

Evaluation of the Shaping Places for Healthier Lives (SPHL) programme

The Health Foundation is seeking a supplier to work with us to deliver the evaluation of the Shaping Places for Healthier Lives programme

Invitation to tender, May 2021

Prepared by

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Deadline date: 13.00, Friday 9 July 2021

Accompanying documents

- SPHL programme governance map
- Summary of stage 3 applications
- Sample contract
- Sample tender response form
- AIMS user guide

1.0 Summary

In 2019, the Health Foundation and the Local Government Association (LGA) launched the Shaping Places for Healthier Lives (SPHL) programme. Its purpose is to fund five council-led partnership projects aiming to make changes to local systems of wider determinants of health to support better physical and mental health, which will be sustained beyond the lifetime of the 3-year grant programme. We expect to announce the successful projects in summer 2021.

We plan to evaluate the programme and make full use of the lessons learnt from the programme about local systems approaches to health, as well as about the specific themes of the five projects. The evaluation should enable the Foundation and the LGA to:

- identify mechanisms that facilitate or obstruct the development and sustainability of cross-sector partnerships to tackle the wider determinants of health through system-wide action
- understand how systems approaches are delivered in practice, including the barriers and enablers associated with setting up and implementing these approaches
- make sure the project teams have a better understanding of applying systems approaches to tackle the wider determinants of health during the lifetime of the programme
- draw out learning from both the design and delivery of the programme, especially core principles and elements which could be applied in other contexts.

We are looking for an evaluation team (or consortium) to evaluate the five projects and the programme as a whole. The project-level work will analyse and inform system-wide action across local systems that the five project teams take during the lifetime of the programme. The programme-level elements of the evaluation will draw together learning from across the five projects about systems approaches to the wider determinants of health, as well as informing how we fund similar programmes in the future.

This work is being commissioned through an open tendering process. The successful team will be appointed in July 2021, ideally with the ability to start soon afterwards.

We anticipate bids of **up to £250,000 (inclusive of VAT and expenses)**.

Applicants must complete their application on an online portal called AIMS (aims.health.org.uk). Please familiarise yourself with AIMS as quickly as possible, as we may not be able to respond in a timely fashion to any technical queries as the deadline for application nears.

The deadline to submit proposals is 13.00 on Friday 9 July 2021.

2.0 About us

The Health Foundation is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and health care for people in the UK.

Our aim is a healthier population, supported by high quality health care that can be equitably accessed. We learn what works to make people's lives healthier and improve the health care system. From giving grants to those working at the front line to carrying out research and policy analysis, we shine a light on how to make successful change happen.

We make links between the knowledge we gain from working with those delivering health and health care and our research and analysis. Our aspiration is to create a virtuous circle, using what we know works on the ground to inform effective policymaking and vice versa.

We believe good health and health care are key to a flourishing society. Through sharing what we learn, collaborating with others and building people's skills and knowledge, we aim to make a difference and contribute to a healthier population.

3.0 Background to the SPHL programme

In November 2019, we launched a new grant programme in collaboration with the LGA to explore how coordinated action across systems of wider determinants of health can shape a place to help people live healthier lives. The programme was set up to support councils working with partners in their localities to change local systems of determinants of health and health related outcomes, and to be innovative in their implementation, with the long-term aim of improving health and reducing inequalities.

The objectives of the programme are to:

- mobilise cross-sector action on the wider determinants of health through sustainable system change at a local level
- support local authorities to facilitate and enable local partnerships for system change on the wider determinants of health
- learn how to make changes that impact on the wider determinants of health so that learning can be shared.

The challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic have led to delays in the application process, but all three stages of the application process have now been completed (as shown in the table below). Following a review of the stage 3 applications, we expect to make awards in summer 2021.

Application stage	Outcome
Stage 1	110 expressions of interest were submitted by English councils.
Stage 2	32 councils were provided with some design and systems support to submit a stage 2 application.

