



RCN Foundation Call for applications

Scoping research: understanding the contribution of nurses to improve the health and well-being of children, adults and older people with learning disabilities, now and for the future

Background

A new three year strategy was agreed by the RCN Foundation's Board of Trustees and came into effect in 2018. As part of this new strategy a theme of supporting learning disability nursing was agreed. Underpinning this was a commitment to listening to, and engaging with, a wide range of people and organisations to ensure the right approach was adopted, including those living with learning disabilities.

On 24 June the RCN Foundation held a Collaborative Forum on learning disability nursing at RCN HQ, a list of attendees can be found in Appendix A.

The purpose of the Collaborative Forum was:

- To generate discussion, debate and ideas through which the RCN Foundation could identify specific priorities for our future programme of work in how nursing can make a difference to the care of people living with learning disabilities.
- To help identify the specific issues and themes that will underpin our grant-making in this area
- To decide how best these might be taken forward
- To set out next steps

The Collaborative Forum stated that there was a need for a scoping exercise to determine what services are available for people with learning disabilities. There was consensus that there is little known about the services for people with learning disabilities that are adapting to the changing needs of the population.

The draft call for applications has been developed in conjunction with Professor Michael Brown (Queens University, Belfast):

Call for applications

Scoping research: understanding the contribution of nurses to improve the health and well-being of children, adults and older people with learning disabilities, now and for the future

Introduction

The RCN Foundation is an independent charity (1134606 – England and Wales, SC043663 – Scotland) and a company limited by guarantee (7026001). It was set up



in 2010 and aims to support and strengthen nursing to improve the health and well-being of the public. The Foundation delivers its purpose by

- **Supporting** individual members of the nursing team (nurses, midwives and health care support workers) by providing grants for hardship and education purposes
- **Investing** in the nursing profession to improve patient care by funding research and clinical projects in our priority areas of care homes, children and young people's mental health, and learning disability nursing
- **Championing** nursing by raising the profile of the profession and public understanding of its contribution to improving the nation's health

In order to establish the Foundation's learning disability grants programme the Foundation is commissioning a scoping project to identify the available evidence on interventions in practice and service provision that have been developed to address the distinct health and well-being needs of children, adults and older people with learning disabilities and where the nursing team has a role in these interventions.

Funding Call

The RCN Foundation is calling for applicants to undertake a scoping project that will identify nursing led/ nursing centred interventions that are in place to address the changing needs of the population living with learning disabilities. Interventions can be implemented by a multi-disciplinary team however there must be a nurse on the team.

The scoping research will establish an evidence base for the development of our learning disability funding stream.

Interventions should cover all ages and the research should also reflect activity across the four countries of the UK.

The scoping research should identify areas of good care delivery, any innovative practices, and possible gaps in the provision of care for individuals with learning disabilities.

It will address a number of questions including:

- What nursing led/ nursing centred interventions are in place to respond to the changing needs of the population living with learning disabilities?
- Are there examples of service redesign to meet future needs?
- How does the nursing team fit into these interventions?
- How could the nursing team better contribute to these interventions?
- Where in the UK are these interventions taking place?



- In which settings (example: private, NHS, charity care settings)?
- What is the impact of these interventions?

The scoping research must cover interventions in all four countries of the UK and it should cover all settings including care provided by the NHS, the independent sector and charities.

The funding available for this scoping research is up to the value of £30,000. The scoping research should be undertaken within a six month period from the point at which the award is made. The funding available may cover direct research-related salaries, research expenses within reason and dissemination costs. The funding will not cover indirect costs such as university overheads, capital costs or purchase of non-specialist equipment.

Once appointed, the successful applicant will be required to submit a report mid-way through the project and final report with a presentation of findings once the project has been completed.

Context for the Call

There are currently 1.4 million people with a learning disability in the UK and of these, approximately 193,707 are children of school age (Mencap, 2019). However, the population of people with learning disabilities is changing. Life expectancy of people living with learning disabilities is increasing and this in turn is resulting in an increase in the complexity of needs and conditions, unlike anything that has been experienced before.

This change is being felt on two fronts, an increase of children with multiple and complex disabilities who are living longer and into adulthood and an increase in the numbers of people with learning disabilities living into older age.

There is an increase in the number of children and young people living into adulthood with neurodevelopmental disabilities and learning disabilities, including Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), many presenting with significant mental health conditions and challenging behaviours. These individuals are highly dependent for all aspects of their care and support. They are high and frequent users of all health services, including primary care, child health services, acute care and specialist learning disability services.

