cross-Nuffield project, with close involvement from the **Nuffield Family Justice Observatory** and the **Ada Lovelace Institute**.

We are especially interested in grant applications that cover some of these themes and the intersections between them, and will communicate more-specific priorities as this programme develops. We will still consider applications relating to topics or issues outside of the above areas, although some future funding rounds may be reserved solely for applications addressing specific questions from our *Public Right to Justice* work.

Section 3: Eligibility

The best way to check eligibility for funding is to use our **Eligibility Tool.**

3.1 UK context

We welcome applications from UK-based organisations. As set out in Section 1.2, proposals for projects should be directly concerned with UK issues and society – this includes comparative work between the four nations, and international work which results in lessons for UK policy and practice.

3.2 Staffing

Principal Investigators

Proposed projects must be led by a named Principal Investigator (PI), who is the lead applicant.

The PI is responsible for the application and serves as the main contact throughout the process and any subsequent grant period.

If there are Co-Principal Investigators, one must be designated as the lead applicant and our primary contact for the purposes of grant administration if an award is made.

We award grants to organisations (the 'host institution') not individuals. The PI must be based at the host institution.

Other staff

Individuals who will have a significant role in assisting the PI in the management and leadership of the project should be named as Co-Investigators (Co-Is).

Individuals with non-leadership roles on the project should also be named in the application if known, and details provided of any roles into which someone would need to be recruited if an award were made.

Other funders

Applicants must state in their Outline application if they are applying or have applied for funds elsewhere for the same or a closely related project.

If the proposal was unsuccessful elsewhere, they should include all feedback received.

We may contact the other funding organisation(s) for information. We don't support general appeals for pooled funding, but we may consider partnership funding.

Applicants should provide the name of the proposed co-funder and explain the case for co-funding.

We usually contact the proposed co-funder to discuss the feasibility of co-funding before making a funding decision.

3.3 Multiple proposals

Multiple Outline applications from the same Principal Investigator are allowed, but it is unlikely more than one will be shortlisted in the same funding round.

3.4 Ineligible categories

- Individuals without formal employment at or another relationship with the institution hosting the grant.
- Projects led by individuals unaffiliated to any particular organisation.
- Projects led by schools or further education colleges.
- Projects led by undergraduates or master's students.
- PhD fees or projects where the main purpose is to support a PhD.
- The establishment of academic posts.
- Ongoing costs or the costs of 'rolling out' existing work or services.
- 'Dissemination-only' projects, including campaigning work, which are not connected to our funded work.
- Local charities, replacement for statutory funding, or local social services or social welfare provision.
- Requests for financial help or educational fees from or on behalf of individuals.
- Projects led by organisations or institutions that are not based in the UK.
- In exceptional cases, we may accept applications from overseas organisations if no UK-based host is feasible. Applicants must show strong plans for UK-focused dissemination, engagement and impact.

Section 4: Understanding the application process

4.1 Outline applications

Outline applications must be submitted using our online form. Should you need help please contact us at **applications@nuffieldfoundation.org**.

Applicants should indicate which of our five priority questions the project will answer; it is possible to select more than one.

Outline application requirements

Outline applications must:

- Provide a clear, concise and compelling account of the proposal, why it is needed and the impact it is expected to achieve.
- Show the project fits within the Foundation's interests and that the proposed approach is well considered, fit for purpose and appropriately resourced (staff and costs, including non-academic staff – for example, project managers and communications and engagement expertise).
- Stand alone to make a case, without any need for the reviewers to undertake further research or to follow up the bibliographic references in order to judge the application.

Feedback on Outline applications

- Only a small proportion of *Outline applications* are shortlisted to proceed to a *Full application.* We provide constructive advice and support to those shortlisted.
- Due to the volume of applications we receive we regret that we are not able to provide specific feedback on unsuccessful *Outline applications* as standard.
- We do not accept resubmissions of unsuccessful *Outline applications*.

4.2 Shortlisted applications

- Our invitation will include feedback from the Foundation, which must be addressed in the *Full application*. A submission deadline will also be provided, usually around six weeks from the date of invitation.
- We may request a discussion with shortlisted applicants, and applicants can also request one in order to clarify any feedback.
- Deferrals are rarely granted. If a *Full application* is not submitted by the deadline (and no alternative timeline has been agreed), the application will be considered withdrawn.

We aim to notify all applicants of our decision by the month shown in the timeline on our **website**.

If you haven't heard by the end of that month, please contact us **applications@nuffieldfoundation.org**. Be sure to include the **PI's name** and the **application reference number**.

4.3 Full applications

The invitation to *Full application* includes a link to the online form for submissions.

