

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

What do older people with high support needs want and value from life? Involving older people in shaping 'A Better Life'

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) wants to commission a process to involve older people with high support needs (and potentially others) to inform and advise JRF on a new and ambitious programme of work. The deadline for receipt of full proposals is 12 noon on **Tuesday 24 November 2009** for decision by 18 December.

Background

The Foundation has embarked on a major new programme of work (2009 – 2013), 'A Better Life', the central question of which is: **How can we ensure a better life and better choices for older people who need high levels of support?**

Definitions: Older people of any age who need a lot of support associated with physical frailty, chronic conditions and/or multiple impairments (including dementia). Most will be over 85 years old. A minority will be younger, perhaps reflecting the impact of other factors linked to poverty, disadvantage, nationality, ethnicity, lifestyle, etc. Equally, some of the very oldest people may never come into this category.

The 'Better Life' programme has three main strands: **Residential and Nursing Care** (which is a partnership with *My Home Life* about improving quality of life in existing care homes), **Housing with Care** (which will explore how housing with care can enable older people who have, or who develop, high support needs to continue to enjoy a good quality of life), and **Alternative Approaches** (which aims to identify alternative approaches to support, housing and community).

The brief

The Foundation is committed to involving older people with high support needs – particularly those whose voices are least heard – in shaping, informing and advising on the programme – alongside others with relevant insights and experience (e.g. younger people, including working-age adults who have high/complex support needs, given that the programme needs to speak to what future generations as well as current generations want and value in old age as/when they develop high support needs).

Whilst the Foundation has a good track record in promoting involvement, we recognise that the involvement of a range of different older people with high support needs (including older people with experience of particular discrimination and disadvantage, older people with complex and/or cognitive and/or communication support needs) will be challenging. It is also essential to the success and credibility of the whole programme.

Therefore, we want to commission a team to work with a diverse range of older people with high support needs (current and future generations) and with the Foundation in order to ensure that older people with high support needs are at the heart throughout this important programme.

Governance and where this work fits

We see this project as **advisory** to the Foundation and the JRF programme on 'A Better Life', working particularly closely with the JRF Programme Managers and Programme Team – as well as with partners and projects commissioned through the different strands of the 'Better Life' programme. It will be one part – and a crucial part – of a range of people and mechanisms providing advice to JRF and we will want to find ways of making links across these (e.g. a Programme Advisory Group, *ad hoc* groups/advisers as required).

Aims and objectives:

- To involve older people *with high support needs* – including those whose voices are least heard, and who experience particular disadvantage or discrimination, and with a mind to future as well as current generations, to:
 - 1) Define the ‘framework’ for the programme – that is: what do current and future generations of people who have or develop high support needs in their old age *want and value from life* (building on what is already known about quality of life/outcomes);
 - 2) Advise the Foundation throughout the programme to keep it grounded in the realities of people’s lives and experiences;
 - 3) Guide the selection of the ideas and approaches which emerge from the three strands (Residential and Nursing Care, Housing with Care, Alternative Approaches) –which the Foundation will then develop into recommendations for change.
- To involve *a range of* older people with high support needs, prioritising people whose voices may be particularly unheard and whose lives and experiences may be particularly ignored (recognising that the population of people with high support needs in old age is already more heterogeneous than often portrayed, and likely to become still more so in the future).
- To support and challenge the Foundation and our partners (e.g. partners and projects funded under the different strands of this programme) to ensure the programme is grounded in and respectful to the involvement of people with high support needs.

Methods

We are open to a range of relevant methodologies and approaches, building on best practice in involvement and participation.

We would expect the proposed methods to be: imaginative, ethical, respectful, 'on their terms' (responsive to the individual wishes of the older people involved), inclusive (including in relation to communication expertise), accessible, effective and worthwhile from the perspective of the older people who agree to be involved.

We are open to supporting partnership projects (as it is likely that no one organisation will have the full range of expertise and networks required for this challenging project).

Whilst we recognise that this will need to be a developmental and experimental process, albeit within set budget and time constraints, we would nonetheless invite proposers to set out clearly and fully how they would anticipate approaching this work, and what existing experience and expertise they would draw on to ensure success.

Proposers should address the following questions in their proposal:

1. What past work (your own or by others) would the project team build on in relation to setting the 'framework' for the programme (one framework to cover all three strands) – that is: what older people with high support needs *want and value from life*?

Please note: We ourselves have struggled with language here ('framework', 'benchmark', 'standards'). What we are interested in is *something* (this could equally be words, stories or images) that can be used by the JRF in commissioning and in supporting other projects in the programme – so that the evidence they generate (about housing with care, about residential care, about other approaches to community, housing, support) *reflects and builds on* what current and future generations of older people

with high support needs want and value from life. The same 'framework' (words, stories, etc) would be used towards the end of the programme – so that policy and practice ideas with the potential to turn into recommendations are also measured by their potential to deliver what older people want and value.

