

HEALTH AND CARE RESEARCH WALES EVIDENCE CENTRE

BRIEF AND GUIDANCE

Closing date: 17:00 Friday 2 September 2022

1. Introduction to the call

Health and Care Research Wales wishes to fund an Evidence Centre to undertake evidence synthesis and rapid primary research to address knowledge gaps and the specific needs of Welsh Government and other healthcare, public health and social care stakeholders in Wales. It is expected that the evidence produced will be of immediate use to decision-makers within Welsh Government, the NHS and social care and will have a direct impact on decision-making, patient and client care, reducing inequalities and identifying future research needs.

The Evidence Centre will be expected to engage with stakeholders, identify and prioritise research questions, and undertake a range of evidence synthesis, rapid evaluation and rapid primary research activities.

The Evidence Centre will produce a variety of products which could include, but need not be restricted to:

- Research evidence maps
- Scoping reviews

- Rapid evidence summaries
- Rapid evidence reviews
- Systematic reviews
- Living reviews
- Rapid evaluations of interventions and service developments
- Rapid primary research arising from the Centre's evidence synthesis activities or direct stakeholder need

It follows from this that the successful application will need to demonstrate:

- Expertise in a variety of review methods
- A track record of delivering reviews and rapid primary research in a range of health, public health and social care topics
- The agility, experience and expertise to adapt methods and approaches quickly to the kind of research required
- The ability to draw on additional methodological and topic-specific expertise as required
- A good understanding of, and ideally existing strong links with, the relevant stakeholder communities
- A good understanding and track record of strong public involvement and engagement
- A good understanding of and track record of knowledge mobilisation and engagement with end-users of research

2. Key features of this funding call

- Funding of up to £1.5 million per year is available for an initial 3-year award and a possible 2-year extension. Applicants must provide a cost breakdown and a justification of the funding requested.
- This investment will create core capacity for evidence synthesis and rapid primary research for a period of up to 5 years, and during this period the Evidence Centre will be in a strong position to seek and win additional

grant funding from other sources, generating income both for health and care research and for the relevant institution. As such, Health and Care Research Wales sees this investment as an infrastructure investment, and as a feature of the call, and in recognition of the partnership aspect of such awards, requests that applying institutions waive overheads.

- The call opens on Tuesday 12 July 2022 with a deadline of 17:00 Friday 2 September 2022. Applications will undergo assessment in September 2022, with all applicants notified of the outcome of their bid by the end of September 2022.
- Applicants are asked to note that a period of discussion and iteration may be required between assessment, agreement of the final award and the issuing of a formal Grant Award Letter.
- Health and Care Research Wales is committed to ensuring that public need and public involvement are at the heart of all we do. Applicants are expected to have strong public involvement and engagement built into their applications.

3. Background

As part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Welsh Government, via Health and Care Research Wales, funded the Wales Covid-19 Evidence Centre (WCEC) to drive the use of research and evidence in managing the pandemic and supporting recovery and regeneration.

[Wales COVID-19 Evidence Centre | Health Care Research Wales \(healthandcareresearchwales.org\)](https://healthandcareresearchwales.org).

The priority for the WCEC is to produce rapid, but rigorous, evidence syntheses that meet the needs of decision-makers, policy makers, clinicians, the public, and other relevant stakeholders. Some rapid primary research has also been supported.

The WCEC work programme has covered many important COVID-related evidence priorities emerging in Wales, developed and iterated through a scoping and priority-setting process with key stakeholders, including, but not limited to, representation from Welsh Government, health service bodies, social care, third sector, public involvement organisations and research infrastructures. Work has been carefully tailored to complement the work of other groups internal and external to Welsh Government, across the UK and internationally, to ensure that the WCEC addresses the unmet needs of decision-makers in Wales.

Given the success of the WCEC, Health and Care Research Wales now wishes to create and fund an Evidence Centre able to work across its full remit, addressing key and urgent priority issues across the health and social care agenda.

4. Completing the application form

Applicants should fully complete the application form, including the finance annex, that accompanies this brief.

The following guidance might be helpful when completing the form.

Section A: BASIC INFORMATION

In providing the basic details requested, please ensure that the roles of all individuals listed as part of the application are clearly and meaningfully described.

Please note that your plain English summary should be just that. It should be suitable for a general readership, as it may be used on the Health and Care Research Wales website and for other reporting and communication purposes.

Section B: ACTIVITIES

It is important that you provide a full account of your proposed activities covering **B1**: your approach to question identification and prioritisation; **B2**: the evidence synthesis and rapid evaluation/primary research products you will produce; and **B3**: the dissemination and knowledge mobilisation activities you will undertake to ensure that your findings are taken up and used by health and social care decision-makers.

In responding to the questions in this section, you should think about:

- how you will plan and develop your work programme in collaboration with Welsh Government and other stakeholders;
- how you will prioritise different evidence needs;
- the types and volume of the various products you will produce;
- the relative balance of evidence synthesis and rapid evaluation/primary research activity and outputs;
- what is feasible given the available level of resources and timescale;
- the most effective way of disseminating your products and mobilising your findings;
- how you will track and measure take-up of your findings and your impact.

Section C: YOUR TEAM

Whatever the content of your work programme, and whatever activities you describe, you must demonstrate that you have the appropriate expertise, experience and excellence within the team to deliver. While your core team must be based in Wales, co-applicants and team members can be drawn from multi-institutions, as long as you put appropriate management arrangements in place.