The Full application should:

- Be accessible to readers with and without specialist knowledge.
- Demonstrate the team's knowledge and grasp of the subject and why it is important, as well as the appropriateness of the chosen methods, approach and activities.
- Be standalone and comprehensive, fully demonstrating why the project is important and that the approach will deliver a high-quality and impactful project.
- Build on the *Outline application*, providing fuller information and taking into account the feedback received from the Foundation.
- It is particularly important that the *Full application* expands on the intended outcomes, and the activities applicants will undertake to deliver these.

4.4 Diversity and inclusion monitoring

As part of our commitment to **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**, the Foundation collects voluntary diversity data from applicants (PIs and Co-Is) after *Outline applications* are submitted. This is done via a secure, separate online form, sent by email. Responses are securely and separately stored from other application information, and do not influence application decisions.

If a grant is awarded, further data may be collected from the full project team. All data is anonymised, used for reporting, and deleted after 18 months.

The data we collect enables us to identify and benchmark key trends, evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken under our **EDI Action Plan**, and generate insights that inform the development of future priorities.

Section 5: Completing the Outline and Full Application forms

5.1 Filling out the form

Alongside contact details and basic information such as the project start and end dates, applicants will need to confirm their **project title**. Project titles should be clear, descriptive and unambiguous. The sections of the *Outline* and *Full application* forms are set out below.

Outline application form	Full application form
Alternative funding sources	Project summary
Research questions	Alternative funding sources
Case for importance	Research questions
Outcomes and influence	Case for importance
Methods, approach and activities	Outcomes and influence
Research and engagement team	Methods, approach and activities
Budget	Research and engagement team
References	Expert advice and stakeholder engagement
Additional information	Quality assurance and risk management
	Legal and ethical aspects
	Archiving
	Timetable
	Budget
	References
	Additional information
	Acceptance of Terms and conditions

For shortlisted applications, aspects of the proposal – including the budget – may be refined between *Outline* and *Full application* stage. Some changes may be prompted by the feedback we provide.

5.2 Specific section guidance

Outcomes and influence

We want to understand how the proposed project will make a real-world difference, even if that change takes time. Section 2.1, ‘Impact’, details the five dimensions in which the work we fund and do has impact.

In the *Full application* we expect applicants to fully elaborate on the project’s intended impact and the activities proposed to support it, as well as who will take these forward and how they will be resourced:

- What are the specific ways in which the research is expected to have an impact and improve people’s lives?
- How will key audiences be identified, and what are the plans for influencing and engaging them? How will they use the proposed research?
- Outline key mechanisms, such as conferences, seminars, meetings with senior policymakers, or the production of online communications or publications aimed at wider audiences.
- We view research reports, briefing papers, other publications, seminars and other events as outputs – dissemination plans must explain how such outputs will be used to drive impact (that is, outcomes).
- We welcome the production of academic journal articles, but these are not usually the primary outputs of the projects we fund. All projects should produce at least one report aimed at as broad an audience as possible, which is freely and publicly available.
- We recommend that applicants read the ***Guide for grant-holders*** as this sets out in detail our expectations for a *Communications plan*, should the project be funded.

Applicants should read **‘Additional information: Impact’** in full before completing this section of the *Full application*.

Methods, approach and activities

The purpose of this section is to enable applicants to set out the work they will undertake to achieve the aims and objectives of their project, and to address the research questions. It must demonstrate that the proposed design is fit for purpose, the project is feasible and that a high-quality project will be delivered.

In the *Outline application* we need to see:

- An account of whether the approach is designed to be exploratory, provide a robust descriptive account or infer/understand causality (or a combination of these).
- Details of the population of interest and the unit of analysis; a definition of who will be included in the study and an explanation of why; an assessment of whether some important groups will be excluded, the reasons for this and the impact on the study.
- A description and rationale of the proposed research methods. There needs to be sufficient detail of the approach for the reviewer to assess how reliable and robust it is. For example, applicants may need to cover:
  - **Sampling** – information on the proposed sampling method.
  - **Quantitative analysis** – as an assessment of whether the sample sizes are big enough to test the key relationships with sufficient confidence, including subgroup analysis and with issues of bias considered.
  - **Qualitative work** – sampling criteria and quotas, how the sampling strategy will ensure an appropriate range of individuals and experiences are covered, and the approach to analysis.
  - **Evaluations** – how the 'counterfactual' will be assessed and what effect sizes will be detectable
- Discussions of the effects on the analysis of key limitations of the data, and the plans in place to recognise and address the

At *Full application* stage we expect a much fuller and more detailed account. Please read '**Additional information: Full application methods, approach and activities guidance**' before completing this section.

Research and engagement team

We need to be confident that staffing for the project is appropriate and that staff have the necessary expertise to conduct the proposed project. The *Outline application* requires applicants to provide brief details to support an initial assessment of the team. We do not require CVs at the outline stage.

