



Supporting local learning

Applicant guidance

1.0 Background

The pandemic response saw a valuable increase in collaborative learning between teams, organisations, and sectors. Q wants to help maintain the momentum behind this way of working and help embed a systemic, collaborative approach to learning. Supporting local learning, is a stand-alone funding call offering awards of up to £20,000 for proposals from Academic Health Science Networks (AHSNs) across England. We expect to fund proposals looking to build, strengthen and support collaborative learning practices that have emerged from the pandemic, adding value to work that is already happening across the regions.

2.0 The funding offer

We have set a limit for this funding of a maximum £20,000 for a small number of proposals. Please note that this does not mean that all applications need to be at this maximum level. If we receive good quality applications that require smaller resources or could be delivered in a shorter time scale, we will be pleased to consider them. Proposals that actively demonstrate value for money and build in ideas around sustainability are encouraged.

We have a limited budget for awards therefore we expect this call to be very competitive. You should review the criteria carefully and make your case as clearly as you can.

Although co-funding or matched funding are welcome, no preference will be given to proposals that include either.

2.1 What we expect to fund

- Activity that seeks to build and further emerging systems and networks of shared learning. We are particularly interested in receiving applications that also show consideration of regional priorities and needs.
- Local activity that considers how to involve Q members and provides tangible outcomes that benefit Q members across the region. Successful proposals will support Q members to learn, connect and collaborate and consider how to share key developments and learning with the Q community.

Examples of activity eligible for funding:

- Events, or other processes, that bring together Q members to contribute to local work (eg a hackathon process that invites Q members to advise on how to reduce waiting lists locally).
- Activities that support peer learning between Q members and other improvers (eg funding for Communities of Practice, Action Learning Sets, or Open space events).
- Learning that's applied, rather than general networking. This should be participant led, so the activities are tailored to their priorities.
- Events or communication activities that build understanding of promising interventions from Q to encourage uptake (eg an event to encourage wider engagement in a Q Exchange project or other promising intervention being developed by a local Q member, or a set of case studies of ideas that have emerged through Q members).
- Activities that encourage the spread of promising insights and interventions that utilise Q (eg local events or a 'campaign' to involve Q members in implementing the intervention)
- Interventions that help build the skills and knowledge needed locally for collaborative learning (eg development sessions on the skills map or collaborative learning techniques, or to test some of the ideas from Network Weaving locally).
- Design and development work to support embedding Q effectively into local organisational learning (eg co-design sessions with Q members on Q's role in supporting learning; facilitation capacity to support connections between members).

2.2 What we will not fund:

- Activity that does not demonstrate a clear link to collaborative learning, learning that involves sharing insight across teams and organisations.
- Activity that does not demonstrate a clear link to [Q's Theory of change](#).
- Activity with no link to current regional priorities.

3.0 Proposal

Those applying will need to complete an online application form and provide detailed budgetary information on the total cost of their initiative. This includes what the funds will cover and details of any co-funding or matched funding. Guidance for completing individual questions can be found in Appendix 1.

3.1 Proposal Timescale

We will fund proposals for a maximum of 12 months. We understand that timescales will vary depending on the activity proposed. We expect the work to conclude by December 2022.

3.2 Assessment

An assessment of proposals will be carried out against the criteria laid out in Appendix 1. Each proposal will be assessed by two assessors who are both Q members and from within NHS England and NHS Improvement with a solid understanding of the regional priorities associated with the AHSN submitting the proposal for funding. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application as per the timeline in section 3.3. If we require any further information on proposals, we will contact applicants directly.

3.3 Key dates

Open for applications	Wednesday 14 April 2021
Deadline for proposals to be submitted	Wednesday 19 May 2021
Internal eligibility checks and allocation to assessors	From Wednesday 19 May 2021
Assessor assessments	w/c Monday 24 May – Monday 7 June 2021
Assessor panel meetings	Monday 7 June – Friday 18 June 2021
Final decision-making meeting	w/c Monday 12 July 2021
Applicants informed of decision	w/c Monday 12 July 2021
Award agreements finalised	August 2021
Work to be completed	September 2021 – December 2022

4.0 What we expect from successful teams

4.1 Reporting

Award holders are required to update the Q project team on any significant changes to the project team or delivered activity. This includes producing a final report covering the approach, context, results, impact and learning as well as a summary financial statement (the format for these will be agreed with the successful award holders).

We will offer advice and constructive challenge. We expect grant holders to adhere to delivery of the agreed activity and keep us informed, but we will not be involved in the day-to-day management of the awards.

4.2 Capture and share knowledge

Q wishes to capture learning on how to best reach out to new audiences and build the Q community. Successful applicants will be expected to:

- Share any outward facing materials that are produced, for example patient information or tools for health care professionals.
- Share key project developments and learning with the wider Q community throughout project duration using media such as, but not limited to, blogs on the Q website, Twitter, Q-municate (our monthly newsletter) and events (some support will be provided by the Q team to do this).

Appendix I - Guidance for application questions

Contact and project information (Not assessed)

Name of lead organisation applying (AHSN)

This funding call is only open to the 15 Allied Health Science Networks in England.

Project lead

Please ensure this is the person who will be listed in the award agreement as the project lead and who we will contact regarding the administration of the award, including reporting.

Project title

What is the project title?

Project summary

Please give a short summary of the proposed project.

Section 1: Aims and background to the project

Aims

In this question we want to be confident that the project addresses the primary aim of this funding programme: activities that enable collaborative learning, learning that involves sharing insight across teams and organisations.

