Nuffield Foundation

Guide for applicants

Updated July 2023

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Section 1: About our grants

1.1 Introduction / What we're looking for

The Nuffield Foundation is an independent charitable trust with a mission to support research that can improve lives. We do this by drawing on evidence to influence policy and practice.

The Foundation seeks to be an open, collaborative and engaged funder that offers more than money. We are not simply an academic funding body, though the research we fund must stand up to rigorous academic scrutiny. We work with our grant-holders to help maximise the impact of their projects.

Our main focus is on Education, Welfare and Justice but many of our projects cut across and go beyond these broad domains. In particular, we are interested in funding research that takes account of the trends that are shaping today's increasingly complex society, such as those set out in our 2017-2022 strategy:

- How do **digital technologies and digital communications** alleviate, exacerbate and shift vulnerability, and affect concepts of trust, evidence and authority?
- In what ways do factors such as **socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, community** and **geography** affect the vulnerability of people to different types of risk, and how can this be mitigated?
- What interventions might promote opportunity and reduce adversity through different life stages, and **promote social inclusion between and across generations**?
- What are the social and economic implications of physical and mental disability and chronic illness?
- How can social policy institutions make **better use of research, evidence and data** in order to understand better the needs of those they serve, and improve services and outcomes?
- How might the **data infrastructure** be used or improved to better understand and explain **outcomes** for individuals and society?

Examples of specific topics that interest us at present include:

- Early childhood
- Skills and employment
- The cost of living
- Geographical inequalities
- Quality of life in later life
- The quality of and access to public services
- The long-term implications of COVID-19

What we expect from the research we fund

- Applications must be based around impartial, objective and rigorous research. Applicants should be open-minded to the outcomes of the research and committed to basing any conclusions or recommendations on what the evidence shows.
- The proposed methodological approach should be appropriate for the research question(s). We will fund research founded on quantitative evidence and analysis, well-designed and insightful qualitative research, or research using mixed methods.
- There should be potential for impact on policy and /or practice.
- Our primary focus is on the United Kingdom, but this may include comparative work between the four nations and internationally, where appropriate.

1.2 What we offer

Grant size

Applications for grants costing up to £750,000 will be considered **twice a year**, with deadlines for submission of outline applications in March and September.

As shown in Figure 1, most of the grants we award are below £300,000. On those occasions where an application costs over £500,000, we recommend that applicants contact us to discuss the application in advance of submitting. Successful applications for larger amounts will need to demonstrate an exceptionally strong case and value for money.

We occasionally award smaller grants for work costing less than £15,000. There are options for assessing such applications on a quicker timetable than our standard one, and we would seek to expedite smaller grants where we think there is a strong case for an accelerated decision.

Larger projects

We have a portfolio of more than 200 research projects, of which six are strategic level. These include:

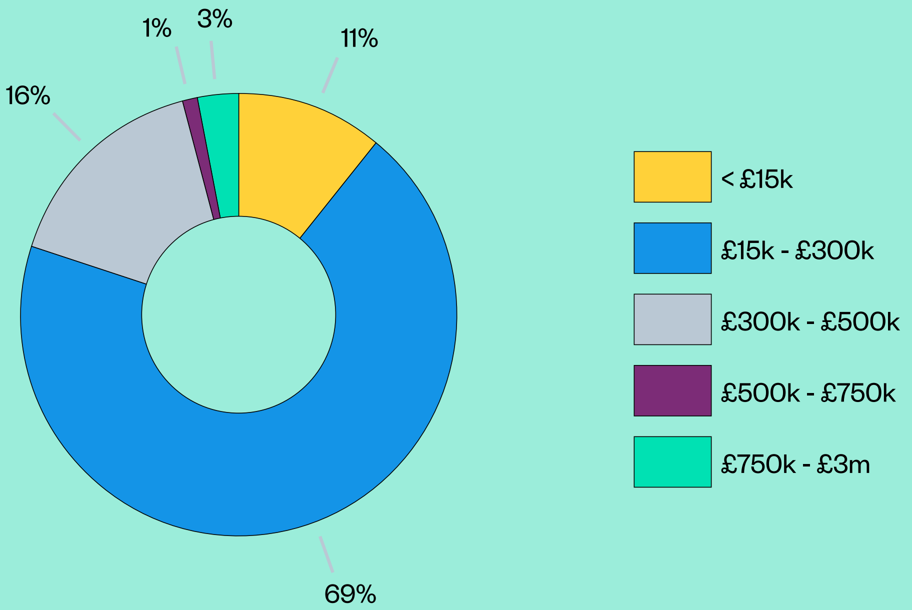
- IFS Deaton Review of Inequalities *(Professor Sir Angus Deaton and the Institute of Fiscal Studies)*
- Economy 2030 Inquiry *(Torsten Bell at the Resolution Foundation and Professor Stephen Machin from the London School of Economics)*
- The Skills Imperative 2035 *(Jude Hillary at the National Foundation for Education Research)*
- The Future of Work and Well-being *(Professor Sir Christopher Pissarides at the Institute for the Future of Work)*
- Data and voice to improve children's lives *(Professor Leon Feinstein at the Rees Centre, University of Oxford)*
- Connecting pensions, health and care *(Dr Olena Nizalova at the University of Kent)*

Please note that we are pausing funding for strategic projects over £750,000 while we consult with partners and stakeholders about our new strategy. It means that for 2024, the research projects we support will only be for grant sizes of up to £750,000.

Grant Duration

- Usually between six months and three years
- Projects with longer or shorter timelines occasionally considered

Figure 1: The value of the grants awarded during the 2017-2022 strategy period



1.3 Overview of the application process

NB* We are not accepting applications for grants of over £750,000 in 2024 while we develop a new strategy with our partners and stakeholders.

