

# OPEN CALL FOR QEDS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This FAQ document compiles questions submitted by prospective applicants since the launch of our open call for quasi-experimental evaluations (QEDs), including those raised during our webinars. We have provided responses to help address common areas of interest and uncertainty. This document will be updated regularly as we continue to receive questions and host further webinars.

## Will Foundations be funding intervention delivery?

No, Foundations are not funding intervention delivery for this call. This is primarily because we anticipate this being a **retrospective evaluation** for interventions that have already been completed. Where evaluations are prospective, we would expect to use randomised experimental methods such as an RCT.

If applicants have a strong justification for a prospective evaluation where an RCT would not be possible/ would be inappropriate and a QED would be better, please email us and this could be something we discuss.

## Can academic institutions apply?

Yes, and we would encourage them to do so. Academic institutions could also be particularly valuable as part of a consortium, for example, with other who have expertise around conducting rigorous QEDs or knowledge of relevant data sets.

## Will University overheads be funded?

No, our call guidance states that Foundations will not pay Full Economic Costings (FEC) for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), which means only direct costs for HEIs will be covered (i.e. expenses that are directly related to the running of the project including staff salaries, equipment and materials specifically used for this project, and travel costs for fieldwork etc).

## How many families are you expecting to go through this evaluation?

We do not set a strict minimum sample size for this call. However, we expect applicants to justify that their proposed evaluation will have sufficient statistical power to detect meaningful effects, given the sample size and characteristics of the available data. This should include a brief power calculation or other rationale appropriate to the proposed quasi-experimental method. We recognise that effect sizes and sample sizes vary depending on the intervention and context, so we



assess feasibility and rigour on a case-by-case basis. Applicants whose proposals may concern a smaller sample size may want to consider applying as a Pilot-QED rather than a full-scale QED.

**You've put a really big focus on using existing data. Is that the primary focus of this call? Or are you open to interventions that can provide new data?**

This call is focused on retrospective quasi-experimental impact evaluations that make use of existing administrative or service delivery data. Our aim is to accelerate learning about what works by leveraging data that already exists - minimising costs, reducing research burden on service providers, and enabling timely insights.

**We're working across several different local authorities. We're wondering whether we should bring all of those local authorities together or just use one local authority. Proportionally, there's are probably more ethnically minoritised families in one particular local authority that we're working with than the other local authorities.**

To generate a robust evaluation, particularly with a full-scale QED, a larger sample size would be preferable. We are also particularly interested in generating insights for minoritised ethnic children and families and would encourage applicants to consider subgroup analyses and the samples required to do this.

**If we have an intervention that is funded across the four UK nations, would that still be eligible?**

This would still be eligible. However, we would only be able to conduct an evaluation on the intervention that was delivered in England. Foundations is funded by the Department for Education, which is responsible for education and children's services in England only (given that education is a devolved matter across the four nations of the UK). As such, our focus is to understand how to improve outcomes for children and families in England only. Where an intervention has been delivered across the four nations, it would still be eligible, but we would expect proposals to focus specifically on our target population.

**Can you elaborate on the possibility of additional funding to existing evaluations to conduct further analyses?**

Yes, if an intervention or programme has already been evaluated through, for example, say an RCT, we like to consider funding re-analyses of evaluation data using different outcomes or looking at the impact for subgroups of children and families. For example, there could be a parenting intervention that we could analyse specifically for minoritised ethnic families.



**Prior to the application, does Foundations expect us to do an evaluability assessment of our QED? E.g. doing some initial patient and participant involvement and effect size calculations. Or can this be included as part of the project itself?**

We don't expect a full evaluability assessment before applying. However, we do expect applicants to have done enough preliminary work to show that a credible quasi-experimental design is feasible. This might include initial checks on data availability and quality, indicative sample sizes, and a basic sense of whether there's potential for identifying a suitable comparison group. We don't require patient and public involvement (PPI) at this stage, but we welcome it if it strengthens the case for feasibility or relevance.