Stage 3	14 councils undertook a 'discovery phase' – receiving further design and systems support and up to £20,000 development funding to submit a stage 3 application (see document: Summary of stage 3 applications).
Selection	Five council-led partnerships will be awarded up to £300,000 each to implement their system approach over the next 3 years.

From November 2021, the five project teams will have 3 years of funding to make sustainable changes to local systems that affect the health-related issues specified in their projects. These changes will be consistent with improved population health and reduced health inequalities in their localities.

The programme is being managed by a Programme Working Group (PWG – chaired by the LGA) and the project teams will be supported to implement their systems approaches by a Delivery Support Partner (DSP – to be commissioned by the LGA). In addition, a learning network will be formed by the project teams, with support from the DSP, to share learning across the five projects and more widely (see document: SPHL programme governance map).

4.0 Details of the work

4.1 Aim

The purpose of the evaluation is to enable the Foundation and the LGA to:

- identify mechanisms that facilitate or obstruct the development and sustainability of cross-sector partnerships to tackle the wider determinants of health through system-wide action
- understand how systems approaches are delivered in practice, including the barriers and enablers associated with setting up and implementing these approaches
- make sure the project teams have a better understanding of applying systems approaches to tackle the wider determinants of health during the lifetime of the programme
- draw out learning from both the design and delivery of the programme, especially core principles and elements which could be applied in other contexts.

4.2 Evaluation questions

Indicative project-level questions

- How effectively are the project teams and their partners managing to work together?
More specifically:
 - What are the barriers and enablers of effective collaboration between the partners?
 - Are the project partnerships likely to continue after the 3-year funding period, and why/why not?
- How are the project teams delivering change on the ground?
 - Are the project teams learning how system-wide action can influence health/health inequalities in their localities?

- What are the challenges and benefits that are emerging for the teams as they implement systems approaches?
- What are the project teams and their local partners doing differently as a result of the programme? More specifically:
 - How are they adapting the programme and their approach over time?
 - Are the local partnerships adapting their practices and processes in line with the principles of the programme (eg systems thinking and taking a complex systems approach)?

We have been explicit with SPHL programme applicants that we do not expect to see changes in health outcomes in the 3-year funded period. Instead, we want them to effect changes in the relevant systems of determinants to create suitable conditions for longer-term improvements in these outcomes, demonstrating through their theories of change how they hypothesise these changes will lead to longer-term improvements in health and health inequalities.

Indicative programme-level questions

- Which elements from each project can we spread (or scale up) through future guidance (eg mechanisms through which system-wide action can influence health/health inequalities)?
- How are the project teams experiencing the programme?
- How are the programme objectives being understood and turned into action by the project teams and their partners (eg is there a shared understanding of systems approaches)?
- What resources and conditions are supporting the projects to meet their objectives and, conversely, what is missing?
- How are the interactions between the project teams and other programme groups changing/influencing the interventions proposed for each project site?
- What is the ongoing learning, including unintended consequences?

4.3 Approach and methods

The evaluation partner will need to be able to maintain a flexible approach to the delivery of this evaluation for the duration of the programme. This will be particularly important in the early stages of the evaluation, as some projects will be starting from different points and are likely to develop at different paces.

There is a need to balance rigorous evaluation with an approach that builds in the need to learn and adapt as the projects progress and systems change. Prospective evaluation partners should therefore be familiar with both developmental and formative approaches, as these are likely to be suitable for the project-level evaluation.

As part of this approach, we expect the design of the evaluation to apply systems thinking to:

- understand the interrelationships underpinning each project intervention
- engage with the perspectives of the multiple stakeholders involved in each project
- reflect on choices about systems boundaries and points of intervention (what is included/not included in each approach).

Because we are dealing with complex systems, actions may have broad and possibly unintended consequences – both positive and negative. A systems perspective to evaluation design will take account of this and offer the potential to learn more about the dynamics of the system in question and how the local partnerships can better achieve their intent.