- To help manage demand, we have a two-stage application process: *Outline applications* and *Full applications*.
- The Outline process offers all potential applicants the opportunity to test their ideas with the Foundation.
- On average, 15% of *Outline* applicants are invited to submit a *Full application*. Grant decisions include consideration of resources available for funding, but we do not operate a rigid quota system. All applications will be judged on quality, relevance and impact.
- We operate on a gathered field approach to assessing applications. This means funding applications can be made at any time, via our website, but shortlisting takes place twice a year – in March and September.
- A shortlisting decision will be made around three months after the deadline.
- For applications initially received in September, a final decision will usually be made the following May. For applications received in March, the final decision is usually made in November (see Figure 2).
- *Full applications* will be sent for peer review and applicants will have an opportunity to respond to comments before a funding decision is made.
- Having assessed a *Full application*, we may decide to offer a grant, or to request further clarification or specific conditions before awarding a grant, or not to award a grant.

The start date for any project should be at least two months after the month of the relevant May or November decision point.

1.4 Assessment criteria

Our grants rounds are always competitive, and we only fund a small proportion of the many applications we receive each year. We consider the following factors in assessing applications submitted to us:

Is the research question relevant?
We consider whether it is an interesting question addressing an important issue that fits the Nuffield Foundation's mission and is relevant to at least one of our domains. Applicants need to make a clear case for the importance of the proposed project and how it would add to the existing knowledge base.

Is there a clear conceptual framework?
Where there is a falsifiable hypothesis or theory of change this should be explicitly set out. We also support research relating to theory-building as well as theory-testing but will still look for a clear underpinning analytical structure demonstrating an understanding of the social context in which the research would be conducted.

Is the question researchable and the methodology appropriate and rigorous?
This relates to analysis and drawing conclusions as well as design/data collection. Methods need to be robust and right for the question. See Section 2.2 for further advice on methodological considerations.

Does the team possess appropriate experience, expertise and potential?
We consider suitability to carry out the project as planned in terms of track record and disciplinary focus, but also evidence of potential to further enhance the capability of members of the team.

Is the budget requested appropriate and does it offer good value for money?
We examine whether funds requested are both adequate and not excessive. Value for money considerations encompass whether the cost is justified by the potential benefits and in line with comparable research, as well as whether resources are being used in the best way to achieve the intended outcomes.

Is there a clear route to use the output to positively influence future outcomes?
There needs to be clarity of outputs and outcomes, and of the relationship between the two. Applications need to set out the ways in which the research could have an impact on people, policy and practice and who the key audiences for the research are. This should be backed by a credible plan to achieve this.

Figure 2: Application timeline

MAR	**SEP**	Outline applications submitted	
APR	OCT		
MAY	NOV		
JUN	**DEC**	Successful applicants invited to submit a Full application	Unsuccessful applicants notified
JUL	**JAN**	Full applications submitted	
AUG	FEB	Peer reviewing	
SEP	**MAR**	Applicants respond to peer review comments	
OCT	APR		
NOV	**MAY**	Full applications considered by Trustees	
DEC	**JUN**	Applicants notified of decision	
JAN	**JUL**	Earliest project start date	
FEB	AUG		

The months on the left-hand side provide an indication of our two grants rounds, but applicants should check the [application timeline] on our website for key dates and deadlines.

Section 2: What we fund

2.1 Our research interests

Our core interests focus on three broad public policy domains that we have long identified as underpinning a well-functioning society: Education, Welfare and Justice.

We encourage the involvement of a range of disciplines in issues within these three domains. These disciplines include, but are not limited to, law, psychology, economics, sociology, geography and data and computer sciences. We welcome cross-disciplinary approaches and also proposals that cut across our domains of interest: to that end, we encourage applicants to read about the priorities in all three domains and consider how their particular topic of interest might relate to these.

i. Education

Our Education framework

The scope of our interest in education covers all life stages and phases from early years (including pre-natal), through school, to further and higher education and vocational learning. We have four key thematic funding priorities in education:

- Skills and capabilities
- Teaching quality
- Young people's pathways
- Educational disadvantage

We would expect most of the projects we fund to address one or more of these themes.

Skills and capabilities

We seek applications related to the skills, capabilities and attributes that equip children and young people for life and work in a rapidly changing world. These may be developed through formal and informal educational experiences, and we are also interested in how they are shaped by families and the home environment, geography, and other influences outside of educational institutions.

Particular skills and capabilities include:

- Oral language, literacy and wider communications skills.
- Numeracy, quantitative and data skills, as developed across all subjects (including mathematics, statistics, natural and social sciences, arts and humanities, and vocational learning).

- Scientific inquiry and analytical thinking.
- Social and emotional development, and mental health and well-being more broadly.
- School readiness and the range of characteristics and competencies this encompasses.
- Essential/transferable skills such as problem-solving, interpersonal skills, collaboration and teamwork, time management, self-confidence, self-efficacy, motivation, leadership, and creative and metacognitive skills and an understanding of the skills valued by employers.
- Digital skills and their relationship to other skills, including how the increasing use of digital technologies and media in both educational institutions and in the home affects learning and development.
- Adult retraining, upskilling and lifelong learning.

Teaching quality

We seek projects aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning, in particular through:

- Evidence-based pedagogy and practice across all education settings including early years providers, schools, colleges and work-based provision – for example, based on carefully designed, developed and evaluated interventions.
- Harnessing digital technologies to improve teaching and learning, parental engagement, and child and adolescent development.
- Addressing the roles of, and arrangements for, the assessment of learning and achievement.
- Scrutinising and understanding the recruitment, retention, working conditions, training and continuous professional development of early years, school and tertiary education workforces.
- Examining how to improve the quality of early years provision, across the sector but particularly within the private, voluntary and independent sector and within provision for the under-twos.
- Enabling better dissemination, accessibility and use of knowledge from research to inform teaching practice.
- Research into school effectiveness and improvement.
- Examining the role and impact of structures and organisation of education systems, including funding and accountability arrangements.

Young people's pathways

We seek projects that improve the evidence base concerning young people's choices, decisions and pathways at key points in their progression through education and training into work. These projects should aim to influence relevant policy and practice on these issues.

