



Department
for Education

Children's Social Care Innovation Programme

**Targeted Funding Opportunity:
How to get involved**

December 2016

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What are we looking to support through this targeted opportunity?

1. The Children's Social Care Innovation Programme is working with the sector to radically transform the children's social care system so that we achieve better life chances for children receiving support and better value for money. The Programme is inspiring practice change and finding new and innovative ways to improve outcomes.
2. To date the Innovation Programme has stimulated new thinking in the sector and is testing a wide range of innovations. There has been an overwhelming amount of interest in the programme: between May 2014 and March 2016 the Innovation Programme invested £100M in 53 projects involving 90 local authorities. It has generated radical new ideas and taken many much further by testing new ways of working in a range of different settings and circumstances.
3. We are beginning to see the impact the Innovation Programme is having on improving outcomes for children and families, and to understand which interventions are most successful in transforming children's social care. Ofsted's Annual Report cites that 'research-led ideas can have a transformative effect on children, young people and families when staff are supported to deliver them and leaders critically assess their impact'. We are seeking to continue to support this through the Innovation Programme.
4. To transform practice more widely we must focus on building a world-leading evidence base and sharing the learning from the Programme. Over time, the new What Works Centre will bring together in one place evidence of excellent practice and learning from the Innovation Programme and more widely, providing a trusted voice on best practice that is built on solid evidence.
5. We know that a strong evidence base must be grounded in continued development, testing and evaluation of innovations that show promise, including by testing them in different conditions, areas and at larger scale. Robust evaluation is integral to the Innovation Programme and early findings from the first wave are already starting to identify the key features of successful children's social care systems, which include strong leadership and governance as well as a clear and coherent theory of practice.
6. We want to ensure we are building on this early learning and deepening the evidence base, as well as identifying and filling gaps. Therefore, we are currently developing plans for how we can build on and deepen the evidence base which is starting to emerge from the Innovation Programme, developing the forensic approach to testing what works that will be at the heart of the new Children's Social Care What Works Centre. We aim to publish further details of our plans early in 2017.

7. In the meantime our vision for '[Putting Children First](#)', published in July, set out a number of policy areas where we need quickly to develop and test new interventions. These are:

a. Building on the recommendations from Sir Martin Narey's report on residential care to:

- *Test innovative new ways in which residential care could be used in a more dynamic and creative way to support children and link seamlessly with other care placements and services;*
- *Pilot variations of 'Staying Close' to enable young people to live independently but close to their children's home and with support from the home, developing a better understanding of the costings, practicalities and impact; and*
- *Enable LAs to come together in larger scale commissioning arrangements for residential care placements to test Sir Martin Narey's view that this could lead to significant savings, wider placement choices and better outcomes for children.*

For further details please see the policy briefs – [Residential care](#) and [Staying Close](#) and the FAQs – [Residential Care](#) and [Staying Close](#)

b. Testing the use of social investment to improve the way that care leavers are supported as they make the transition to independent living, and to support their sustained participation in employment and training.

For further details please see the [policy brief](#) and the [FAQ](#)

c. Testing alternative delivery models for children's social care and building the evidence base in this area in order to spark new ideas, provide insight on the risks and benefits of alternative structures and shape support for organisational and structural innovations.

For further details please see the [policy brief](#)

d. Develop and test understanding of how targeted support can prevent children needing to enter the child protection system.

For further details please see the [policy brief](#)

