Test and Learn grant funding for Health Anchors Learning Network (HALN) participants

Frequently asked questions

Below are the questions and answers that have come through to the anchors team and/or were asked in the information call on 15 September 2021

Eligibility

1.0   *Why is funding only open to anchor institutions, i.e., NHS trusts, Health and Social Care Trusts, NHS Boards and Local Health Boards? Can Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) apply for funding? Can other non-health anchor institutions apply? Why not?*

We know that lots of other systems and organisations have a key role to play in anchor action, but this is a relatively small funding programme and the first one we have done to support NHS anchor work. Therefore, we have initially focused on trusts and boards where there is opportunity and learning to deliver anchor work.

Applications must be made by the NHS trust or primary care organisation, or the equivalent board in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We welcome applications that are in partnership; trusts and boards need to be lead applicant, but we are keen to see applicants working with other organisations and adding value across places. We are particularly interested in projects that show how they will link in with their integrated care system (ICS - England) / integrated care partnership (Northern Ireland) / integration joint board (Scotland) / regional partnership boards (Wales).

2.0   *Why do you need to be a participant of the HALN?*

The funding available is part of the Health Foundation and NHS England and NHS Improvement's broader programme of work to develop the capacity and capability of anchor institutions to develop anchor practice, share and spread learning. The HALN is part of that programme alongside this funding opportunity. By connecting the funding opportunity and the HALN, the learning from the network can support anchor work in practice, and the learning from the funded projects can benefit HALN participants, and therefore increase the impact and reach of both.

3.0   What does being a 'HALN participant' mean? I'm a member of FutureNHS, does that count? I've been to a HALN event, does that count?

At a minimum, being a 'HALN participant' means signing up to the HALN newsletter. If you have been to a HALN event and / or are part of the FutureNHS space, that is great but please sign up to the newsletter as that is what we will be checking eligibility against. You don't have to be a participant for any set amount of time. We are looking for projects that build on current HALN learning and / or how it fills any learning gaps not yet covered by the HALN or by other networks / organisations.

4.0   Can an anchor network apply?

If the lead applicant is an NHS Trust (England), Health and Social Care Trust (Northern Ireland), NHS Board (Scotland) and Local Health Board (Wales), yes.

5.0   Can we submit partnership applications with other trusts?

Yes, but please name only one organisation as the lead applicant.

6.0   Can a project be longer than 9 months? How can a short-term project of 6-9 months support a long-term anchor ambition?

If the HALN Test and Learn grant funding is supporting a longer-term project, then yes that longer-term initiative can be more than 9 months. Equally if you have match funding (where your organisation or another partner is contributing to the funding of this work), then it can be used for longer projects. However, final reporting and learning must be shared with the network in 2022 so Test and Learn grant-funded projects need to meet this requirement, even if it is part of a longer-term initiative or workstream.

Selection criteria

7.0   What do you mean by 'long term anchor ambition'? We're only just at the beginning of our anchor journey and don't have a long-term ambition yet, can we apply?

The Health Foundation's 2019 report *Building healthier communities: the role of the NHS as an anchor institution* speaks about anchors adopting more intentional and conscious anchor strategies. What we mean by this is doing this work purposefully so that it's not a one-off project or a 'tick-box' exercise. That said, as outlined in the guidance, we know that not all places have articulated strategies and visions for their anchor work, but we want to see how this project might catalyse that to happen.

8.0   What is an anchor project? We are doing work but currently call it community wealth building, does that count? Would a social value project count?

We know the definitions for what is or isn't anchor work can be fuzzy and not everyone uses the term 'anchor', but essentially it is leveraging the substantial assets of trusts to benefit the health and wellbeing of local communities, that **isn't** providing direct health services or clinical care. If your work does this but is called social value or community wealth building (or another equivalent term), then those projects would be welcome to apply.