Key areas include:

- Pre-16 subject and course choices, and how these relate to later pathways and outcomes.
- The post-16 landscape, encompassing the full range of vocational, technical, further and higher education routes available to young people; how young people interpret and understand the options available; pathways into these routes; and how they are accessed.
- The immediate and longer term societal and individual outcomes associated with post-16 routes, including further training, earnings, broader employment and well-being outcomes.

- How the post-16 pathways followed by young people and their associated outcomes vary and why, including evaluating policy and other evidence-based solutions to improve outcomes.
- How to effectively enhance learning outcomes across different pathways, settings and experiences, for example through work experience or placements in technical routes.
- The role of career guidance (encompassing information, advice, personal guidance and employer engagement) to support effective learning, education and career pathway choices.
- The role of employers in the design and delivery of the education curriculum and training, in supporting young people to enter and thrive in the labour market, and how these relate to individual and societal well-being.

We are also interested in how the pathways and qualifications available equip young people with the various skills and capabilities set out above, acknowledging that there will be some core skills required for all young people, and others which are more specialised depending on their intended vocations.

In this area we are particularly interested in proposals seeking to improve understanding of progression into technical and vocational pathways, training and work. We welcome work that identifies effective policies and practices to support young people, particularly those facing educational disadvantages and other vulnerabilities, including the potential roles played by their families, the professionals who work with them and employers.

Educational disadvantage

We seek applications that investigate the prevalence of – and interrelationships between – the various forms of educational disadvantage and vulnerability faced by children and young people at risk of falling behind in their learning, or of being locked into trajectories of low achievement. We are particularly interested in projects that aim to identify and address these needs as early as possible, including through the development and evaluation of specific interventions, whether in early years settings and schools or through support for parenting and the home learning environment.

We are interested in the relationship between the education system and the wider ecosystem of support services for children and young people experiencing disadvantage. We are also interested in how the pathways taken by young people from age 14 and into post-compulsory education and training vary by different forms of disadvantage or vulnerability, and how evidence-based policy and practical solutions might address inequalities that underpin or result from these variations.

Particular forms of disadvantage and vulnerabilities of interest include:

- Special educational needs and disabilities
- Mental health issues
- Socio-economic disadvantage
- Disadvantages relating to ethnicity, racism, or other forms of discrimination.
- Geographical disadvantage
- Being in care or leaving care.
- The ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education in all phases

We are interested in projects that consider how one or more of these disadvantages or vulnerabilities interconnect and also intersect with our other Education funding priorities, and those within our Welfare and Justice domains.

Approaches to these education priority themes

We encourage the application of a wide variety of disciplines to these educational issues. These disciplines include psychology, economics (including behavioural economics), sociology, geography and data and computer sciences. We welcome cross-disciplinary approaches and proposals that span issues relevant to our other domains of interest (Welfare and Justice).

As with the Foundation's work in general, our primary focus is on the United Kingdom. Where appropriate we are very interested in comparative work between the four nations and internationally, particularly taking advantage of differences and similarities in educational policy and practice.

As covered in detail in Section 5.2 and Appendix A we are open to a wide variety of research approaches, believing that the research question should drive the choice of an appropriate methodology. In our Education work, depending on the research questions, we are particularly interested in projects that:

- Systematically synthesise the existing evidence base in the above four key themes.
- Undertake secondary analysis of existing datasets and where appropriate linkages between them.
- Pilot or evaluate interventions on a pre-trial basis, or through appropriately scaled trials.

For proposals for interventions, projects need to be aimed at developing and evaluating innovative approaches that are relevant to our educational priorities above. These could relate to the direct experience of pupils and students at any stage from the early years through compulsory education and post-16 routes (particularly technical and vocational).

Such student-oriented programmes need to be grounded in evidence and/or designed to help develop the evidence base. Scalability should be built in from the outset and applicants should consider whether development and early evaluation work might pave the way towards a large-scale randomised controlled trial a later stage. For such applications, the project should develop the evidence to a sufficient level to make it a strong candidate for subsequent funding by the Education Endowment Foundation.

ii. Welfare

Our Welfare framework

Our Welfare portfolio aims to improve economic and social well-being across the life course. Our approach is motivated by how certain individuals and groups are potentially vulnerable to adverse outcomes, and how those risks can be mitigated, or channelled in a positive manner. Mitigation involves drawing on resources, broadly defined to include financial and physical assets but also less tangible factors such as practical and emotional support. Such support may come from sources including:

- **Self**: An individual may draw from their own resources, to improve their economic, social, physical and emotional outcomes throughout their lives. This may be, for example, by acquiring skills, managing their health, and deciding where to live, whether to save and in what form.

- **Family**: The distribution of housing and financial, practical and emotional resources within families and between generations is important in affecting people's outcomes. Family-formation, organisation and caring decisions also play a key role.
- **Work**: Well-being in work is influenced by a number of factors. These include the ability to enter and progress in employment, people's control and autonomy over the way they work, and inequalities in the labour market according to characteristics including age, gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation.
- **Community**: Building and drawing upon social capital and other attributes affects the resources provided by communities, and the outcomes for individuals and their families that result. This applies, in different ways, to both digital and virtual communities.
- **State**: Regulation and state provision of transfers, goods and services affect the economic and social well-being of individuals, families and communities.

In all cases, we are interested in vulnerability and the extent to which it can be mitigated, which varies according to individual and group characteristics including age, gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation.

We are also interested in how vulnerability and its mitigation interact with major social and economic forces that may shape society and the distribution of outcomes over the coming years. We are open to what these forces may be, but the following are likely to be relevant:

- **Demographic**: For example, how do we respond to the multiple pressures and opportunities resulting from an ageing population? This will include the impact of personal choices and work on the ageing process and how policy and institutions can adapt to the demands of a growing- older population.
- **Technological**: For example, how are changes in technology affecting the interface between individuals and their family, employer and community?
- **Economic**: For example, what are the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis as well as the longer term systemic economic slowdown for the implicit contracts that underpin society? These include implicit contracts between generations and also those between individuals, business and the state. What do these imply about the need for individuals to manage their own health and financial security?
- **Geographic:** For example, what is the likely impact of place on outcomes including earnings, benefits, wealth, mental and physical health, subjective well-being, crime and safety, participation in society and community cohesion? What is the distribution of such impacts across different subgroups of the population? And what change in or use of powers at different levels might be used to deliver improvements, and what pre-conditions would need to be satisfied for this to be so.