In the *Full application*:

Proposed project management arrangements for the grant should be set out, as well as information on how the contributions of staff working on the project will be managed.

We request short CVs (one page each) that focus on the skills and experience of the individuals relevant to delivering this project, including any project managers and communications professionals.

We are keen to develop the future pipeline of researchers in our fields of interest. Applications should demonstrate how all staff in the proposed team will be developed, particularly those at earlier career stages. We also encourage multidisciplinary teams that will share and develop their expertise and networks.

Expert advice and key stakeholder engagement (Full application only)

Applicants must provide details of their plans for engaging with experts and key stakeholders to support the delivery of a high-quality and impactful project.

Quality assurance and risk management (Full application only)

Applicants must provide information on their approach to quality assurance and risk management.

Applicants should include details of how they will assure the quality of project design, analysis and interpretation of the findings, and project outputs.

Applicants should also identify any limitations and risks to the project, including any measures they propose to manage and mitigate them. Considerations should include data availability, recruitment and resourcing, the capacity of the host institution to provide support, media controversy or other reputational risks to the host organisation or funder, and timing issues that have the potential to reduce impact.

Legal and ethical aspects (Full application only)

The *Full application* also requests details to assure us that the legal and ethical aspects of the project, and the processing of personal data, have been fully considered.

Where projects involve processing of personal data, we would expect applicants to complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment at the outset of the project.

We expect an appropriate ethical clearance procedure to be in place before the project commences.

Projects that involve direct contact with participants ('primary research') are required to pass through independent ethical scrutiny.

- It is the PI's responsibility to meet this requirement, and the responsibility of the host institution to:
  - Ensure appropriate provision for scrutiny is in place.
  - Accept responsibility for the ethical conduct of the research.
- We expect larger research institutes and universities to have standard procedures in place for ethical scrutiny.
  - Where there are no such procedures, we are willing to consider alternative arrangements – for example an independent advisory committee convened specifically for the purpose, or use of a scrutiny committee from another institution.
  - The budget should include any costs associated with ethical or similar scrutiny.

Timetable (Full application only)

At *Full application* stage we require a detailed timetabled project plan.

This should set out the various work streams across the months of the project and include when applicants would propose to deliver the various requirements of the grant, including:

- Progress reports
- Communications plan
- Main public output
- End of project assessment

In considering the timetable, applicants should take into account the Foundation's requirement that grant-holders publish a freely available *Main public output*, which serves as a concise and accessible account of the project, drawing out key findings and recommendations. This report must be published on the host institution's website and disseminated before the end of grant date, with a further six to eight weeks built into project timetables to enable continued stakeholder engagement activity following publication.

End of project assessments should take place at grant completion. We will further review the impact of each grant, with grant-holders, after one year and – in light of our determination to take a long view – also three years after completion.

Applicants may also present this information in Gantt chart form for ease, though this will need to be submitted as part of the document uploaded in the 'Additional information' section. Please note this document should not exceed three pages.

Budget

We do not expect a detailed budget in the *Outline application*. We only need an estimated budget that indicates the split between staff time (separately for different categories of staff), overheads / estate costs and other direct costs (for example, non-staff costs for quantitative and qualitative research). This must comply with our 'Budget guidelines' (Additional information: **Budget guidelines**).

At *Full application*, applicants will be asked to complete a more detailed version of the budget, under the same broad headings requested at *Outline* stage.

> This must be entered into the Excel template provided in the application form. Applicants should download the template, complete the budget in the template file and then upload the completed budget where required in the application form.
>
> Budgets must be completed by calendar year, not project year.
>
> For details of eligible costs and budgetary guidance please refer to **'Additional information: Budget guidelines'**.

Terms and conditions (Full application only)

> Applicants should read our ***Terms and conditions*** before submitting their *Full application*.
>
> The host institution must accept these *Terms and conditions* in principle when applicants submit the *Full application*.
>
> Please ensure that the designated individual is informed in advance that they have been nominated as a signatory, as the Nuffield Foundation will then use the contact details provided to contact this individual with a link to a form which must be completed.

Section 6: The Full application assessment process

We need to receive the *Full application* form, budget and institutional signature in order to begin the assessment of the application.

6.1 Reviewer comments

We will usually share the *Full application*, including budget, with a range of peer reviewers (from the research, policy and practice communities as appropriate).

If we receive a *Full application* that does not contain all the information we need, is not of sufficient quality or has not sufficiently addressed earlier feedback in the letter inviting submission of a *Full application*, we may decide to reject the application without sharing it with peer reviewers.

Peer reviewers are asked to consider the application against our assessment criteria, outlined in Section 1.2.