2. What would be your proposed approach to meeting the aims and objectives set out above – a realistic approach within the budget available (£95k inclusive of VAT over 5 yrs).
3. What past experience (of the lead proposer and key partners) would the project team be able to draw on to inform this approach?
4. Which older people with high support needs would the project team prioritise – thinking about those whose voices are least heard? How would you identify and involve them? What would the 'payback' for their time and involvement be? What support would you provide to ensure involvement is 'on their terms'? How would you address the inevitable issue of 'attrition' - i.e. as those involved near the start of the programme may no longer be alive or able to contribute towards the end, how will you record and 'keep alive' the involvement they have had?
5. How would you go about 'future-proofing' the framework, i.e. so it is relevant for future generations as well as current generations of people who have (or develop) high support needs in their old age?
6. What do you think are the key challenges and risks presented by this project, and how would you anticipate addressing these?
7. In what ways would this project be directly useful to your own (and your partners', if any) work? (Given that this is over a long period of time, it seems important that it offers some other

‘payback’ – over and above financial reimbursement - to all those involved – from older people to the contractors).

Budget

A maximum of **£95k inclusive of VAT** is available for this work – to run throughout the programme (end 2009 – end 2013). Proposers should submit a detailed budget breakdown, using the JRF Budget Form and guidance.

Please note: We know that a project of this nature will be organic and developmental, and therefore it is hard to predict the budget exactly. We are accustomed to supporting flexibility *within* the agreed budget (e.g. viring money between headings or across years). At this stage, it is important for us to have a clear sense from your proposed budget about the *likely* use of resources (including staff time, payback for those involved, etc) to help in assessing tenders received.

Milestones and outputs

Proposed milestones and outputs for the work are set out below:

- 1) **By 1st March 2010:** To produce a short, accessible review briefly setting out what is already known (e.g. from the ESRC Growing Older Programme) about older people’s definitions of what they want and value from life – being clear about where these have been defined by or validated by older people themselves, and which older people (i.e. marginalised or more ‘mainstream’ groups).
- 2) **By 1st June 2010:** To produce a first draft ‘framework’ which builds on the review *as well as the direct voices of different older people with high support needs* involved by the programme – in order to guide the Foundation’s decisions about priorities for new research/development in 2010.

- 3) **By 1st December 2010:** To produce the final version of the “framework” for the *Better Life* programme – which will be shared with research teams supported by the Foundation, and with the programme’s other advisors, and against which ideas and approaches generated through the programme will be measured.
- 4) **During 2011:** In negotiation with the Foundation, to identify and undertake ways of involving older people with high support needs as a ‘sounding board’ for ideas and approaches that are emerging through projects supported by the Foundation. (We have no preconceived ideas as to how this should be done).
- 5) **During 2012:** In negotiation with the Foundation, to identify and undertake ways of involving older people with high support needs to ‘sift’ through the ideas and approaches generated by the completing research/development projects – to identify the ‘front-runners’ that should then be developed into costed recommendations for change.
- 6) **During 2013:** To identify and support ways of involving older people with high support needs in the final ‘communicating and influencing’ stages of the programme (for which additional resources would be available at this stage).

How to apply

There will be a single stage process. Full proposals must be submitted by **12.00 noon on Tuesday 24 November**. Please use the [guidance and forms available on the JRF website](#) for applying to the Foundation – but making sure to address the specific questions below in your proposal. **Given the unusual and challenging nature of this call, we are happy for you to call us to discuss the brief (without prejudice on either side).**

Proposals should **address the specific questions highlighted in the brief above**, and should also include details on:

- A detailed budget breakdown (whilst accepting that monies may need to be vired across headings during the life of the project)
- The contractor's (and partners' if a partnership proposal) experience and credentials in relation to the brief (please do not send an academic CV) – in particular: we are looking for proposals from people with a track record of involving older people with high support needs and working within a social model of disability (or equivalent).
- Assurance of capacity to deliver given the budget and time restrictions based on:
 - A clear, plausible and realistic approach to the brief
 - A detailed budget, including number of days allocated, rates charged and any additional costs

The proposals will be considered by two Programme Managers, Assistant Director and Director of Policy and Research, and an independent external assessor. A decision will be made by Friday 18 December 2009 so that work can commence early in January 2010.

The proposal should be emailed to Phillipa Fairburn at phillipa.fairburn@jrf.org.uk, who will acknowledge receipt by e-mail as soon as possible. We do not need hard copies.

Timetable

Deadline for receipt of proposals. Requests for an extension to this deadline cannot be considered.	12.00 noon on Tuesday 24 November 2009
Notification of selected contractors:	Friday 18 December 2009

Key contacts:

Phillipa Fairburn will also be able to direct other queries to relevant JRF staff. Phillipa.Fairburn@jrf.org.uk Tel: 01904 615967