Areas of focus

Applications are welcome in all of the above areas. However, we particularly wish to support research into how **family, work and the intersection of the two** will affect individual and societal well-being in the coming years. These topics link strongly to the Nuffield Foundation's other domains of Education and Justice and we are also interested in projects which explore the intersections between these domains.

We are also sharpening the Welfare focus of the Foundation's cross-cutting theme of how new technologies can alleviate, exacerbate and shift vulnerability, and affect concepts of trust, evidence and authority. We will have a particular focus on **how new technologies combine with family and work** to affect economic and social well-being, including the links between digital and social exclusion. We will prioritise projects that look to inform solutions and which use innovative methods that are fit for purpose in this rapidly developing area.

We are also interested in research exploring how quality of life can be maximised during **later life and the final phase of life**, taking account of decisions and experiences over the full life course, and including the implications for family and carers. We invite proposals relevant to our broader Welfare aims, such as better understanding the population of people receiving formal and informal care, insights into preferences for care provision, and the role of markets or missing markets in protection against the financial risks arising from needs in later life.

We also highlight some further topics as specific examples of areas where we would be interested to receive applications:

- What types of **economic policies and systems** would best enhance individual and societal well-being and challenge existing inequalities, as society adjusts to turbulent and uncertain growth in the economy, earnings and productivity in the post-COVID- 19 world?
- How will the costs and benefits of the **transition to a net zero-emissions economy** be shared fairly across the population and across generations?
- How can we better understand the **economic determinants of health outcomes and their impact on social well-being**, both in the current context and in the face of long-term demographic trends?
- How can quality of life be maximised during **later life and the final phase of life**, including for family and carers, and taking account of decisions and experiences over the full life course?
- What can we learn from the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of intersectionality of vulnerabilities and how can these can lead to adverse outcomes? How might these be addressed, either locally or nationally and through the state or other actors?

We emphasise that we are not funders of general research into macroeconomics, science, technology, medical issues, or health or social care systems that is solely, or primarily, aimed at enhancing knowledge within those fields. Successful proposals in the above areas will need to be very clearly and directly focused on improving economic and social policy, practice and well-being.

Complementary social and economic analysis

Complementing our Welfare portfolio, since 2020 we have awarded over £5 million in research funding through the Oliver Bird Fund to improve the lives of people living with musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions, working in partnership with Versus Arthritis. A further call for proposals to the Oliver Bird Fund will run in the future – an update will be available on our website.

iii. Justice

Our Justice framework

Our Justice programme is central to our mission to advance social well-being and to understanding the foundations and pathways to a just and inclusive society. We believe that a well-functioning, fair and effective system of justice is essential for day-to-day life and for public trust, respect and confidence in the law and institutions of State. Following a recent review of work in our Justice domain, we have refreshed our funding priorities.

We are interested in research that explores how the real-world application of law and the administration of justice enables (or not) people to resolve their legal needs and disputes. Our particular emphasis is on issues of law and justice that have the most significant effect on people's lives, opportunities and well-being, especially those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged in some way. We are especially interested in both the causes and consequences of people's involvement in the justice system in the context of their wider life chances and well-being, and any inequalities they may face through this process. We want to put the needs, experiences, expectations and outcomes of both those in contact with the justice system and the wider public at the heart of our work, although we are also interested in the structural and institutional factors that impact upon how fairly, effectively and efficiently the justice system operates.

We emphasise the need for research focusing on the current challenges facing the justice system (including those arising from the impacts of the pandemic), and broader questions around the effectiveness of the system – not just in terms of its capacity to serve the needs of its users and the public, but also its wider social and economic value.

Our focus is on research that looks both **at, before, and beyond** the workings of courts and tribunals and people's journeys to and through that system, including the nature of the legal problems they face. We are also interested in the connected systems, processes and agencies operating alongside and up and downstream of the decisions made by the justice system, such as the early legal advice sector, or children's social care services.

We are interested in all three of the UK's legal systems (England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland), separately and comparatively.

Areas of focus

We believe that a modern, well-functioning justice system should be:

- Responsive to the needs of people who rely on it
- Accessible and transparent
- Fair
- Effective
- Trusted and regarded as legitimate

In this context, we welcome proposals addressing research questions that speak to different aspects of these points. We are particularly interested in the following **priority themes and questions**, although this is not an exhaustive list and we are open to applications featuring other priorities and questions of significance identified by applicants.

Accessing and participating in justice

- How do people respond to their legal needs in different situations, how do those needs interact with other forms of vulnerability or disadvantage, and what are people's experiences and/or

expectations of the justice system in addressing their needs?
- What does meaningful access to and participation in justice look like in different settings and to different users of the justice system?
- What are the enablers and barriers to these, including the impact of the system's structural and institutional processes and culture?
- What are the implications for access to justice of the application of new technologies and other modernisations implemented, planned or foreseeable?

Decision-making and fair process
- What are the key issues in the forms, fairness and quality of decision-making, including the scope for challenge, change and innovation?
- What is the relationship between process, outcomes and experiences for different groups?

Outcomes of and from the system
- What are the most effective, efficient, proportionate and just routes to addressing different types of legal needs and disputes, including new or alternative forms of dispute resolution?
- How are different types of justice outcomes and performance best understood and measured? How can the wider social and economic value of the justice system be examined, and what are the effects of contact (or non-contact) with the justice system or other legal processes on wider life chances and well-being?
- What are the impacts and implications of changes caused by (a) the COVID-19 pandemic and (b) justice system reforms and resourcing?

Disparity, discrimination and exclusion
- What are the causes, consequences and circumstances of different types of disparity (for places or people), inequality and discrimination in processes and outcomes within the justice system?
- In what situations are individuals or groups being poorly treated or underserved by the system, and how can such instances be best addressed?