Prospective evaluation partners will need to be familiar with a range of evaluation methods and will need to think carefully about their feasibility and appropriateness in the context of this programme. For example, one of the defining data collection methods of developmental evaluations is to support reflective practice – reflecting on one’s contribution and role in relation to project-specific contexts and processes. We would expect the evaluation partner to facilitate reflective practice among the project teams in appropriate ways, avoiding duplication and overburdening partners.

At a programme level, we are keen to learn how systems approaches can be used to tackle the wider determinants of health through cross-sector action and how these approaches can be applied in other contexts.

The data collection and analysis for the programme-level evaluation should be structured around our working logic model, which represents the programme theory and assumptions and illustrates the causal pathways thought to be operating in the programme. We expect the evaluation partner to refine the logic model (which will be shared at inception) as the evaluation progresses.

By synthesising the learning from the individual projects, the programme-level evaluation should build understanding of how systems approaches can be put into practice, the challenges involved and facilitating factors, and the ability of such approaches to influence change in relation to the wider determinants of health.

The programme-level evaluation should also shed light on the contexts in which systems approaches could lead to effective action on the wider determinants of health (or conversely fail to gain traction) and how these may be applied to other areas of public health. Findings from the programme-level evaluation are intended to help other local authorities adapt and implement systems approaches to tackle health-related issues in other contexts.

As part of the overall evaluation design, we would expect the evaluation partner to capture all findings (including records of reflective practice) in line with agreed evaluation and learning frameworks. These findings should be presented back to the Foundation, the LGA and the project teams throughout the lifetime of the programme and formally through three annual reports – two learning reports and a final report.

4.4 Working with us

We are looking for an evaluation team or consortium who can work closely with the Foundation and our partners in the programme. We have outlined the key responsibilities of the key programme groups and the implications for the evaluation partner in the table below.

At the outset, the evaluation partner will work with the PWG and DSP to agree a set of principles for the conduct of the evaluations. These principles will form the basis of a mutually-agreed memorandum of understanding (MOU) which will guide our working relationships for the duration of the programme.

The evaluation partner will also need to develop a strong understanding of each project team’s plans. To support connections with the project teams, the evaluation partner and DSP will be expected to run evaluation workshops with the five project teams at the start of the programme. The workshops should enable the evaluation partner to:

- learn about the aims of each project in more depth
- introduce the programme-level theory of change to the project teams
- understand and help refine the theory of change for each project
- develop good working relationships between the project teams and the DSP.

The process and quality of engagement between the evaluation partner and the project teams is vital to the success of the evaluation. The evaluation partner should develop a good relationship with the five project teams and collectively agree on ways of working, ideally captured through one coherent MOU.

Programme group	Key responsibilities	Relationship with evaluation partner
Award holders/project teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain a systems map and theory of change for the project. • Capture data and learnings from the local-level interventions undertaken, in line with agreed evaluation and learning frameworks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the setup phase (Aug–Dec 2021), the evaluation partner will review the systems maps and theories of change produced by the project teams and suggest changes in line with the project objectives and programme theory of change. • At the end of the setup phase, the evaluation partner will develop and share evaluation and learning frameworks for the programme and projects. • The evaluation partner will be expected to address the project-level evaluation questions through regular dialogue with the project teams, examining and tracking the implications of adaptations and providing timely feedback on an ongoing basis (as close to real-time as possible). • Your proposal should outline how you expect to engage deeply with the project teams through regular contact and what form this contact will take (eg site visits, video conferencing, emails, etc).