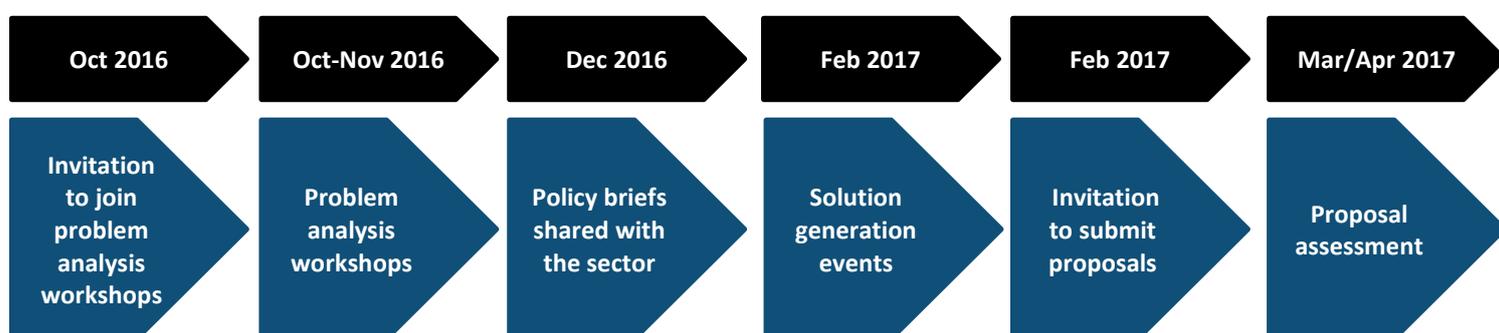
This targeted funding opportunity is for organisations interested in developing and testing innovations in the above four areas.

How to get involved in this targeted opportunity

8. Through this targeted funding opportunity we are specifically looking to support organisations interested in developing and testing innovations in the four policy areas set out in *Putting Children First* and explained above:
- Building on the recommendations of the Narey report on residential care, particularly piloting 'Staying Close' and regional commissioning of residential care;
 - Testing the use of social investment to improve support for care leavers;
 - Testing alternative delivery models for children's social care; and
 - Testing and developing understanding of targeted support to prevent children entering child protection systems.

The process in more detail

9. We are aiming for this targeted funding opportunity to be as collaborative as possible. It will include the core components set out below, with timings subject to change depending on how quickly thinking in each area develops:



Invitation to join problem analysis workshops (October 2016) - organisations register an interest in attending workshops to further define the challenges and opportunities within the policy areas.

Problem analysis workshops (October/November 2016) – to bring together interested organisations, sector experts and policy teams from the Department to build a shared understanding of each of the policy issues and the challenges and opportunities for addressing them. A summary of key points of discussion from the first workshops will be made available on this website following the events.

Policy briefs shared with the sector (December 2016) - Output from the problem analysis workshops will be used to develop policy briefs setting out in more detail the issues which we are looking to address alongside an invitation to submit a short expression of interest ([EOI](#)). These EOIs will be used to select organisations to take part in the solution generation events that follow.

Solution generation events (February 2017) - to bring together potential bidders, policy teams and the Innovation Programme team to explore and develop responses to the policy briefs.

Invitation to submit proposals (February 2017) - Bidders asked to submit proposals on their ideas following the solution generation events.

Proposal assessment and funding decisions (Jan-Apr 2017) - Proposals will be considered by the Innovation Programme Expert Panel and Investment Board who will make recommendations on funding to the Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families and the Secretary of State. We hope to start releasing funding for Innovation Projects from the spring of 2017.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against six criteria consistent with previous awards made by the Innovation Programme. At EOI stage we will focus primarily on scope, innovation and outcomes criteria as we recognise some of these ideas will be embryonic.

1. The project is innovative
 - Include bold new approaches to transforming outcomes for children and young people
 - Challenge the status quo
 - Have the potential, if delivered at scale, to transform the sector
2. The project will improve outcomes for children and/or young people
 - Clearly describe the type and extent of change that will be achieved for children in need of social care support
 - Have a logical and compelling case for the expected impact
 - Be backed by evidence where the proposal has been previously tested or draw on relevant evidence where the proposal is new
 - Strong understanding of what data will be collected to show impact/how it will be collected
3. The project will improve value for money
 - Show a compelling case that better outcomes can be achieved for the same or less money

- Include figures that are complete and robust
- Have a clear plan for securing funding from other sources

4. The project will be able to be delivered

- Have identified a strong team to take forward the work
- Include appropriate and realistic activities, milestones, timescales and budget planning
- Show good awareness of the enablers and risks for the project
- Include appropriate sponsorship and/or endorsements

5. The project will be sustained and mainstreamed

- Include clear and achievable plans to achieve long term sustainability, backed up by figures
- Show how activity will be part of core delivery, not peripheral

