

Expression of interest guidance

STRENGTHENING THE EVALUATION CAPACITY OF BY AND FOR ORGANISATIONS

**Domestic abuse workforce
programmes**

Closes: 12pm (midday), Wednesday 19 August



Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in our funding call, Strengthening Evaluation Capacity of By and For Organisations: Domestic Abuse Workforce Programmes. This call is part of Foundations Domestic Abuse Workforce Programmes Evidence Fund.

Foundations, the national What Works Centre for Children & Families, invite Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from By and For Organisations who deliver domestic abuse workforce development programmes and would like to strengthen their evaluation skills and further build the evidence of their work.

We are particularly interested in engagement of workforce programmes that:

- Are delivered to the Early/ Family Help and wider Children's Social Care workforce, and possibly the wider safeguarding partnership
- Are developed and delivered to go beyond a workforce training offer, meaningfully aiming to build knowledge and motivation, recognising the organisational and systemic context of the workforce
- Have been developed through consultation with those from lived experience, especially marginalised groups and minoritised ethnic families
- Target one or more thematic areas of skills gaps noted in the scoping phase around; cultural competencies, coercive control, perpetrator dynamics, child-centred practice, multi-agencies, and family courts. *However, Foundations is open to receiving applications that cover other thematic areas as well.*

Each successful organisation (or 'delivery partner') will work in partnership with an independent evaluator (or 'evaluation partner'). The evaluation partner will work with the organisation to identify the specific needs and opportunities to strengthen evaluation capacity and agree on specific, measurable, time-bound goals for the duration of the project.

About this opportunity

This is a grant-funded opportunity, with **£30,000** available for **up to 25 months**.

This is an exciting opportunity to strengthen your organisations with tailored support to refine your intervention and clarify your theory of change in preparation for any potential future robust evaluation. You will also build shared learning about how researchers and funders can work more effectively with By and For Organisations and strengthen the evidence base for what works in domestic abuse workforce development, particularly for minoritised ethnic children and families.

How to apply

We recognise that the application process requires a meaningful investment of time and resource. To support with this, we have implemented a three-stage process:

1. Submitting an EOI - our intention with this stage is to reduce burden on applicants.
2. Full application – by invitation from the EOI stage.
3. Interview and selection stage – shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview.



Within this document you will find guidance on the EOI process, details of the scope of the evaluation support, information on what to expect and next steps.

Once you have completed your Expression of Interest form, please upload it via the [EOI Portal](#) by 12PM (midday) Wednesday 19 August 2026.

If you have any questions or require support with your EOI, please do not hesitate to contact the project team at programmes@foundations.org.uk.

Kind regards,
Foundations



1. Why are we launching this call?

Minoritised children and families are overrepresented in children’s social care interventions relative to population, yet **minoritised families are often underrepresented** in programme evaluations and research samples. Survivors from minoritised ethnic backgrounds continue to face **poorer access to effective support**, and **professionals often lack the skills and confidence** to respond to their specific needs.

Practitioners working with children, young people, and families affected by domestic abuse from minoritised ethnic backgrounds require **specialist knowledge, confidence in their practice, and trauma-informed skills** to respond safely, effectively, and with cultural competence. Through an in-depth scoping exercise — including conversations with Experts by Experience, sector leaders and policy specialists, a review of existing evidence, and service mapping exercise of domestic abuse workforce development programmes in England — we identified **significant gaps in practitioners’ capacity to provide appropriate support to minoritised ethnic children and families**. These gaps not only limit the quality of responses, but risk reinforcing existing inequalities, making targeted, high-quality workforce programmes an essential priority.

Findings from our scoping exercise emphasised that **By and For Organisations are uniquely placed to address these gaps**, yet they remain underrepresented in the evidence base. Structural barriers—including limited evaluation capacity, resource constraints, and the greater visibility of larger mainstream providers—mean their impact is often under recognised and under documented. Our service mapping exercise reinforced these findings. While a wide range of training exists across the country, provision varies significantly in quality, clarity of outcomes, and implementation approach. **Specialist training focusing on marginalised groups, and training delivered by By and For Organisations, was notably absent from publicly available information**—despite stakeholders identifying these as areas of greatest need.