6.2 Applicant responses

Anonymised reviewer comments will be shared with the applicant along with a series of questions about their application to which they will be invited to respond. Please note that these questions may be extensive, and responses are typically required within 2–3 weeks. The applicant can also address any other reviewer comments they consider pertinent which are not referenced in the questions.

6.3 Application decision

When *Full applications* are considered by the Nuffield Foundation we may decide to:

- Offer a grant
- Request further clarification or impose specific conditions before awarding a grant
- Reject an application

Applicants are informed of the outcome as soon as possible following the decision.

6.4 Unsuccessful applicants

- If an applicant is unsuccessful, they will receive a letter setting out the issues raised by the Nuffield Foundation.
- Unsuccessful applications may not be resubmitted unless applicants are specifically invited to do so.

Invitations to revise and resubmit applications are rare and will usually be accompanied by specific feedback on ways in which the project may be amended.

Section 7: Receiving the grant

7.1 Notice of award

A *Notice of award* letter will be sent to successful applicants.

A link to our *Grant acceptance* form will be sent along with the *Notice of award*

Any feedback or requirements from the Foundation will be included in the *Notice of award*

Occasionally, we send a *Conditional award* letter that identifies specific conditions. Satisfying these conditions is fundamental to a decision to award, and they must be signed off by the Foundation before the grant can be released.

In some circumstances, we may award a grant with 'gated funding', where funds are approved and awarded in stages. For example, gated funding may be appropriate for projects where a second phase relies on specific outcomes from the first phase of work. It can also provide flexibility to allow for adjustments to the project based on emerging challenges or opportunities.

In the reply to the *Notice of award* letter successful applicants must:

Set out any proposed amendments to the project, especially where these are required in response to conditions

Confirm the start and end dates, the project budget breakdown, the dates for delivering the requirements (*Progress reports*, *Communications plan*, *Main public output and End of project assessment*) and accept the latest *Terms and conditions*.

We do not usually expect amendments to the budget at this stage, and significant budget changes will require approval

If there have been substantial changes to plans for the project during the application process, we may require these to be incorporated into an updated project plan or application form so that there is a single record of what has been agreed.

We are happy to provide advice before successful applicants send their response letter to the *Notice of award* – for example, if there is more than one option for addressing feedback, or if they anticipate timing difficulties.

7.2 Grant acceptance form

Once any requirements or feedback points from the *Notice of award* have been addressed, the *Grant acceptance* form should be completed to:

- Confirm acceptance of the grant and agreement to our *Terms and conditions*.
- Confirm the correct institutional signatory.
- Submit any comments regarding points in the *Notice of award*

7.3 Confirmation of award

The *Confirmation of award* letter confirms the final details of the grant.

It is usually sent out within two months of issuing the *Notice of award*.

At this stage, it is vital to read our *Guide for grant-holders*, which sets out our typical approach to managing grants including invoicing, grant outputs, acknowledging the Foundation and reporting requirements.

Please note:

- A grant is only formally confirmed once the *Confirmation of award* letter has been issued.
- Details of the grant can only be made public after the *Confirmation of award* letter has been issued.
- The Foundation cannot fund any work that takes place before the start date of the grant.
- The Foundation reserves the right to withdraw an in principle offer if it is not possible to confirm the award within six months of issuing the *Notice of award*.

Additional information: Impact

Please read this in full before completing the ‘Outcomes and influence’ section of the *Full application* form.

As an engaged funder with a purpose to improve social well-being and people’s lives, we have a responsibility to make a difference in the world. It is important that the evidence generated by a project is noticed and heard by those with the power to use it at the right time. Potential for impact is a key consideration in funding decisions.

Applicants should consider where a project can make a meaningful difference and where to prioritise resource and effort.

Applicants should set out the ways in which their research will have an impact using our five dimensions of impact, how they will identify the main audiences for the research, and how the outputs will best serve the research aims.

Applicants should also consider impact when planning communication and engagement activities and staffing/resourcing. The *Guide for grant-holders* provides full details of our expectations for the *Communications plan*.

We expect the work that we fund to make a difference across five dimensions of impact:

1. Informing change to policies, systems or legislation
2. Informing practice change
3. Improving or advancing understanding or awareness of an issue
4. Changing attitudes or perceptions
5. Providing opportunity and building capability

We do not expect applicants to aim for or achieve every dimension of impact – but we do expect one or more to be achieved in every project. We recognise that indicators of impact may need to be revised due to contextual changes during the course of a funded project.

The non-exhaustive examples below are intended as a prompt for the impact indicators that applicants should be aiming for.

Examples of how to achieve the ‘Informing change to policies, systems or legislation’ dimension of impact:

Undertake strategic policy landscape and stakeholder mapping.

Pursue early, sustained and tailored engagement with policymakers.

Give timely responses to policy initiatives such as government consultations, parliamentary inquiries and legislative plans to drive change.