6. The project will have an impact at a bigger scale

- Be very likely to be adopted and adapted in other places
- Have a clear plan for how the innovation can grow (whether this is led by the project or not)
- Have developed business models and/or commissioning models that create demand and enable delivery of their innovation
- Have national partners on board
- Have a plan for how to engage policy makers
- Be codifying practice
- Be engaging with workforce development issues related to the project
- Be ensuring appropriate fidelity to the model

Submission requirements

Applicants should use the detail provided in the policy brief when completing their EOI to ensure they are addressing the problems and challenges outlined and that their EOI meets the policy objectives for this targeted funding opportunity. In addition, applicants should refer to the Innovation Programme's assessment criteria when completing their EOI which can be found in this document.

All applications must be submitted by 3pm, 31st January 2017 to CS.INNOVATIONPROGRAMME@education.gsi.gov.uk using the [EOI form](#) provided.

Next steps

To take advantage of this targeted funding opportunity, we recommend that you:

- Read DfE's policy document [*'Putting Children First: delivering our vision for excellent children's social care.'*](#)
- If you are interested in responding to the residential care opportunity, read Sir Martin Narey's independent review of children's residential care in England and the [Department's response](#)
- Read the [policy briefs](#) and decide if your idea fits with a specific policy area.
- Have a look at the [learning outputs](#) from the problem analysis workshops to read what was discussed by the sector.
- If you believe your idea does fit the scope of a policy brief, submit an EOI.
- Keep up to date with evaluation reports and learning reports from the projects that were funded in Wave 1 of the Innovation Programme as they are published on the [Spring Consortium website](#).

Questions and Answers

Funding

How much funding is available?

There is nearly £200m available for all of the Department's innovation and improvement work over this parliament. We have some flexibility about how we use this funding between the Innovation Programme, Partners in Practice, city and devolution deals and Trusts. We will ensure the money is used where it has the most potential to make a long term difference to the outcomes of vulnerable children and young people.

What is funding available for?

Funding will be available for new innovation projects and for scaling up or spreading existing innovations in each of the four policy areas outlined in this document.

How long can we receive funding for/how long can a project be?

In very unusual circumstances projects may receive funding for up to 2019/20. We expect most projects to be shorter, (between one and two years), with a clear plan for becoming self-sustaining in future years.

How will funding decisions be made?

Funding decisions will be made in a transparent way against the criteria set out in the 'innovation briefs' that will be published after the first solution generation events. In reaching decisions on which projects to fund the Department will take the advice of the Innovation Programme Investment Board, details of which can be found on the Spring Consortium website. Final decisions will be taken by Ministers.

Who can apply for funding?

Local authorities and organisations from across the private, public and voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors can all apply for funding. We are keen to have a mix of organisations involved.

How much should I bid for?

We will be looking to achieve maximum impact from the £200m investment in innovation and improvement and this funding over this parliament. There is no single figure that is most likely to attract funding but each project should offer the potential for substantial impact and provide excellent value for public money.

When will funding be available from?

We hope to make funding available from spring 2017, depending on how well developed the proposals we receive are.

How developed does an innovation need to be?

For this targeted opportunity we are keen to work closely with the sector to develop ideas at different stages of innovation addressing the four policy issues set out above. This includes testing new ideas as well as developing an evidence base for or scaling up an existing innovation. The key is that you have a sense of the problem that you are trying to solve, the outcomes you would like to achieve, and that the idea is truly innovative.

I have an idea that I want to scale up but I'm not an Innovation Programme project at the moment. Can I register for one of the events?

Yes, as long as your idea is linked to one of the four policy areas.

What if I am unable to attend the first event?

If you are unable to attend the problem analysis events you will still be able to access the 'policy briefs' as they are published and submit a short expression of interest which will be used to select organisations to take part in the second solution generation event. A summary of key points of discussion from the first workshops will be made available on the [Spring Consortium website](#) following the event if you are unable to attend.

What if I have an idea which does not fit into one of the four policy areas, but is aligned to the broader programme strands, can I still apply?

We will not be accepting proposals outside of the four policy areas outlined in this document at this stage.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Please contact innovation@springconsortium.com with any questions about this targeted funding opportunity.



Department
for Education

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