As a result, **there is limited robust evidence on what works for minoritised ethnic children and families affected by domestic abuse**. Without a strong evidence base on how the workforce can be empowered and upskilled to support these families, there is a risk that these **gaps will be perpetuated** in practice and in the evidence base.

Foundations aims to close these gaps through **a commitment to expand our work to better reflect the experiences and needs of a broader range of minoritised groups**¹. By supporting By and For Organisations to strengthen their evaluation capacities, we aim to elevate their expertise in evaluating and reporting on the impact of their work, influence improvements to workforce practice, and contribute to a more equitable and effective responses to domestic abuse.

If you would like to read more about the scoping work which supported this call, please see the [Evidence Considerations](#).

¹ For more information about Foundation’s commitment to improving equality, diversity, inclusion and equity within our research please see [EDIE and the Guidebook - Foundations](#)



2. Project scope

Foundations is committed to building an evidence base of promising domestic abuse workforce development programmes, in particular for minoritised ethnic children and families. By demonstrating the impact of these programmes, we aim to support the wider adoption of best practice across the sector. Central to this is ensuring that the expertise and effect of By and For organisations are recognised, evidenced, and elevated.

2.1. What are we looking to achieve?

We want to support By and For Organisations to strengthen their skills, capacities and experience to engage in research evaluations and enhance how they can best profile the impact of their work to a wide audience.

Successful partners will work closely with Foundations and an independent evaluation partner or consortium of partners (that will be commissioned by us) to develop a **tailored evaluation capacity strengthening approach** comprised of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound actions that will build essential skills to effectively demonstrate their impact and engage in evaluation.

While specific outputs and details will be co-developed between the delivery partners, evaluation partner and Foundations once partners have been selected, we anticipate that approach to the capacity strengthening work will likely include:

- **Set-up & scoping (between 3 to 6 months):** During this phase, successful applicants will be introduced to one another and begin building relationships across the cohort. They will work with the evaluation partner(s) to develop individual capacity-building plans, including clear milestones and timelines.
- **Capacity Strengthening Delivery and Testing (between 11 to 18 months):** This phase will see partners participate in individual (and potential cross-cohort) workshops, Theory of Change development or refinement, and participating in peer-learning and exchanges. Where appropriate to your plan and goals, taking part in 'test & learn' activities to test the application of skills and approaches learned through the above, supported by the evaluation partner(s) and Foundations.
- **Project Wind-up (last 3 months):** This phase will see partners finalise the project outputs and take part in dissemination and lessons learned activities and 'what next' planning. This phase will include submitting a short financial and narrative report on your participation, participating in any lessons learned, distribution events and discussions of next steps and sustainability (as relevant).

We require delivery partners to actively participate in all phases of the project, as outlined above.

We invite interested applicants to **reflect on the resources they have available to realistically participate within the activities**, such as staffing, time, and governance support, considering the above expectations. If you would like to discuss any questions or concerns around resourcing, please do reach out to us.



2.2. Who is this call for?

This call is open to By and For Organisations, only. For this call, Foundations is using the definition set out in the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's [Patchwork of Provision](#) report, which describes By and For Organisations as:

*“organisations that are **designed and delivered by and for people who are minoritised (including race, disability, sexual orientation, transgender identity, religion or age)**. These services will be rooted in the communities they serve, and may include wrap-around holistic recovery and support that address a victim or survivor’s full range of intersecting needs, beyond purely domestic abuse support.”*

For this call, we are looking to partner with By and For Organisations that work with minoritised ethnic families, to align with our organisational anti-racism strategy. However, we welcome applications which reflect intersectionality with the broader definition above, providing they maintain a clear and consistent approach engaging with and delivery to minoritised ethnic families.

We recognise that some organisations may meet this definition but use different language to describe themselves such as *grassroots, community led, or survivor led*.

Foundations is interested in the nature and purpose of your organisation, not the specific label you use.

If your organisation aligns with the definition above but you are unsure whether you would be considered a By and For organisation, we encourage you to contact us to discuss your eligibility before beginning an expression of interest.