**Do you need evaluators to have access to the required datasets at the point of application?**

No, not necessarily at the point of application, but as stated in our criteria, applications that can demonstrate clear access routes to the data and awareness of any risks or known challenges to accessing these datasets will be favoured.

**How will you make decisions across your priority areas and populations? For example if you have several very strong applications, but limited funding do you have some 'priority' priority areas?**

Our primary assessment criteria are focused on strategic alignment – specifically, how well the proposal addresses our priority areas, outcomes, and populations. Technical quality, including the credibility of the proposed quasi-experimental design and the expertise of the team, is assessed as a secondary criterion.

If we receive several very strong applications, we may also consider the overall balance and complementarity of our portfolio as a tertiary criterion, but this will only come into play after assessing strategic alignment and technical merit. We aim to prioritise proposals that are both well-designed and most likely to generate useful evidence for decision-makers across our priority areas.



**We run an intervention that has a broadly White British uptake, however we are very keen to explore barriers to marginalised communities accessing the intervention as part of our own EDIE strategy. Would this be of interest or is it beyond scope of the call?**

We are looking to fund QEDs in which the research question focuses on the impact of an intervention. We also welcome QEDs that include subgroup analyses which look at effectiveness for subgroups of children and families. IPEs could explore questions around barriers to accessing interventions.

**Would applications that not only focus on family work but includes the whole network around the child (including work with the family, social care, school staff) be eligible for this call? The main focus would be on working with the parents but it also includes work with the network around the child, especially for children in care.**

Yes, this would be eligible provided that child outcomes can be measured

Update: This FAQ was updated on 11 June 2025. The questions below have been added to the original document.

**We believe we have sufficient in-house expertise to run the research. Because of that, we were wondering if it is necessary to include an academic partner in the partnership?**

No, it is not necessary to have an academic partner in the partnership. We would just ask that full detail of your in-house expertise is provided in the application to allow us to assess this.



**The budget template lists daily rates for each project role. However, we usually calculate costs using full-time equivalents (FTEs). Could we submit the budget in FTEs instead?**

The template we shared asks for budgets to be broken down by day rates and estimated number of days per activity and team member. This level of detail helps us understand how your team will be resourced across different stages of work and activities and ensures consistency when assessing proposals.

While we recognise that some organisations work and plan in FTEs, we strongly encourage you to translate this into day rates/number of days in the template provided, as this format will also align with our quarterly financial reporting requirements during the grant period if you were to be successful.

If you're unable to provide this breakdown and need to provide a budget in FTEs instead, please make sure your submission is as clear and detailed as possible, and that you provide your assumptions about working days, staff time, and how this will map onto specific activities.

**Are projects that target parents or families eligible, or should the evaluation focus specifically on children?**

In the call guidance document (pages 5-6), we specified the child-level outcomes we are interested in, but noted that we recognise that these are high level and reflect Foundations' strategic goals. As such, for the purposes of this funding call, evaluators are encouraged to identify measurable, intermediate outcomes appropriate for a quasi-experimental design that serve as proxies for the long-term child outcomes we're interested in. We expect to see a strong articulation of how one leads to the other.

**I am hoping to partner with an academic institution on this. Would part of the funding be able to be allocated to adding capacity to my organisation's data team for this?**

Yes and this should be fully explained in the budgeting template.

**Is there a deadline by which we can submit questions or are you open to answering up until the deadline (although hopefully any doubt is solved earlier than the deadline)**

We are open to answering questions up until **one week before** so that our FAQ document can be updated and all applicants can see the answers.



## **What is the email address for specific questions about ideas?**

[Evaluation@foundations.org.uk](mailto:Evaluation@foundations.org.uk)

## **On partnerships: Things like being linked to key contacts in the organisations that provide data and making them aware of the timeline implications could be useful, can Foundations support with this?**

We only have limited contacts with organisations that provide or facilitate access to data ourselves, so are unlikely to be in a position to provide applicants with additional contacts. This is why we are looking to ensure that applicants are applying with the relevant partners. That being said, if you are funded, we will be happy to join any follow-up meetings with you.