As a consequence of the increase in the number of children and young people with learning disabilities living into adulthood, there will be major implications for education, health, social care and criminal justice and secure services in the future.

At the other end of the age continuum, older adults are proportionally the largest and fastest growing group in the learning disabled population (Health Scotland, 2017). The population of older people with learning disabilities will increase four times faster than the overall adult learning disability population (NICE, 2018). By 2030, there will



be a 30% increase in the number of adults with learning disabilities aged 50+ using social care services. This figure masks variations by age group. For example, it is estimated that there will be a 164% increase in adults with learning disabilities over 80 using social care (NDTI, 2014). As life expectancy has increased, more people with learning disabilities are experiencing multi-morbidities – 2 or more long-term, chronic health conditions. This growing population with complex health needs brings about new challenges for health professionals and care services (Health Scotland, 2017). This will create substantial pressure on services, which has not yet been fully quantified (NICE 2018).

In addition, Approximately 29,000 adults with a learning disability live with parents aged 70 or over, many of whom are too old or frail to continue in their caring role. In just 1 in 4 of these cases the local authority has planned alternative care. To meet this demand, numbers of services will have to increase, as well as diversify (Care England 2016). As a result, there will be significant impact and challenges for services in the future.

Sources

[Care England \(2016\) Learning Disability in the UK: Briefing for the Care Home Parliamentary Network,](http://www.careengland.org.uk/sites/careengland/files/2.%20LD%20Briefing%20CHP%20-%20April%202016.pdf)
<http://www.careengland.org.uk/sites/careengland/files/2.%20LD%20Briefing%20CHP%20-%20April%202016.pdf>

[NICE \(2018\) Care and support of people growing older with learning disabilities,](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng96)
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng96>

[National Development Team for Inclusion \(2014\) Supporting older people with learning disabilities,](https://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/9354_Supporting_Older_People_ST3.pdf)
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[NHS Health Scotland \(2017\) People with Learning Disabilities in Scotland: 2017 Health Needs Assessment Update Report,](http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1690/people-with-learning-disabilities-in-scotland.pdf)
<http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1690/people-with-learning-disabilities-in-scotland.pdf>

[The Scottish Government \(2013\) Keys to life,](https://www.gov.scot/publications/keys-life-implementation-framework-priorities-2019-2021/)
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/keys-life-implementation-framework-priorities-2019-2021/>

[Mencap \(2019\) Research and Statistics,](https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/research-and-statistics)
<https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/research-and-statistics>

Application

To apply for this funding call, please contact grants@rcnfoundation.org.uk to request an application form.



The application form will address the following headings.

Section A: Application details

Please complete the details of the research lead and the organisation that you are applying from. Please give a description of the organisation and list the team. In addition please list any partner organisations involved in the research.

The ideal application will demonstrate:

- Considerable experience of carrying out evidence-based research around issues in nursing
- Experience of producing influential reports at a policy or programme design level
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Experience of providing written reports and presenting findings to both nursing professionals and non-specialists
- Understanding the equalities issues around rehabilitation care for all communities across the four countries of the UK

Section B: Project Details

This section will introduce the questions and issues central to the research and should identify the aims and objectives and what methods or means you plan to use. Please also include here any ethical approvals that may be required.

Please describe the main outputs and outcomes of the research and how these meet the RCN Foundation's priorities.

Please describe how the research will be evaluated.

We are seeking projects that will be undertaken during a maximum of six months.

Please provide an outline of the timescales of the project. This should include the key phases, deadlines and milestones of the project, as well as any other relevant information.

Please outline how you propose to disseminate the outcomes of the project, identifying the key activities, and the audiences at whom the outcomes will be targeted.

Section C: Project Costs and Resources

The maximum budget for this call is £30,000. Please provide a detailed breakdown of costs using the format within the application form.



Next Steps

If you would like to apply for this call, **please email grants@rcnfoundation.org.uk for an application form.**

The closing date for applications is 15 December 2019.

Interviews will be held at the end of January 2020 and applicants will be informed of the decisions in February 2020.

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

Completed applications should be submitted by email to:

grants@rcnfoundation.org.uk

Should you have any questions about this funding call please contact

katie.slater@rcn.org.uk

Thank you for your interest.