

Programme Advisory Group on Alcohol

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

RESEARCH ON YOUNG PEOPLE, ALCOHOL AND LOCALITY

As part of our programme on drinking cultures among young people, we wish to fund one study focusing on the influence of 'locality' on the drinking and drinking cultures of young people aged 15-24.

Background

The JRF Programme Advisory Group on Alcohol (formerly the Alcohol Research Committee) has been set up to fund research and development in the alcohol field. The PAGA's overall aim is to:

Collect and use evidence to contribute to halting or reversing negative drinking cultures and patterns among young people in the UK in order to reduce problems or harm.

Hitherto, the research funded under this programme has focused on young people who drink – and the influences on their drinking – with the ultimate aim of considering what interventions might impact on young people's drinking cultures. To this end, we have funded two research projects on family influences, three on peer influences (including one with a strong focus on ethnicity); one project on media influences (including depictions of celebrities); and a survey examining the impact of multiple influences. However, we are aware that much may also be learned from understanding the role that locality plays in determining the drinking and drinking cultures of young people.

As with all the work funded by the Foundation, we wish to emphasise that there is a practical purpose to this work: ultimately, we want this

research to help us to identify what actions or interventions are most likely to have an impact on preventing or reversing harmful drinking cultures and patterns in the UK.

Reflecting the Foundation's central concerns, the PAGA programme includes a strong focus on socio-economic status, gender and ethnicity. We therefore expect proposals to address these issues, and where relevant, for the research to be designed to explore the impact of these factors.

Young People, Alcohol and Locality

National and local statistics on alcohol consumption provide a clear picture of regional and local variations in alcohol consumption and harmful patterns of consumption throughout the UK. Statistics indicate, for instance, that in the North of England, people drink more and at more harmful levels than in the South East (NHS Information Centre, National Statistics on Alcohol: England, 2008). Local profiles produced by the North West Public Health Observatory, map and compare the distribution of alcohol-related harms across local authorities in England, again demonstrating considerable differences.

(<http://www.nwph.net/alcohol/lape/index.htm>.) There are also a number of qualitative studies which examine drinking cultures in different settings and localities as well as among different social groups, highlighting the importance for policy and practice of national, regional and local drinking cultures (e.g. Jarvinen and Room 2007).

Other studies have looked specifically at 'micro' settings such as city centres and particular pubs or venues (e.g. identified 'hot-spots') and considered ways in which changing the immediate drinking environment inside and outside these venues might help to control and prevent problematic drinking behaviour (e.g. Graham and Homel 2008). The drinking habits and 'cultures' of underage young people – and their use of public spaces such as parks – has also been the subject of enquiry and has raised questions regarding the need for appropriate alternative activities especially in areas underserved by suitable, affordable leisure opportunities (e.g. Honess, Seymour and Webster 2000).

Clearly, locality seems to matter when it comes to drinking and drinking behaviour. However, international research, as well as research conducted in the UK, has led to debates regarding the emergence of a youth drinking culture which transcends gender, socio-economic differences, nationality and locality differences and is breaking away from traditional drinking cultures of older generations. We would expect this body of work to inform the research questions and design of the new study.

Aims of the study

This research is intended to explore the relationship between locality and the drinking cultures of young people age 15-24.

Research questions might include:

- What is the role of locality in the emergence, continuation of, or change in, youth drinking cultures?
- Can we talk about a youth culture any more than we can talk about a culture linked to 'locality'?
- How stable or changing are local drinking cultures?
- To what extent are differences in drinking cultures linked to differences in demographic variables such as population mobility, socio-economic conditions of the area, the provision of recreational and occupational opportunities for young people, population characteristics, such as numbers and types of immigrant groups, the dominance of particular occupations now or in the past (e.g. such as mining, shipbuilding, textiles at one time) or the level of unemployment?
- To what extent is there generational transmission of drinking cultures and is this breaking down?
- How might variable drinking patterns linked to 'locality' be addressed in policy and practice?

Methods

The definition of 'locality' is open and may include examination at country, regional or local levels – including, for example, quite small, defined areas such as a housing estate, different neighbourhoods within a town, or different drinking settings and venues. Applicants may

consider samples which focus solely on the target group of 15-24 year olds or may consider including families/ older generations to explore the transition of drinking cultures to young people along with the influence of locality characteristics.

We expect quantitative and qualitative approaches will be incorporated into the successful project, but are keen that this research should go beyond the description of broad quantitative relationships between young people's drinking cultures and locality measures. We expect the work to adopt a range of qualitative approaches which will look in depth at young people's drinking and examine the main drivers of drinking cultures (and change in drinking cultures) in the 15-24 age group. This might also include a 'life stages' or 'biographical trajectory' approach or other means to understanding the dynamics of change in youth drinking cultures as related to age.

A review of relevant literature is expected as part of this work and should inform the design and research questions although it should not be a primary focus.

Policy and practice implications

As stated above, the ultimate aim of this programme is to identify ways of impacting on negative drinking cultures among young people. We therefore want this research to provide insights into how local communities, local authorities, educational or occupational facilities or other local or regional organisations, as well as national policy approaches, might address issues related to 'locality' based influences on the emergence and continuation of harmful drinking cultures.

Resources and number of projects

A maximum of **£150k** is available under this call for proposals and we expect to fund **a single project** with this sum.

Timescale

We want this project to start early next year (2010) and be conducted over a period no longer than 18 months.

HOW TO APPLY

It is essential that you read the [How to apply for funding](#) section of our website before submitting your proposal.

Criteria used in considering proposals

In considering proposals, the following key criteria are taken account of:

- the importance and relevance of the topic to the Foundation's priorities;
- the relevance of the proposal to the research brief in the call for proposals;
- whether the work will offer new insights or developments;
- the appropriateness of the methods proposed to the aims of the project (for research projects, this includes research design, data collection and analysis);
- demonstration of good knowledge of the area, including both research literature and the policy and practice context;
- the ability of the staff and organisation to carry out the work and complete on time;
- the policy and practice implications of the project;
- an appropriate approach to dissemination;
- race equality and appropriate supported involvement of people with direct experience, where appropriate; and
- priority within available funds and value for money.

Judgements about proposals are made on the basis of what is written down. Some proposals are turned down because the Foundation cannot give the topic sufficient priority even though the proposal is well thought out and presented. In other cases, strong proposals may be rejected simply because, on balance, another is found to be even stronger. But proposals are most often rejected because insufficient information has

been provided about key aspects or there is a lack of clarity about what is planned.

The [Application Guidelines](#) contain all the information and documents you will need to complete your application. **Please note** that in exceptional circumstances the Foundation may wish to interview shortlisted teams.

You may also find it helpful to [read this guidance](#).

SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

THREE sets of the following documents are required:

Proposal registration form
Summary
Proposal
Budget form
Staff Costs forms
Full CVs for all Proposers

These should be sent to:
Nancy Kelley
Assistant Director of Policy and Research
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
The Homestead
40 Water End
York YO30 6WP

Please also **email** the **Summary and Proposal** to Christine Appleton – christine.appleton@jrf.org.uk.

**THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF
HARD COPY AND EMAIL DOCUMENTATION IS
2 PM ON WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Please note that this is a strict deadline. Amendments or additions to the proposal sent after this date will not be accepted.

If you wish to discuss any of the details of the proposed work, Nancy Kelley, Assistant Director of Policy and Research can be contacted on 01904 615944 or by email nancy.kelley@jrf.org.uk.
Administrative queries: please contact Christine Appleton on 01904 615911 or email christine.appleton@jrf.org.uk.