9.0   What do you mean by 'new' approaches and learning? What does 'test new approaches' mean?

We know it may be difficult to know what anchor work has already happened across the UK, but in the guidance, 'new' learning is defined in three ways:

- test a **new and innovative anchor approach**;
- implement existing or known anchor initiatives in a **new context**; or
- test and use a **unique approach to an existing or known anchor activity** where the practical 'how to' learning will benefit others.

Submitted questions

10.0   Can you say more about the level of reporting and other requirements? I can see there is an expectation about contributing to learning and a report.

Learning is a key part of this programme and we want to support teams to do this in a way throughout the projects that is helpful for the teams as well as the HALN, but also proportionate to the size of the project and grant funding. Details are being finalised as it also depends on how projects want to share their learning and draw on the HALN. At a minimum, there will be a final report at the end to capture feedback and learning. We usually ask for these to be quite short and draw out the key points from the projects.

11.0   Can you also say more about what will be expected for full application?

The full application will ask you to expand on your expression of interest, asking for further information about the need you are hoping to address, how progress will be measured, how work will be resourced and a more detailed project plan. The full application will be assessed against the same criteria outlined in the guidance in section four. We may also invite applicants who have submitted a full application for an informal interview to discuss their project.

12.0   What extent of collaboration with other partners would be recommended?

The guidance is clear that we want participants to collaborate and engage communities and to collaborate with other partners. Partnership is a key pillar of being an anchor institution. The extent to which you collaborate with others depends on your project and local need.

13.0   How does the Health Foundation view temporary employment of a member of staff (non-permanent role) for a grant application if the aim of the anchors programme is to improve access to good/fair work? Can this fund recruitment or a specific post?

Employment is one of the anchor pillars, however the project would still need to meet the other funding criteria i.e. how would this employment contribute new learning, support a longer term anchor ambition and contribute to reducing health inequalities? We will not be funding projects that do not meet the wider funding criteria. To see more about examples of projects we are seeking to fund, please see section 5 of the grant guidance.

14.0   What is the expectation around sustainability?

In terms of sustainability, we are realistic about what projects can achieve with this grant funding. This is why we are encouraging projects that connect to a broader anchor ambition and that have a collaborative approach to build in sustainability. Projects should demonstrate how the learning or outputs of the work will hopefully lead on to something else, whether directly or indirectly.

15.0   Will there be any assessors on interview panellists outside of the Health Foundation, NHS England and NHS Improvement with a community development / third sector background?

For the expressions of interest, assessors will be from the Health Foundation and NHS England and Improvement. For the full applications, we will invite external assessors to look at the applications, including VCSE organisations and HALN participants.

16.0   Can an organisation submit more than one EOI?

Within the guidance we have said that only one expression of interest should be submitted from each organisation.

17.0   How will evaluation of the projects be done and given the short delivery time - will projects that demonstrate sustainability beyond the 9 months be viewed more favourably?

It is unlikely the projects will be formally evaluated due to the size of the grant and it will be a pragmatic approach. Award holders may be invited to participate in the broader HALN evaluation which is currently being undertaken by SQW. We are currently finalising the requirements of reporting but as a minimum, it will be by means of a final report to capture the key learning and impact. See question 14 for further details on sustainability.

18.0   Do you have the application from in a word document as this will be easier to fill out?

We are only accepting applications via Salesforce-Grants, however we do understand that it may be helpful to see the questions beforehand and these can be found in section 8 of the guidance along with the word limits.

Please refer to the Salesforce-Grants guidance or get in touch if you have further questions.

19.0   Looking at section 8.2 of the HALN test and learn funding guidance document, alongside the online form in the applicant portal, there are differences in the number of words allowed per question. For several questions, the guidance suggests 300 words are recommended, while the online form indicates 500 words could be available.

Please follow the recommended word limit in the guidance when completing the online form. The online form is one that we use for all Health Foundation expressions of interest, and so we have noted the number of words we would recommend for each question in the guidance.

You won't be ineligible if you go above the word count that we noted in the guidance, but we have used it as an indication of where we think the weighting of your application should be and the time spent on each question.