Trust and legitimacy
- What shapes both public and user views of the justice system's legitimacy and their trust in it, and what are the implications of those views?
- What will be the impacts of changes to the justice system, including the introduction of new technologies (such as AI and data-driven approaches), on public trust in the justice system?

Connections within and beyond the justice system
- What does analysing the justice system as a system reveal about its strengths and weaknesses, including how it impacts upon other areas of public policy?
- What connections across different parts of the justice system are feasible and appropriate, and what are the trade-offs and consequences of such connections?
- What lessons can be learnt from comparative research either between the UK and other jurisdictions or between the justice system and other complex social policy systems?

Applicants should make explicit reference to how their topic of study or approach relates to these questions **or** whether they address a different issue of significance.

In terms of specific subject areas, while we are potentially interested in issues spanning all jurisdictions and areas of law – both because of their strong connection to the

Foundation's wider priorities and because we think there is particular scope here to develop the existing evidence base to improve knowledge and outcomes – our priority focus is on the following areas:

- **Social welfare and justice** – addressing people's needs and disputes in relation to employment, benefits, debt, housing, immigration and special education provision, and challenges to administrative decision-making in these areas.
- **Family justice** – understanding the experiences of, and improving outcomes for, children and families involved in public and private family law proceedings.
- **Youth justice** – addressing the needs and behaviours of children involved in offending or facing other risks and harms, including the fairness and effectiveness of the youth justice system in doing so.

We do fund some work in **criminal justice** outside of youth justice but it must link to our priority themes or relate to the Foundation's wider work or interests.

Note that our work on family justice links to the **Nuffield Family Justice Observatory** (Nuffield FJO), an organisation we have established to improve the lives of children and families by putting data and evidence at the heart of the family justice system, with a strong focus on policy and practice impact. Although we have different functions and ways of working, we share a common goal and our work complements that of the Nuffield FJO by responsively funding research that addresses issues of contemporary or perennial concern in family justice, whether of a strategic or more practical nature.

In addition to the overlap in interests and priorities with the Nuffield FJO, we also encourage applications on topics that cross our domain boundaries. Examples might include:

- The availability and enforcement of rights for vulnerable workers (links to Welfare).
- Addressing the educational and behavioural needs of children in or at risk of entering the youth justice system, and the role of Pupil Referral Units in particular (links to Education).
- The fairness and effectiveness of decision-making processes around access to benefits or specialist educational provision (links to Education and Welfare).
- Assessing the importance of an effective justice system for broader social and economic outcomes (links to Welfare and Education).

While we primarily fund empirical work, we are open-minded as to the type of methodological approach proposed, for both quantitative and qualitative work, provided it is appropriate for the project's aims and research question. We have a particular interest in the following approaches:

- Evidence synthesis on key topics, translated for policy and practice audiences.
- Analysis (possibly involving data linkage) of datasets held by local and national agencies and organisations.
- Exploring system users'/potential users' requirements and expectations through deliberative and participative research.
- Innovation and evaluation: identifying and testing possible solutions to problems and understanding and evidencing what works in policy and practice.

Whatever the proposed method, we always place significant weight on rigour, quality and impact.

We want to reinvigorate the research agenda into justice. We are very interested in applications that can bring fresh or broader thinking to this area, including taking an interdisciplinary perspective and connecting with other areas of social policy. We particularly want to hear from researchers in subject areas and disciplines who may not have focused on justice topics before, as well as those already expert in this field.

2.2 Types of research we support

i. Research reviews, synthesis and translation

- Could include formal meta-analysis as well as other systematic and narrative reviews that offer a critical evaluation of empirical research, policy and practice within or across our domains.
- Should aim to draw out implications for policy and practice reform (including learning from international experience where appropriate) or to generate a new research agenda.
- Might explore how different approaches to knowledge translation can help practitioners to better understand and use existing or new data to improve outcomes or service provision.

ii. Data collection and analysis

While many of the projects we fund involve secondary analysis of existing datasets, some proposals aim to explore topics or questions where there is no or only inadequate current data.

- We will only fund primary data collection where analysing and reporting on the collected data is an integral part of the project.
- We do **not** fund data collection exercises (including sweeps of regular surveys, either on a one-off or ongoing basis) as a standalone task.

iii. Intervention development and early evaluation

- The conceptualisation and design of innovative interventions, taking the concept through an assessment of feasibility and initial pilot phase.
- Comparison or controlled trials or evaluations where there is a particularly important and innovative intervention that has already been subjected to formal pre-trial development work.
- All trials should be pre-registered on an appropriate trial registry such as the ISRCTN Registry or AEA Trial Registry.
- We do not fund projects that simply involve ‘rolling out’ a well-known way of working to new areas.

Appendix C contains further detail regarding our expectations for intervention development and early evaluation.

iv. Developmental projects

We occasionally fund projects of a more developmental nature. They may or may not lead to larger scale applications for funding from the Foundation.

Examples might include small-scale inquiries, working parties or similar mechanisms to engage and deliberate with a range of stakeholders to reach common ground on a priority policy or practice issue and research/identify a potentially workable way forward, or exploratory analysis of new data to inform the feasibility and potential for further analysis.

Section 3: Eligibility

The best way to check eligibility is to use our Eligibility Tool. The best way to check whether an idea is suitable is by submitting an *Outline application*.

Due to the volume of queries we receive, we are not able to meet with, or offer bespoke advice to prospective applicants about eligibility or suitability prior to the submission of an *Outline application*. Applications are considered on a gathered field basis.

3.1 Eligibility Criteria

UK context

In general, we award grants for projects focused on the UK context. We also welcome applications from UK-based organisations to carry out collaborative projects, possibly involving overseas partners, and/or using data relating to other countries, for example where:

- These provide useful comparators or lessons to be learned for the UK experience in our areas of substantive interest.
- Policy or practice overseas might be adapted for the UK.