Develop bespoke and accessible policy briefings and synthesis to influence live policy-focused initiatives.

Provide evidence to policy advisory groups and relevant advocacy organisations.

Examples of how to achieve the ‘Informing practice change’ dimension of impact:

If a practical project or intervention, ensure its design is practitioner-informed and evaluated on the ground.

- Develop guidance materials, best practice case studies, toolkits, etc. for practitioners.
- Develop partnerships with organisations that serve as intermediaries for practitioner communities.
- Publish articles in practitioner-focused publications.
- Present at practitioner conferences.

Examples of how to achieve the ‘Improving or advancing understanding or awareness of an issue’ and ‘Changing attitudes or perceptions’ dimensions of impact:

- Hold or speak at relevant events
- Join related advisory groups
- Secure media coverage
- Post on blog sites or social media
- Engage with policy and practice

Examples of how to achieve the ‘Providing opportunity and building capability’ dimension of impact:

- Host and attend events and other convening activities.
- Develop early-career researchers.
- Support and enable interdisciplinary collaboration or cross-sector communities of practice.

Develop open-access datasets, toolkits or methodologies.

Additional information: Full application ‘Methods, approach and activities’ guidance

Please read this guidance in full before completing the ‘Methods, approach and activities’ section of the *Full application* form.

Where a project includes primary data collection, applicants must:

- Supply full details of the sampling strategy and its rationale.
- Include a clear description of the population of interest, and plans to select and recruit the sample and any subgroups within it.
- Supply a full account of the theoretical, technical and practical issues that have influenced the selected methodology/approach.

If this involves quantitative data collection, applicants should:

- Provide information about both the issued and achieved sample sizes, along with appropriate power calculations, and how to account for expected attrition.
- In cases where the project involves a survey, provide details of the approach to implementation, and demonstrate an understanding of the practical implementation challenges as well as statistical theory.
- In cases where the study involves collecting data in a systematic and quantifiable way from electronic or paper records (for example, court files), state what data is held in what form, identify issues of data quality and consistency, and set out how the data will be accessed, collected and manipulated to be in a useable form for analysis.

If this involves qualitative data collection, applicants should:

- Clearly set out the approach suggested for each group (for example, one-to-one in-depth interviews, focus groups, deliberation) and identify any specific tools or interviewing techniques to deploy to elicit quality data.
- Set out the approach intended for the analysis and presentation of findings.

For all projects that include primary quantitative or qualitative data collection, applicants should set out whether they plan to deposit the data at an appropriate archive to ensure data is available for future research. Applicants should:

- Explain what will be said to participants about how their data will be used, including any statements about anonymised data.
- Explain how data will be anonymised, which data archive will be used or, if an archive is not appropriate, what other arrangements will be made to enable other researchers to access the data.
- Set out the timescale for the deposit, which should be within one year of grant completion.
- Explain the reasons if it is not appropriate to deposit the data for future use.
- Include in the budget any costs related to preparing data for archiving.

Where applicants propose secondary data analysis of existing data sources – surveys, administrative data or other sources – they should:

- Explain how the source is appropriate to address the aims and objectives of the project, how to obtain access to the data source, and what further manipulation of the data may be necessary to make it fit for purpose.
- Include an analysis plan.

- Use and integrate the data sources that best address the research questions (rather than focusing on only one dataset, and then using separate projects to interrogate other datasets to examine the same issue).

For reviews and synthesis, including formal meta-analysis as well as other systematic and narrative reviews, applicants should:

- Demonstrate that the approach will deliver a critical assessment of empirical research or policy/practice initiatives, draw out implications for policy and practice, or generate a new research agenda.
- Demonstrate that preliminary work has been undertaken to establish there is sufficient literature to review.
- Explain how relevant research would be identified (that is, which databases will be searched) and include details about how to assess the quality of studies and other inclusion criteri

Evaluations, whether process, impact or economic, will often require a mix of methods in order to address the research questions and meet the wider project objectives, and applicants should therefore apply the guidance above where relevant. In addition, applicants should provide details about:

- The underlying theory for the intervention proposed for evaluation and any existing evidence of promise.
- How any ‘counterfactual’ would be assessed.
- The outcome measures to be used, including their validity, reliability and how these would be collected.

For pre-trial development work, there needs to be potential for the work to progress to decisive outcome trials, and interventions which are being tested must be based on strong evidence, for example about the:

- Scale and nature of the problem that the intervention seeks to address.
- Causal mechanisms at the heart of any programme design.
- Practicality of implementing the proposed intervention in the chosen setting.
- Potential effect sizes.
- Feasibility of conducting an evaluation of sufficient scale and rigour to provide convincing evidence of effectiveness.