- What are the overall aims of the proposal / project? What is the purpose of the project? Does the purpose align with the aim of this funding programme?
- Who are the intended beneficiaries? How will this project benefit Q members?
- How can you demonstrate clear value for money in terms of reach and / or impact?
- How has the project taken account of service users / people with lived experience being included in design and delivery?

Background

In this question we are looking for information that demonstrates there is a clear need within the Q community for the proposed activity and appetite amongst members to participate. Successful proposals will provide clear evidence rather than anecdotal feedback.

- What is the need within the Q community the activity will address?
- How does the proposed activity seek to build and further emerging systems and networks of shared learning?
- What evidence do you have of a consideration of regional priorities and needs?
- How will the proposed activity involve Q members and lead to tangible outcomes that will benefit members? How will the proposal support members to learn, connect and collaborate locally? How will key learning and developments be shared with the community?

Section 2: Activities and project plan

Activities and methods

We are looking for a clear outline of the proposed activities and methodologies that your project will use.

- What is your rationale for why the proposed ideas / solutions are an effective approach to addressing the need identified?
- Describe what the project will do and the rationale for how this will be achieved.
- What is your hypothesis or theory of change on how the activity will benefit Q members to establish or strengthen their own learning networks across the improvement landscape?

Timetable / project plan

- What are the major milestones for the project and how will progress be monitored?
- What are the identified deliverables and are they achievable within the 12-month period?

Project duration

- Please enter the project duration in months. The project should conclude by the end of December 2022.

Section 3: Staffing and budget

Staffing and organisation

In this question, we are looking to understand who is involved and what their roles will be in the delivery of the project.

- Are any roles being proposed to be recruited as part of the project? If so, what is the role?
- Identify the skill sets / roles needed (staff, patients, stakeholders etc) and have they confirmed availability to support the planning and delivery of the work?

Total cost

What is the total cost of the project? (This may include funding from other sources)

Total amount of funding requested

How much funding is being requested from the Health Foundation? (The maximum funding available is £20,000 per application)

Other funding

Have any other organisations been approached for funding?

Detailed Budget

Please complete a [detailed budget](#) in a separate document.

Through the budget we are looking for information that demonstrates that spend has been adequately allocated. When completing the budget please consider the following questions:

- Is the funding amount requested below or up to £20,000?
- What are the exact details of your budget and how will resources be used effectively to deliver the project aims?
- Is the funding request for staff costs directly linked to supporting the methods and activities proposed but not making up the entirety of funding?
- Are the requested funds for expenses reasonable and in line with [Q's Expenses Policy](#)?
- Does the budget represent value for money?
- Has any funding been requested for items that are not eligible, ie core staff costs, capital expenditure such as for vehicles or buildings or major items of equipment, staff time for the writing and submission of articles, publications, or journals?

The budget should include details of how much you are requesting for the following:

- **Staff costs**
If the Health Foundation is being asked to contribute to some or all the costs of staff, please give the name of the postholder (if known), their total salary including on costs and the percentage of time allocated to the project, for each member of staff to be funded. The number and level of staff requested should be appropriate to the work proposed. Salary increases can be included but should be no more than 3% per year.
- **Running costs**
The Health Foundation will fund reasonable running costs such as consumables, data analysis, computing costs, essential administration and office expenses directly related to this project. All such costs must be directly related to this project. Please note we do not fund overhead costs.
- **Travel and subsistence**
Reasonable costs (economy / standard class fares) will be met, where applicants can justify the need to visit each other or collaborators or to participate in conferences and meetings.
- **Non-recurring costs**
Equipment essential to the project but currently unavailable in the organisation / department may be funded, provided this is clearly justified. The cost should be a current quotation from the supplier. If the applicant and the project move during the tenure of the award, the Health Foundation may require that any equipment purchased moves with them.
- **Other costs**
Funding for exceptional items may be available providing they are justified. (For example, access to specialist facilities or equipment or the use of consultants may incur charges). Please add any other costs which do not fit under any of the above headings here.

Below is a reminder of what the funding can and cannot be used for.

Supporting local learning will provide up to £20,000 per award. This money can be used to cover:

- Costs associated with project meetings or events including room hire, catering, etc.
- Patients', carers', and service users' involvement.
- Communication materials for the project.
- Administrative support.
- Backfill costs for staff where appropriate.

Supporting local learning funding **cannot** be used for:

- Capital expenditure such as vehicles or building acquisition or refurbishment.
- Organisational overheads such as costs of premises, management, and HR.
- Procurement of day-to-day consumables or of 'business-as-usual' equipment.
- Staff time for the writing and submission of articles, publications, or journals.
- VAT: the project will be supported as a charitable grant and as such is not liable for VAT.

Budget Justification

Please provide justification for items requested in the budget and the level of funding requested. **Please note an important part of our assessment will be how you demonstrate value for money.**

Living wage employer

Please let us know whether you are an accredited living wage employer.

Section 4: Outcomes, risks, and dissemination

Expected outcomes

In this question we are looking to understand what the anticipated results of the project are and identify any outputs such as publications, educational materials, or patient information.

- Are you able to clearly understand what success will look like for this proposal?
- Demonstrate how your proposed activity will be effectively evaluated and impact measured within the 12-month delivery timeframe

Project risks

- What are the identified risks and what mitigations will be put in place?

Dissemination

In this question we are looking for clearly articulated plans for disseminating results and learning.

- Describe how you plan to capture and share knowledge, disseminate impact and learning, and share any useful outward facing materials?
- Do you have any good evidence of potential routes for sustainability?

- Is it clear how this project will result in an approach to learning that will become embedded during and beyond the funding period?

If you have any questions or need help with your application, please [email the Q team](#).