Staffing

Principal Investigators

- All proposed projects must be led by a named Principal Investigator (PI), who is the lead applicant.
  - Where there are Co-Principal Investigators, one PI **must** still be named as the lead applicant. This is for administrative purposes only.
- PIs must take overall responsibility for the application and be the main point of contact with the Foundation throughout the application process and for the duration of any subsequent grant period.
- We award grants to organisations (the 'host institution') rather than individuals, and the PI must be based at the host institution.

Co-Investigators

- Individuals who will assist the PI in the management and leadership of the project may be named as Co-Investigators (Co-Is).

- Co-Is should only be named if they have a significant role in the management and implementation of the project.

Project staff

- Other project staff can be named in the application, as well as any roles that are expected to be recruited for.
- Applicants need to provide information on how project staff, particularly those at earlier career stages, will be supported and developed.

Other funders

In some circumstances we will accept applications for projects that are being considered by another funder.

- Applicants **must** state in their *Outline application* if they are applying or have applied for funds for their project elsewhere.
- We will judge the application on its merits but reserve the right to contact the relevant person at the other funding organisation(s) for information.

Proposals that have been unsuccessful elsewhere will only be considered if they are of high quality and central to our areas of interest. Applicants should provide details of where they have previously applied, and any feedback provided by the other funder.

Although the Foundation does not contribute to general appeals for pooled funding, in some circumstances we will consider partnership funding. Where applicants wish to propose a partnership funding model, we would expect them to argue the case for such an approach within their *Outline application*.

- Applicants should provide the name and contact details of the proposed co-funder.
- We would usually expect to contact the proposed co-funder to discuss the feasibility of co-funding prior to a funding decision being made by the Foundation.

Multiple proposals

Where applicants wish to seek funding for more than one project, we are willing to consider more than one *Outline application* from the same organisation. However, applicants should bear in mind that it is unlikely that we would shortlist more than one *Outline application* from a single PI within a given funding round.

Ineligible categories

- Individuals without a formal employment or other 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 masters 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 circumstances, we might consider an application from an overseas organisation where there is no workable arrangement whereby a UK-based organisation can host the grant. In these cases, the applicant must convince us that there are adequate arrangements for dissemination, engagement and impact in the UK context.

Section 4: Understanding the application process

4.1 Stage 1: Outline applications

Please note we are not accepting applications for grants of over £750,000 in 2024 while we develop a new strategy with our partners and stakeholders.

Outline applications must be submitted via our online form. Applicants can complete this form at any time of the year but proposals will only be considered twice a year. If there are issues submitting an *Outline application*, or if there is a legitimate reason why we need to consider an offline application, contact us at applications@nuffieldfoundation.org.

We ask applicants to indicate which of the domains, their project **best** fits so that it can be directed to the appropriate team for initial sifting. However, there are no separate budgets or criteria for the different domains, and potentially promising *Outlines* are often shared internally so that they can benefit from the range of experience in the team.

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.
- Demonstrate that the project fits within the Foundation's interests, clearly articulate the aims and objectives and demonstrate that the approach, methodology and activities are well-considered, fit for purpose and appropriately resourced (staff, time and costs).
- 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.
- Applications for grants over £500,000 need to demonstrate am exceptionally strong case and value for money.

Feedback on *Outline applications*:

- Only a small proportion of *Outline applications* are shortlisted to proceed to a *Full application* and we will offer constructive advice and support to those shortlisted.

- We are not able to provide specific feedback on unsuccessful *Outline applications*.
- We do not accept resubmissions of unsuccessful *Outline applications*.

4.2 What happens next?

Shortlisted applications

- Our letter will set out any comments and questions raised by the Foundation in the shortlisting process. These must be addressed in the *Full application*. The date by which applicants must submit their *Full application* will be provided in the letter.
- We may request a discussion with shortlisted applicants to help them fully consider our feedback. Shortlisted applicants may also request a discussion with Foundation staff if they want clarification on any feedback in the letter.
- We aim to ensure that applicants have around six weeks to prepare their *Full application*.
- We do not generally allow deferrals to a later round unless there is a strong case for doing so. Unless we agree an alternative timescale with the applicant, if we do not receive a *Full application* for the next deadline, we will consider the application withdrawn.

The month during which we aim to inform all applicants of our decision is set out in the detailed timetable on our website. If applicants do not hear back by the end of the specified month, or have any other concerns about their *Outline application*, they should contact applications@nuffieldfoundation.org. Please make sure to include the name of the PI and the application reference number included in the confirmation email (if received).

4.3 Stage 2: Full applications

Full applications must be submitted via our online form. The form will be shared directly with successful applicants after their *Outline application* has been reviewed by Programme Heads.

The *Full application* should:

- Be sufficiently detailed to satisfy experts of the applicant's knowledge and grasp of the subject and why it is important, and the appropriateness of their chosen methods, approach and activities, while at the same time being comprehensible to lay people.
- 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 Diversity and Inclusion the Nuffield Foundation wants to ensure that our application process and grant-making activity is inclusive and supports diversity among the people who approach us for funding, and those who are successful in gaining support. To assess this, we will be seeking to collect some basic diversity data from PI, and their Co-I immediately after an outline application has been submitted.

The data will be collected via an online monitoring form which will be sent directly via email to the named PIs and Co-Is to an application. Participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and will not influence the consideration or outcome of any application. Data collected through the online survey will be securely stored separately from other application information.

Where an application is successful, and a grant is awarded, we will look to collect fresh data for the full project team (PI, Co-I, and other project staff) at a point after the start of the project.

Data will be aggregated to report anonymously on the protected characteristics of our applicants and grant-holders. Personal data will be held for a period of no longer than 18 months before being permanently deleted.

Section 5: Completing the Outline and Full Application forms

5.1 Filling out the form

Sections of the *Outline* and *Full application* forms are set out below.

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 title needs to reflect the importance of the project as it will be used to identify the application during the assessment process for internal and external reviewers.