## **Will events to disseminate the results or travel costs be eligible under the £50,000 threshold?**

Any dissemination costs would need to be factored into the overall £200,000 QED budget. In the guidance document, we suggested allocating approximately £150,000 for the QED and £50,000 to the IPE, but this was just a suggestion. We are happy for evaluators to allocate budget for activities as they see fit, and to provide justification for this. Please note that we would not expect any dissemination costs to be extensive, and we would not expect to fund attendance at conferences or travel for these.

## **What is an IPE? With partner costs, it may difficult to keep within budget. Is there flexibility?**

IPE stands for Implementation and Process Evaluation. The purpose of our IPEs are to assess how an intervention is delivered, how it operates in practice, and what factors influence its success or failure. It helps determine whether the intervention was implemented as intended, identifies barriers and facilitators, and examines the context in which the intervention was applied. Our IPEs are observational and typically use both qualitative data (e.g., interviews, focus groups, observations) and quantitative data (e.g., surveys, programme records). Where teams do not currently have this expertise internally, we recognise that bringing on additional partners will increase the overall cost of your proposal.

While we encourage applicants to remain within the £200,000 budget envelope, we might be able to consider submissions that exceed this but only where there is a very strong justification and a clear explanation of the added value.

If you are considering putting in a proposal that exceeds the budget limit set, we also suggest your proposal outlines options:

- one that fits within the £200,000 limit, and



- one that exceeds it alongside a clear breakdown of additional activities and what the additional funding would strengthen the evaluation

## **Should the project duration be between October 2025 and the end of March 2027? Are there any requirements regarding the minimum duration?**

No, there are no minimum duration requirements.

## **If I've already collected data (pilot) on children and young people, and would like to test the findings in existing secondary data. Is this of interest?**

Yes, provided the data had been collected and subject to meeting data protection requirements about re-analysing existing data.

## **Accessing external sources of admin data e.g. from NHS Digital can be very resource intensive and time consuming - has this consideration been built into the timelines for the funding? Would Foundations be able to provide any support with this?**

- a. Yes, we appreciate the longer nature of accessing some QED data so this has been built into the timeline (accepting that final reporting may not be available until 2027). However, we advise that some datasets and processes may take much longer than others, therefore, partners should use their judgement on whether their application would fit within our parameters and timelines. Our timelines are final, and we expect all projects to meet these deadlines without requiring extensions.
- b. It depends on what is meant by support. We would not be able to provide internal capacity to accessing the data itself but would be able to provide support via expertise and signposting.

## **Are consortium partners also required to meet all the eligibility criteria applicable to the lead applicant?**

The eligibility discussed in our guidance relates to the following: *The lead applicant must represent a registered charity, company, statutory body, community interest company, or academic institution.*

Please note that this would only apply to the lead applicant, but they would have responsibility for ensuring that all subcontracted or partner individuals/organisations are able to adhere to the project expectations and to the terms and conditions in our grant agreements.





If you are an applicant that doesn't fit into the above categories, please do reach out to us.

## **Who should lead if it's a partner study with HEI and Registered Charity?**

We are open as to who applies as the lead applicant. Our recommendation would be for the evaluator to be the lead applicant as they will be best placed to answer most of the application questions but this is up to the applicant.

**The area where the service we want to run the QED on takes place in an area that is not very ethnically diverse and this reflects on the service uptake. Because of that, an evaluation run specifically on minority ethnic groups would not lead to transferrable learnings. We were, therefore, thinking of focussing on children and young people and families with experiences of deprivation and socio-economic marginalisation (i.e. high IMD). Would this study still be eligible and within the scope of the call?**

Firstly, the data used in this study does not need to be collected from minoritised groups only. However, as a minimum, the proportion of minoritised people should be sufficient to conduct subgroup analyses (though we accept these may not always be well powered).