2.3 What are the type of development programmes we are targeting?

In scope

We are interested in domestic abuse workforce development programmes:

- Where the ultimate beneficiaries of the programme are CYP and their families through Early/ Family Help and wider Children's Social Care workforce (essential) and may include the wider safeguarding partnership such as health, police, and education (desirable).
- That allow us to understand the different lenses taken by partners on key domestic abuse thematic issues such as peer abuse, child as victim, or child as perpetrator.
- Which target one or more thematic areas of skills gaps noted in the scoping phase around; cultural competencies, coercive control, perpetrator dynamics, child-centered practice, multi-agencies, and family courts. *However, Foundations is open to receiving applications that cover other thematic areas as well.*

We understand that development programmes may combine a range of formats and methods, including formal in person or online trainings, mentoring or further implementation support. We



are open to how you define and implement your development programmes, however **we are specifically looking for programmes that:**

- Build knowledge, motivate staff, develop techniques and embed practice
- Include an element of ongoing capacity building (for example, through active partnerships with recipients)
- Acknowledge and address the support needs of children as victims in their own right and is not adult-only focused
- Demonstrate the potential to scale and grow, either through further development and refinement of the model, expanded delivery, or a combination of both
- Have been delivered with some consistency in content and implementation model and are not still in early programme design/development phases
- Extend beyond a workforce training offer, considering the organisational and systemic context within which development is implemented
- May focus on different stages of careers, for example to inform early career standards (ECS), Child Protection standards, and general CPD
- Clearly articulate the benefits to all children and families, including those from marginalised/ minoritised backgrounds, ideally with supporting theory or evidence. This could be via an existing Theory of Change. However, *an existing Theory of Change is not required to be eligible, but we ask that you are willing to engage with the evaluation partner(s) to develop one during the project.*

Drawing from evidence on workforce development specifically around domestic abuse, **we are also interested in programmes which:**

- Target practitioners' practical skills and confidence
- Address survivors' intersecting needs
- Involve specialist knowledge and lived experience in their design and delivery
- Include an element of ongoing learning
- Integrate practitioner wellbeing considerations.

Out of scope

We would consider programmes out of scope and therefore, **not applicable for this call if they are:**

- One-off training with no follow-up or reinforcement
- Approaches that only focus on awareness-raising
- Programmes that are not grounded in evidence-informed behaviour change mechanisms.

2.4. What can you expect from the evaluation partner, and Foundations?

You can expect the evaluation partner to conduct a thorough (but proportionate) review of your evaluation capacity, and to develop and facilitate a tailored capacity strengthening plan. They will



then deliver training, mentoring, and ongoing guidance as you and the other successful applicants progress.

From Foundations, you can expect us to facilitate the introductions between partners, setting expectations across the cohort, and ensure the evaluation partner develops and carries out an effective and results driven capacity strengthening framework. We will also work with you and other successful applicants to engage with stakeholders, including those in policy and service sectors, to support peer learning, foster new relationships, and create opportunities for shared reflection and collective influence.

3. Expressions of Interest

3.1. Funding

Successful applicants selected through the EOI and full application stages will receive £30,000 to support their participation in this project. The funds are intended to supplement some of the team and operational resourcing costs associated with participating in the capacity strengthening and evaluation related activities. This funding does not cover delivery activities, and we are neither funding nor expecting to fund delivery as part of this programme.

Funding will be awarded based on the quality and potential impact of each proposal.

3.2. Timelines

Funding for this project is available for **up to 25 months, with a proposed start date of March 2027 and ending March 2029**, and consisting of set-up, delivery and wind down periods. The timelines for each period will be agreed with the awarded delivery and evaluation partners based on the refined approach of the capacity strengthening plans, though you can see an example of what timings could look like in section [2.a What are we looking to achieve?](#)

Please see the table below for a timeline of the key activities in this funding call. This timeline is indicative only and is subject to change.

Foundations reserves the right to change the roll out, scope, funding amounts, timeline, and dates of this call at any point. Please see our website for updates as and if they occur.