We usually expect pre-trial development work to be undertaken separately and independently from formal large-scale comparison or controlled trials to establish potential effectiveness (including cost effectiveness). Applicants should set out why any particular concept or approach – as opposed to others that may already be available or in development – warrants further development and testing.

All trials should be pre-registered on an appropriate trial registry.

Please see Appendix D for further detail regarding our expectations for pre-trial development work.

Additional information: Budget guidelines ‘Methods, approach and activities’ guidance

The following points set out our approach to assessing the budget and to financial monitoring:

- Grant budgets must be set out in calendar year. We do not accept budgets set out using project year or financial year.
- Our grant funding is outside the scope of VAT, as it is not a business activity for private benefit.
  - Where applicants are contemplating working with others for substantial parts of the grant, we expect them to consider whether it is feasible to include them as co-applicants or collaborators, rather than as providers of a service which might make them liable for VAT.
  - Any VAT that is expected to be payable must be set out within the budget submitted as part of the *Full application*; budgets should be inclusive of all VAT and local taxes, where applicable.
- We fund 100% of eligible costs, not the 80% funded by Research Councils.
  - Where we make an award to a Higher Education Institution (HEI), we will meet all ‘directly incurred’ costs (subject to certain conditions) and most ‘directly allocated’ costs (except the estates costs of PIs and permanent university staff).
  - We do not fund ‘indirect’ costs. Guidance about these terms should be sought from university research administration staff.
- We reserve the right to hold back up to 20% of the total grant value (to a maximum of £50,000) until satisfactory completion of all grant work and outputs.
- The budget should not include ‘contingency’ funds. If unforeseen events arise or new activities (such as dissemination activities) are agreed, we can consider a request for a supplementary grant.

PhD students can work on grants to undertake specific tasks, provided this is explicitly requested and justified.

- We will fund the PhD student's time and reasonable costs.
- We will not fund PhD fees.
- Where the work a PhD student undertakes will contribute to their PhD, the host institution (rather than the Foundation) is responsible for ensuring appropriate progress towards the PhD is made, and for recruiting alternative staff if the project is delayed.

Budget guidelines for Outline applications

In the *Outline application*, applicants will be asked to set out their proposed budget using the broad categories below:

- Staff costs: PI time
- Staff costs: Co-I time
- Staff costs: Team member time
- Staff costs: Consultants
- Staff costs: Overheads and estate costs
- Non-staff costs: Quantitative research
- Non-staff costs: Qualitative research
- Non-staff costs: Communications and stakeholder engagement
- Non-staff costs: Equipment
- Non-staff costs: Other direct costs

The types of cost we expect to be included under each of the non-staff cost headings are outlined below:

Non-staff costs	Include direct costs relating to
Quantitative research	Survey fieldwork costs (and associated print and postage), data entry, data processing, participant reimbursement, compensation or incentives, data access/linkage fees, travel to secure data enclaves, statistical software licences, assessment materials and licences, etc.

Non-staff costs	Include direct costs relating to
Qualitative research	Transcription, participant reimbursement, compensation or incentives, fieldwork associated travel, accommodation and subsistence, qualitative analysis software licences, etc.
Communications and stakeholder engagement	Dissemination activities, conference and workshop expenses, advisory group activities, travel for advisory groups, etc.
Equipment	For example, recording equipment, laptops.
Other direct costs	General administrative or office expenses, recruitment of project staff, any other costs not covered elsewhere.

A more detailed explanation of eligible and ineligible costs mostly relevant to the *Full application* stage is provided below.

Budget guidelines for Outline applications

Staff time (salaries and on-costs)

Eligible costs:

- Salaries (for both UK and non-UK staff).
- National Insurance.
- Employer pension contributions.

Ineligible costs:

- Enhanced salaries resulting from promotion are not eligible.

More information

- At *Full application* stage, the budget must show the total amount budgeted for each named person, per calendar year.

The ‘Research and engagement team’ section of the *Full application* form should specify the proportion of time that each person will contribute to the project, entered as the full-time equivalent (FTE), where 1.0 is the equivalent to full-time. If calculating a proportion of a week please assume a 35-hour working week, and if calculating a proportion of a year assume 220 working days per year.

On-costs may be claimed in addition to basic salary costs and should be included within the total amount budgeted for each named person.

At *Full application* stage, an estimate of cost-of-living and incremental pay increases should be included in the budget. The combined total of any increases and increments should not exceed 5% per annum. The Foundation will only meet the costs of actual increases, not estimated ones. Where an individual is expected to receive incremental pay increases, these can be incorporated into the budget.

We expect the PI on the project to contribute at least half a day a week (0.1 FTE) on average over the life of the grant. There is no minimum time limit for other members of the research team; however, it is important that all named members of staff have a clearly defined role.

Consultants

Eligible costs:

Daily rates usually within range £250-£800.