Outline application form

- Project summary
- Alternative funding sources
- Case for the importance of the project
- Aims and objectives
- Methods, approach and activities
- Outcomes, outputs and dissemination
- Staffing
- Timetable
- Budget
- References
- Additional information

Full application form

- Project summary
- Alternative funding sources
- Case for the importance of the project
- Aims and objectives
- Methods, approach and activities
- Outcomes, outputs and dissemination
- Staffing
- Expert advice and stakeholder engagement
- Quality assurance and risk management
- Legal and ethical aspects
- Archiving
- Timetable
- Budget
- References
- Additional information
- Acceptance of *Terms and Conditions*

For shortlisted applications, we understand that the budget, timetable and some other aspects of the proposal may be refined between *Outline* and *Full application* stage, and indeed the feedback we provide on shortlisting may well prompt some of these changes.

5.2 Form breakdown

i. Methods, approach and activities

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

We need to see:

- An account of whether the approach is designed to be exploratory, to provide a robust descriptive account, or to infer/understand causality (or a combination of these).
- Clarity on both the population of interest and the unit of analysis; a definition of who will be included in the study and explanation of why; an assessment of whether some important groups will be excluded, the reasons for this, and the impact upon the study.
- A description of the research methods proposed, whether primary research or secondary, and a rationale for why these have been proposed. Details of the approach to research synthesis/review, data collection or analysis as relevant. For each approach, applicants should provide sufficient information for the reviewer to assess its scientific rigour. For example, they may need to cover:
    - For any form of sampling – information on the proposed sampling method, planned issued and achieved sample sizes, and issues of bias to be considered.
    - For quantitative analysis – an assessment of whether the sample sizes are big enough to test the key relationships with sufficient confidence, including subgroup analysis.
    - For qualitative work – how the sampling strategy will ensure an appropriate range of individuals and experiences are covered, and the approach to analysis.
    - For evaluations – how the ‘counterfactual’ will be assessed and what effect sizes will be detectable.
- Discussions of key limitations of the data / to the analysis, and the plans in place to recognise and address them.

At *Full application* stage we expect a much fuller and more detailed account.

- This should be the most substantial and detailed part of the application, comprising a presentation of the

proposed activities and how they will achieve the aims of the project.
- For research proposals, applicants must provide a comprehensive description of the methodology for both qualitative and quantitative approaches and articulate their elements with reference to the research questions. Include the planned methods of data collection and analysis and a rationale for choosing them.
- We will be looking closely at whether the methods chosen are appropriate and sufficiently rigorous to address the questions applicants are asking, and whether the project is feasible.

Applicants should refer to Appendix A before completing the Methods, approach and activities section of the *Full application*.

ii. Outcomes, outputs and dissemination

In the *Full application* applicants must fully elaborate on the intended **Outcomes, outputs and dissemination** activities designed to support these. Here we are interested in how things might change in the real world as a result of the project, even if that change is long-term.

- What are the outcomes aimed to achieve that support our mission to advance people's social well-being?
- We would like to know how applicants plan to identify key audiences, plans for influencing and engaging them, and expectations for how the research will have an impact on people's lives.
- Applicants should outline the key mechanisms they will use, such as conferences, seminars, meetings with senior policy makers, or the production of online communications or publications aimed at wider audiences. This will form the basis of the *Communications plan* for the project, should it be funded.
- We view research reports, briefing papers, other publications, seminars and other events as outputs. These may or may not lead to policy or practical change (outcomes).
- While we welcome the production of academic journal articles, these are not usually the primary outputs of the projects we fund. All research, development and analysis projects should produce **at least one report aimed at as broad an audience as possible and which is freely and publicly available.**
- We recommend that applicants read the Guide for grant-holders as this sets out in detail our expectations.

iii. Staffing

We need to be confident that **Staffing** for the project is appropriate and that staff have the necessary expertise to conduct the project proposed. Applicants must provide the information required to make this assessment in the appropriate part of the application form and by including short CVs (one page each) that focus on the skills and experience of the individual relevant to delivering this project.

In the *Full application*:
- In addition to information on how applicants will manage the contributions of staff working on the project, proposed project management arrangements for the grant should be set out.

- We are keen to develop the **future pipeline of researchers** in our fields of interest, through the development of all staff in the proposed team, and to encourage interdisciplinary teams that share and develop their expertise and networks.
    - **Demonstrating this in the proposal will be considered favourably by the Foundation.**

iv. Expert advice and key stakeholder engagement

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

- Applicants should make sure that the costs take into account this engagement and delivering against the *Communications plan*.
- The Guide for grant-holders provides full details of our expectations.

v. Quality assurance and risk management

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.

vi. Legal and ethical aspects

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; and
    - 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.

vii. Timetable

We do not expect a detailed timetable in the *Outline application*. However, we do need to be given sufficient information to help us judge whether the overall timeframe, and sequencing of key stages in the project, fits with its aims, objectives, and approach.

In considering the timetable, applicants should take into consideration the requirements of the Foundation that grant-holders publish a freely available *Main public report,* which serves as a concise and accessible account of the project, drawing out key findings and recommendations. This report must be published and disseminated **before** the end of grant date.

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 includes when applicants would propose to deliver the various requirements of the grant, including:
    - Progress reports
    - Communications plan
    - Main Public Output
    - End of project assessment

Please see the Guide for grant-holders for full details.

Applicants may wish to submit a separate technical appendix for quantitative analysis plans or 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.**

viii. 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, (e.g. non-staff costs for quantitative and qualitative research) and which complies with our *Budget guidelines* (Appendix B).

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 Appendix B.

ix. Terms and Conditions

- 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 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.

- If the application is successful, the host institution will be asked to formally accept the *Terms and Conditions*.

Applicants should also read the Guide for grant-holders, as this sets out in detail our expectations of successful applicants.

Section 6: The assessment process

Following receipt of the *Full application* form, *budget* and *institutional signature*, the grants team will assess whether the application is in line with expectations, including whether it addresses sufficiently any earlier feedback.

Reviewer comments

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

If we receive a *Full application* that does not contain all the information we need, and/or that 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 the Introduction section of this guide.

Applicant responses

Anonymised comments will be shared with the applicant alongside questions or concerns arising from the application. They will have the opportunity to respond to each query on the application, and to address any other concerns they may think pertinent.