Evaluations that can focus on racially minoritised families in some way, will be favoured as this aligns with Foundations priorities, as stated in our application guidance. However, if this is not possible we would be open to looking at other elements of EDIE like those mentioned in this question.

**The website says applications must match "at least one" of a current gov mission or having an EDIE focus. From today I've understood that a clear focus on \*both\* of those is required - is that right?**

Apologies if there was confusion. Our requirements are that applications should match 'at least one' of the following:

- Current Government mission
- OR
- Local practice need

They must ALSO meet our EDIE requirements as stated in the guidance.





### **Will you fund additional data collection for interventions already delivered? E.g., outcomes from children where only parents have provided data?**

For this open call, data should already have been collected where interventions have already been delivered. As part of our Deliverability (5) assessment criteria, evaluations that still need to collect data are likely to score lower than those that have them. .

### **Is the use of Local Area administrative data acceptable if the consistently available across sites?**

Yes, if the data is consistently available across sites.

### **Comparison group: Would using families who were either not eligible for a programme due to safeguarding concerns or were placed on a waiting list be eligible as a comparison group? Would this approach be acceptable if baseline and follow-up outcome data can be collected?**

Comparing the outcomes of families eligible for the programme vs. those who are not for safeguarding reasons introduces a significant risk of bias in the analysis and our scoring will reflect this risk. The waitlist option seems a more promising one, assuming families are put on a waitlist for reasons unrelated to outcomes (e.g. lack of staff)

### **Sample size: Would a multi-site model across three LAs be likely to offer the scale needed for feasibility?**

We expect your research partner to provide power calculations showing that a plausible effect size can be detected given your sample size, and proposed analysis

### **Is there a character/word limit for the answers? I can see that, in the table, there is the content control activated but I seem to be able to write in each cell as much as I want to/need to. Can you, please, advise?**

No, there is no word limit.



## **Are there particular weightings for different sections of the application?**

Our current weightings are the following:

1. Strategic alignment: 15%
2. Strength and suitability of evaluation design: 20%
3. Data access, feasibility and ethical considerations: 30%
4. EDIE considerations: 10%
5. Deliverability: 15%
6. Impact and contribution to the wider evidence base: 10%

## **How will the budget template be weighted/scored alongside these technical sections of the application?**

Resourcing overall including budgeting and timelines will be scored as part of the ‘Deliverability’ criteria (no. 5).

However, the budgeting template itself will not be scored vs the technical criteria.

It is worth noting though that those proposals that are within budget will of course be favoured over those that are outside of the budget.

## **Would an evaluation of the two child benefit policy be within the scope of this call?**

Although this would be an extremely interesting evaluation, on this occasion, it would not fit within the scope of this QED Open Funding Call as it is not one of Foundations priority areas.

## **Could you confirm the funding basis for day rates – is VAT on top of the basic salary costs for the applicant eligible?**

No, we would not expect VAT to be added on top of staff salary day rates in your budget. Foundations funds projects through grants, which are typically outside the scope of VAT, and salaries themselves are not subject to VAT.

If there are other costs in your budget (e.g. specific project equipment) where VAT is incurred and cannot be recovered by your organisation, it may be included in those line items. Please speak with your finance team if you're unsure about what VAT costs apply



## **Please could we see a draft copy of the Foundations Terms and Conditions when making an award?**

A draft, watermarked copy of our T&Cs can be provided upon request. Please also note the following:

1. These might be subject to minor changes
2. Please be aware that our terms and conditions flow down from our own grant with government funders, so we have very limited flexibility to negotiate these terms

## **Would applying for the Family Safeguarding QED with Foundations preclude applicants from applying for the QED Open Funding Call too?**

No, applicants can apply for both calls and would not be penalised for doing so.