More information

We expect all research team members within the host institution to be funded via salary and on-costs as described above. We also expect to fund most staff within other organisations in this way; however, individuals from other organisations who are undertaking a limited and discrete role on a project may alternatively be written in as consultants. Example consultancy roles include the provision of statistical skills or advice, expert advice regarding data collection instruments or approach, or expert knowledge regarding policy or practice.

At *Full Application* stage, the number of days and daily rate should be specified in the budget. Rates higher than £800/day need detailed justification on the basis of specific skills, experience or seniority.

Separate or additional overheads for consultants are not allowable since we expect these to be incorporated within the specified daily rate.

Indirect costs, estates and overheads

Eligible costs:

Estates costs for HEI staff who are not permanent staff or PIs can be met on a pro-rata basis.

Overheads for non-HEIs (but we do not expect overheads to exceed 60% as a proportion of salaries).

Ineligible costs:

Indirect costs for HEIs are ineligible.

Estates costs for permanent staff and PIs in HEIs are ineligible.

More information:

HEI applicants will be aware that the government has established a revenue stream (the Charity Support Fund) to contribute towards the running costs of research funded by charities at universities. These funds are distributed through the quality-related (QR) element of the higher education funding councils. Grants from the Nuffield Foundation are officially recognised by HEFCE as eligible for this QR funding.

Non-HEIs must specify the overhead rate as a proportion of salaries, and provide details of services included in overhead charges (accommodation, management, central services and so on).

Qualitative and quantitative research (direct, non-staff costs)

Eligible costs:

Direct fieldwork costs.

Reimbursement, compensation or incentive payments to participants (where required).

Travel and subsistence to undertake quantitative or qualitative research activities.

Admin and office expenses incurred to undertake quantitative or qualitative research activities.

More information

At *Full application* stage, applicants should provide details of the issued sample size, achieved sample size, response rate and total cost. Where fieldwork is subcontracted, please provide a specific and up-to-date quotation from the fieldwork provider and specify whether VAT is payable.

At *Full application* stage, we expect clear details to be provided about any requests for reimbursement, compensation or incentives for research participants. Reimbursement will cover any expenses incurred by participants in taking part. Compensation or incentives are to reasonably remunerate or compensate research participants.

Due consideration should be given to the appropriateness and ethics of remunerating participants or otherwise.

Payments must not compromise voluntary consent or act as undue inducement. Applicants should seek early advice—ideally from their institution or expert bodies—on appropriate compensation levels and potential impacts on social security benefits. Non-monetary incentives like vouchers may be suitable in some cases.

Communications and stakeholder engagement

Eligible costs:

Advisory group activities.

Ineligible costs:

Fees for advisory group members are usually ineligible, however, we will consider payment for members from third sector organisations or those bringing lived experience.

More information

Costing assumptions for in-person advisory group meetings should be based on the use of facilities at the host institution, if available, or at another external facility. Rooms at the Foundation's offices may occasionally be available for advisory group meetings but this cannot be guaranteed.

Advisory group member fees should be costed at rates standard for your institution or in line with guidance such as issued by National Institute for Health and Care Research.

Engagement (direct, non-staff costs)

Eligible costs:

Costs of events, publications and dissemination activities.

Travel and subsistence for contributors to events.

Ineligible costs:

Fees for open access publication in journals are not typically eligible.

Travel and attendance costs at international academic conferences are not eligible, except with specific permission (unlikely prior to grant start).

More information

We are aware of the debate about various models of open access for academic publications. However, as universities often have other funds to support open access, and as many journal articles are published after the grant end date, we will only provide funds for this in exceptional circumstances.

Equipment

Eligible costs:

Full costs for project-specific equipment for projects lasting three years or more.

More information

Equipment for projects that last less than three years is eligible for part-funding on a pro-rata basis. For example, if the project duration is 18 months, applicants should request 50% of the actual equipment costs.

Other direct costs

Eligible costs:

For example, direct costs for project-specific staff recruitment campaigns.

Other admin or office expenses that are attributable to the project.

Ineligible costs:

PhD fees are not eligible.

Costs relating to Continuing Professional Development are not eligible.

More information

Applicants must provide further breakdown or justification for budget lines that exceed £5,000.

Direct recruitment costs apply only to recruitment campaigns for project-specific staff (usually research assistants). These cannot be agreed retrospectively.

The Foundation considers Continuing Professional Development activities to be the responsibility of the host institution.

Additional information: Intervention development and early evaluation funding 'Methods, approach and activities' guidance

Key criteria for development and early evaluation funding

To be considered for development and early evaluation funding, applicants should demonstrate they have:

An intervention or approach aimed at improving outcomes in the Foundation's areas and populations of interest – The application must describe the intervention in sufficient detail to explain the nature of the intervention, its intensity – for example in terms of contact hours, duration, etc. – and the target population.