Please note that the comments applicants receive from the Foundation at this stage are thorough and sometimes extensive, so please ensure time is set aside to respond appropriately.

The decision meeting

Applications are considered by Nuffield Foundation, who 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.

Unsuccessful applicants

- If an applicant is unsuccessful, the *Rejection Letter* will set out issues raised by Nuffield Foundation.
- Unsuccessful applications may not be re-submitted 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

Applicants will receive a letter confirming the decision regarding the application.

7.1 Notice of Award

- A *Notice of Award* letter will be sent to successful applicants.
- Any feedback or requirements from the Foundation will be included.
- A link to the *Grant Acceptance form* will be sent along with the *Notice of Award* letter.
    - 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 Trustees before the grant can be released.

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 (*Interim reports, Communications plan,* and *Main public report*), 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 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 of our Terms and Conditions.
  - Confirm the correct Institutional Signatory.
  - Submit any comments regarding points in the *Award Letter*.

7.3 Confirmation of Award

- The *Confirmation of Award* letter confirms the final details of the grant
- It is usually issued within two months of issuing the *Notice of Award*
- At this stage, it is important 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.*

Appendix A: 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 rationale for the sampling strategy.
- This should include a clear description of the population of interest, and plans to select and recruit the sample and any subgroups within it.
- We expect 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.
- Where the project involves a survey, applicants must provide details of the approach to implementation, and demonstrate an understanding of the practical implementation challenges as well as statistical theory.
- If the study involves collecting data in a systematic and quantifiable way from electronic or paper records, (e.g. court files) applicants need to 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 (e.g. one-to-one in-depth interviews, focus groups, deliberation) and identify any specific tools or interviewing techniques to deploy to elicit quality data.

- Applicants should 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 any costs related to preparing data for archiving in the budget.

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.
- Researchers should use and integrate the data sources that best address their 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, drawing out implications for policy and practice, or generating 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 (i.e. which databases will be searched) and include details about how to assess the quality of studies and other inclusion criteria.

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.

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

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.
- How any 'counterfactual' would be assessed.
- The outcome measures to be used, including their validity, reliability and how these would be collected.
- Estimated sample sizes and whether these would provide sufficient power to detect the expected effect size, with reference to previously observed effect sizes where relevant.

Appendix B: Budget guidelines

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 *Full applications*; 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 of 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: Qualitative research
- Non-staff costs: Quantitative 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 is outlined below:

Non-staff costs	Include direct costs relating to
a. Quantitative research	survey fieldwork costs (and associated print and postage), data entry, data processing, incentives (please refer to detailed guidance if using incentives), data access/linkage fees, travel to secure data enclaves, statistical software licences, assessment materials and licences, etc.
b. Qualitative research	transcription, incentives (please refer to detailed guidance if using incentives), fieldwork associated travel, accommodation and subsistence, qualitative analysis software licences etc.
c. Communications and stakeholder engagement	dissemination activities, conference and workshop expenses, advisory group activities, travel for advisory groups, etc.
d. Equipment	e.g. recording equipment, laptops.
e. 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 Full applications

Budget category	Eligible costs	Ineligible costs	Comments
Staff time (salaries and on-costs)	Salaries (for both UK and non-UK staff). National Insurance. Employer pension contributions.	Enhanced salaries resulting from promotion are not eligible.	At *Full application* stage, the budget must show: • The total amount budgeted for each named person, per calendar year. The staffing section of the *Full application* form should specify: • The proportion of time that each person would **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. Where the person is not known, please specify the equivalent information separately for each post to be filled. 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** ½ 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.

Budget category	Eligible costs	Ineligible costs	Comments
Consultants	Daily rates usually within range £250–£800.		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	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).	Indirect costs for HEIs are ineligible. Estates costs for permanent staff and PIs in HEIs are ineligible.	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).

Budget category	Eligible costs	Ineligible costs	Comments
Qualitative and quantitative research (direct, non-staff costs)	Direct fieldwork costs. Incentive payments (if justified). Travel and subsistence to undertake quantitative or qualitative research activities. Admin and office expenses incurred to undertaken quantitative or qualitative research activities.	Enhanced salaries resulting from promotion are not eligible.	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, any request for incentive payments to ensure respondents' participation needs to be justified in detail, with evidence that these are necessary to the delivery of this specific project. Applicants should show that any advantages in improved participation outweigh potential risks (such as potential influence on responses, and the research relationship, and impact on wider willingness to participate without incentives). We are more likely to be sympathetic to a case for incentive (or 'thank you') payments in qualitative research; or in research which includes particularly onerous demands on respondents (e.g. completing a diary); and to incentives in the form of prize draws rather than direct payments.
Communications and stakeholder	Advisory group activities.	Fees for advisory group members are not eligible.	As the availability of Foundation rooms cannot be guaranteed, costing assumptions should be based on the use of external facilities. We will make any necessary adjustments later, if we do host any events or meetings.

Budget category	Eligible costs	Ineligible costs	Comments
Engagement (direct, non-staff costs)	Costs of events, publications and dissemination activities. Travel and subsistence for contributors to events.	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).	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 under exceptional circumstances.
Equipment	Full costs for project-specific equipment for projects lasting three years or more.		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	E.g. direct costs for project specific staff recruitment campaigns. Other admin or office expenses that are attributable to the project.	PhD fees are not eligible. Costs relating to Continuing Professional Development are not eligible.	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.

Appendix C: Intervention development and early evaluation funding

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 e.g. 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. We are keen to generate high quality evidence about what works, but 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 i.e. one that is applicable to equivalent settings in the UK?

Evidence of promise

Is there evidence that this approach could impact on outcomes (i.e. 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 (i.e. is there a clearly defined intervention)? Is the intervention scalable (i.e. 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 (e.g. 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 (i.e. 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 (i.e. feasibility, evidence of promise and readiness for trial), we expect that they will be ready for a large-scale RCT to test efficacy – i.e. whether the intervention can work under ideal / developer-led conditions in a larger number of settings.