Section D: COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with stakeholders, especially those who are the end-users of research is clearly important if you are to understand their needs and if your research findings are to be taken up by them. Please use question **D1** to set out your approach to engagement, explaining how you will ensure that you are engaging effectively with the right individuals and organisations. You should include information on any current engagement and reach into stakeholder organisations (including Welsh Government and NHS and social care organisations) as well as your plans to further develop and extend relevant stakeholder relationships

Question **D2** recognises that while you have to demonstrate you have an experienced and capable core team, additional topic-specific and methodological expertise may need to be conscripted from time to time, depending on the topics, needs and questions that emerge from your question identification and prioritisation activity. Please describe your approach to academic collaboration beyond your core team, describing your current reach into relevant academic networks (in Wales or beyond).

As noted above, Health and Care Research Wales is committed to strong public involvement in all that we do. In addition to being required to have a public involvement lead among your co-applicants, we expect you to have strong public involvement in all your activities and processes. We further expect the Evidence Centre to build public engagement into its engagement and communication activities. Please respond to **D3** by outlining your plans to involve and engage the public in the work of the Evidence Centre, describing the benefits you think this will bring.

More information on involving the public in research, including links to the *UK Standards for Public Involvement* is available here:

[Involving the public in your research | Health Care Research Wales \(healthandcareresearchwales.org\)](https://healthandcareresearchwales.org)

Section E: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Please respond to **E1** by describing the leadership and governance structures you will put in place to ensure good management of the Evidence Centre and all its constituent processes and parts. Please include a clear description of any external advice or Advisory Group you wish to build into your structures. It is an opportunity too to clarify the structures for managing the involvement of individuals or groups in the core team from institutions other than the lead applicant's institution.

It is important that issues related to equality, diversity and inclusion are adequately reflected not only in the Evidence Centre's work programme but in its structures and processes with adequate representation from across public and stakeholder communities. Please respond to **E2** by describing your approach to ensuring adequate and appropriate engagement and representation.

Section F: RESOURCES

Financial Profile and Cost Breakdown

Please complete the resources table for **F1**: April 2023 – March 2026, and **F2**: April 2026 – March 2028, providing summary costs under each heading

As noted in the **Key features of this funding call** section above, in providing up to 5 years of funding for core evidence synthesis and rapid primary research capacity, Health and Care Research Wales regards this as an research infrastructure award with potential for generating follow-on income both for health and social care research and the relevant institutions. We are therefore asking applying institutions to waive all overheads as the simplest way of achieving a partnership contribution from those institutions which, as a result of this call, we wish to fund. This will provide an undiminished institutional commitment 'up front' without reducing the maximum available Health and Care Research Wales grant award. As such, the overhead line has been blocked out and overhead costs should not feature in this table. This

is a continuation of our previous policy in relation to research infrastructure funding.

In addition to completing the summary table, please provide a more detailed financial breakdown using the **Finance Annex** template provided with the application form.

When completing **F1**, **F2** and the **Finance Annex**, please note:

- Staff costs should include *all* salaries, with associated direct costs ('on-costs') for which you are seeking funding and show the whole time equivalent (wte) cost of each post. All increments and other known cost pressures should be included in the costs provided. It will *not* be possible to uplift to the grant for this purpose at a later time.
- You should use the **Finance Annex** to provide a full financial breakdown, including all staff posts and all significant items under the main headings given on the summary tables (**F1** and **F2**).
- While Health and Care Research Wales recognises that many costs may be indicative at this stage (especially in relation to dissemination and engagement activity, or travel and subsistence), you should specify all planned or known expenditure and/or ensuring that all estimated expenditure is as accurate as possible.
- You should include *all* public involvement and public engagement costs in your application. We have included a line in the summary tables and **Finance Annex** for this purpose.
- The 'Other' category may be used for costs you feel are essential that do not easily fit elsewhere.

Please respond to 'F3: Justification of resources' by providing a narrative explaining why you have applied for the various resource elements and how each will contribute to your work programme.

Please note that in addition to core research capacity, funding can also be used to support dissemination and impact posts related to stakeholder engagement, question identification and prioritisation, dissemination, awareness raising and knowledge mobilisation activity.

Health and Care Research Wales will consider all reasonable equipment and consumable requests, where these are shown to be integral to the core activities and the cost is fully justified.

If you are in receipt or pledges of additional match-funding or supporting resources from the applying institution/s or other sources, please tell us about this in F4.

Section G: DECLARATIONS and CVs

Please ensure that all required signed declarations and CVs are provided. An application cannot be accepted without the required signatures. Please note that CVs should be a maximum length of two pages (A4).

5. Submitting your application form

Please provide a fully signed electronic copy of your application form, and the accompanying finance annex, by **17:00 (5pm) on 2nd September 2022**.

While we do not require a hard (paper) copy of your form, *all* signatories *must* be copied in when you e-mail us your electronic submission.

Please provide your completed application form in Word *and* Portable Document Format (PDF). The Finance Annex should be completed in Excel and submitted with your application form.

Please e-mail your application form and finance annex to the Research and Development Division Grant Team mailbox:

healthandcareresearchgrants@gov.wales

Please mark your e-mail for the attention of Michael Bowdery.

***You are reminded that you must adhere to all specified word limits.
Words exceeding the limit will not be read.***

If you have any further queries regarding completion of your application form or the submission process, please contact the R&D Division in Welsh Government via our mailbox: healthandcareresearchgrants@gov.wales