A theoretical basis for why the approach is likely to have an impact, based on research literature – The Nuffield Foundation seeks to promote evidence-based policy and practice. It is therefore important that interventions have a sound theoretical basis for anticipating an impact on specified outcomes.

A clear rationale for why it might be expected to be an improvement on existing interventions that tackle the same issue – While we are keen to generate high-quality evidence about what works, we do not want to encourage an unnecessary proliferation of interventions. Applicants should demonstrate their awareness of other interventions that seek to tackle the same issue, and explain why their intervention would be an improvement upon others already in use.

Some prior experience delivering the approach in equivalent settings and/or with equivalent populations, or a track record of developing and/or delivering other promising

approaches – Interventions will only be effective if they are acceptable to practitioners and participants, and feasible to implement. Applicants will need to demonstrate their experience of working in or with relevant settings/populations to show they understand the relevant issues and that they have the necessary skills to successfully deliver the proposed project.

An approach that could be delivered at a reasonable cost – Since high costs are likely to constrain reach, value for money will be an important consideration.

Appetite and potential for the approach to be delivered at **scale –** Since our ultimate aim is to promote interventions with strong evidence of effectiveness, it is important that applicants have aspirations for delivery at scale, or ideas for pathways for delivery at scale.

Identified the questions to be answered in the development and early evaluation work, how this work will be undertaken and how it will contribute towards making the approach ready for future trial – Please see the following section for information about what a development and early evaluation project should seek to achieve.

Evaluation expertise – We expect all intervention development projects to have an evaluation component and to consider how further development or scaling up might also be evaluated robustly and effectively. (We encourage intervention designers and developers who do not have evaluation expertise to form partnerships with organisations that do.)

Commitment to future independent evaluation of their approach via an RCT, where feasible – Since RCTs constitute the most robust form of evaluation, we would expect applicants to be committed to this approach.

Expected outcomes of an intervention development and early evaluation project

In order to pave the way towards a large-scale RCT, a development and early evaluation project will need to refine the proposed intervention and provide formative findings that will help improve future delivery. It will also need to demonstrate that the intervention or approach meets the following conditions:

Feasibility

For example:

- Is the approach acceptable to practitioners and/or the target population?
- Is the approach suitably resourced (including time)?

Is the approach aimed at a suitable target population?

Could settings or the target population afford to buy the intervention?

Has feasibility been demonstrated in an appropriate context, that is, one that is applicable to equivalent settings in the UK?

Evidence of promise

Is there evidence that this approach could impact on outcomes (that is, is the approach underpinned by evidence; does the approach change participant behaviour as predicted in the theory of change; is it likely that the observed behaviours could lead to a change in outcomes; has there been a measurable change in outcomes)?

Readiness for trial

Is the intervention replicable (that is, is there a clearly defined intervention)?

Is the intervention scalable (that is, could the intervention be delivered in a number of settings in its current form or is further development required)?

We do not expect all applications to address all these questions comprehensively within one project. The appropriate scope for a project will depend upon the current stage of the intervention's development.

For example, some interventions may have a strong theoretical basis for why the approach is likely to have an impact and to be an improvement upon existing interventions, but may not have been implemented in practice or subjected to any form of evaluation. Where projects are at such an early stage we would expect an application to be small scale and to focus on feasibility and early piloting.

In contrast, some interventions may be more developed, with initial evidence of promise from previous evaluation of the approach (for example, pre- and post-test assessments, a matched study, a trial conducted in another context). Where projects are at this later stage of development, applications should contain a strong evaluative component designed to ascertain whether the intervention generates a measurable change in outcomes.

An evaluation component of this kind would need to:

Employ a robust design with an appropriate control group.

Use outcome measures that are valid, reliable and predictive of later outcomes.

Be adequately powered (that is, have sufficient scale to detect the expected effect of the intervention).

We therefore welcome applications for small-scale RCTs since they will provide good evidence of the likely intervention effect and test the practicalities associated with implementing an RCT design.

Where projects are at this later stage of development, we would also expect the evaluation component to have independence built in as far as possible, and to employ appropriate strategies to minimise the risk of bias. This might mean publishing a protocol and statistical analysis plan in advance of conducting the project, involving an independent evaluator to measure outcomes, or ensuring that the individuals measuring and comparing outcomes between intervention and comparison groups are blind to the treatment condition. In particular, all trials should be pre-registered.

Where development and early evaluation projects are able to demonstrate all of the features identified (that is, feasibility, evidence of promise and readiness for trial), we expect that they will be ready for a large-scale RCT to test efficacy (that is, whether the intervention can work under ideal/developer-led conditions in a larger number of settings).

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