This funding call has been developed in the context of our current funding arrangements with the Department for Education, which are in place until **31 March 2027**. Funding for the project beyond April 2027 is not yet confirmed but it expected to be confirmed before set up begins in March 2027.

Continuation of the Project beyond 31 March 2027 may be subject to future commissioning and funding decisions.



Responsibility for the continuation of this project may transfer to another organisation or alternative delivery body during the course of the project. Where this occurs, we will seek to ensure appropriate and orderly transition arrangements, subject to funder requirements.

3.3. Funding call process

The funding call process will consist of three key stages, which are outlined in the timeline below.

Activities	Key Dates
Stage 1: Expression of Interest live	Wednesday 10 th June 2026
Deadline for Expressions of Interest	Noon (12pm) Wednesday 19th August 2026
Stage 2: All applicants notified of outcome, and shortlisted applicants will be invited to complete a full application	Tuesday 15 th September 2026
Deadline for Stage 2 applications	Monday 10 th November 2026
Stage 3: Interview stage (shortlisted applicants)	Monday 14 th December and Tuesday 15 th December 2026
Conditional award	January 2027
Full grant award decisions	February/March 2027
Project Start Up	March 2027

This current EOI stage will enhance our understanding of the domestic abuse workforce programmes that are currently being delivered. We will use the information gathered at this stage to map providers, which will feed into our overall understanding of the policy and practice landscape and inform both this funding call as well as Foundations' future work.

We hope this encourages as many delivery partners and providers as possible to register their interest. The EOI is the first stage of the application process; eligible candidates will be shortlisted and invited to the next stage to submit a full application.



The questions we are asking at this stage are to understand the core components of the interventions, the applicant's track record of domestic abuse workforce development programme delivery specifically, and how EDIE is embedded within all projects.

Once you have completed your Expression of Interest form, please upload it via the [EOI Portal](#) by 12PM (noon) Wednesday 19th August 2026.

3.4. Eligibility criteria

Programme eligibility

- You can demonstrate a track record of delivering your domestic abuse workforce programme, and your programme is aligned with the sector and thematic details outlined in [2.c What are the type of development programmes are we targeting?](#)
- Your programme is committed to engaging with and has experience working with and supporting CYP and families from minoritised ethnic backgrounds.
- Your programme has the potential to be scaled and evaluated in the future to assess broader impact on domestic abuse workforce.

Applicant eligibility

- Applications can be submitted by By and For Organisations only, as per the definition outlined in [2.b Who is this call for?](#)
- Programmes must be delivered within England.
- Applicants must be willing and have the capacity to fully participate in the capacity building activities of this programme.
- Applicants need to have adequate organisational stability so you can participate in the full duration of the funding call, with considerations for any contingency measures needed in the event of any timeline changes.

3.5. Applicant support

Webinars

We will be hosting a series of webinars for any interested applicants to learn more about this funding opportunity. The sessions will provide a short overview of the aims of the call, the application process, what we're looking for, and offer a chance to ask questions.

Date	Time	Registration links
24 June 2026	14:00 – 15:00	Webinar #1
8 July 2026	14:00 – 15:00	Webinar #2



5 August 2026	14:00 – 15:00	Webinar #3
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Webinar 1 will be recorded and shared following the event, along with a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document if there are a significant number of questions raised.

FAQs

In addition, please submit any questions you have about the funding call or your application to programmes@foundations.org.uk. Please include the reference '[DA13.B Strand 2](#)' in your subject heading, and we will aim to get back to applicants within 3 working days.

We are happy to discuss any questions about eligibility criteria, the application form or the process. To ensure fairness and transparency we will share all responses through a regularly updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document on our website, without including any identifying information about applicants.

The FAQ document will be updated regularly on the funding page of our website, so please do check back periodically.

Assessment

We will review expressions of interest to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, and suitability against the aims of the evaluation. We intend to provide feedback to applicants invited to second stage to help tailor their full application or to explain where an application was not taken forward.

During this stage, we may reach out to applicants to discuss their submissions. While we cannot provide direct assistance with applications, there may be instances where we seek to learn more about a proposed programme or its context.