<p>Delivery Support Partner (DSP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide practical expertise on partnership working and adopting complex systems approaches. • Use service design expertise and methodology. • Support councils throughout implementation, including individualised support to implement project-level systems maps and theories of change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation partner will provide appropriate feedback to the DSP (eg flagging common issues) to enable them to better support the project teams. • Your proposal should allow time for informal catch-ups with the DSP.
<p>Programme Working Group (PWG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission and manage the programme evaluation partner on behalf of the Foundation in order to achieve the evaluation objectives. • Resolve problems and manage risks related to the programme evaluation, escalating any issues to the Programme Steering Group. • Support the evaluation partner to liaise effectively with the DSP. • Lead on learning and dissemination of learnings from the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation partner will report directly to the PWG (comprising Foundation staff and LGA colleagues). • The work will be managed by the Foundation’s Research Manager, with strategic and content input provided mainly by the Foundation’s Programme Manager. • We will want to meet or speak with the evaluation partner regularly. Initially we anticipate holding fortnightly meetings online. • During the setup phase (Aug–Dec 2021), the evaluation partner will review the programmatic theory of change and suggest changes as appropriate. • We expect to hold monthly meetings in Year 1 of the programme (online or in person as appropriate) and bimonthly or quarterly meetings in Years 2 and 3 (online or in person as appropriate). • Any costs incurred for meetings should be factored into the budget.
<p>Technical Advisory Group (TAG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise the PWG on the quality and delivery of the programme evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation partner will be able to share challenges with, and receive advice from, the TAG.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise the DSP on complexity and systems thinking, and learning approaches. • Advise the evaluation partner on methods used in the programme and project-level evaluations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PWG will facilitate quarterly meetings between the TAG, the DSP and the evaluation partner in Year 1 of the programme. These may become less frequent in Years 2 and 3. • Any costs incurred for meetings should be factored into the budget.
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4.5 Intellectual property

In commissioning this work, the Health Foundation will own the intellectual property generated (please see the intellectual property clause in Schedule 6 of the sample contract).

5.0 Deliverables

The key deliverables expected of the evaluation partner are:

- Evaluation and learning frameworks, which identify data sources, research tools and frequency of data collection. The frameworks should also take into consideration any piloting required for the research tools. (The evaluation partner should consider establishing data sources, data permissions and timeframes, frequency of qualitative data collection and any other preparation for the evaluation. This will be reviewed and discussed with the PWG during the setup phase.)
- MOUs on ways of working with (a) the key programme groups and (b) the five project teams.
- Interim learning reports containing updates on progress, challenges and emerging themes at the end of years 1 and 2, which can be shared with key audiences (see below).
- A final report that synthesises the learning on establishing cross-sector partnerships to tackle the wider determinants of health through system-wide action. The final report should connect to the SPHL programme aims as outlined in section 3 and should be written to a high standard.
- Attendance at the launch event in 2021 (likely to be virtual) and a presentation at the programme close event in 2024.

6.0 Audiences and messaging

The key audiences for the evaluations are:

- the five project teams and their partners
- relevant teams at the Health Foundation
- relevant teams at the LGA
- decision-makers and system leaders in local government
- third sector organisations in, or looking to move into, the public health space
- the wider public health research community
- the wider evaluation research community
- other funders.

We will work closely with the evaluation partner to understand key messages (eg generalisable learnings from the specific approaches taken by the project teams) and to draw out the implications of the findings (eg implications for policymakers). We will also make sure that an outline communications plan accompanies the evaluation plans from the start and that this is fully developed through to completion.

Our aim in terms of dissemination is to provide outputs of interest to technical experts, as well as outputs useable by those in public health policy and practice who are research literate but time poor. We will work with the evaluation partner to consider different presentational options of the deliverables, as we are keen to make sure that this work supports our wider stakeholder engagement work.

We may also produce (in-house or through a commissioned independent writer) our own learning report based on the evaluation partner’s reports. If this is the case, we expect our evaluation partner to work with the writer to provide insight into the key findings and to give feedback on early drafts of the synthesised learning report.

We would also expect our evaluation partner to join us for any roundtable meetings with key stakeholders that may be necessary, to add to the debate about the findings and/or test and validate the findings.

Please make sure that your proposal makes reasonable allowance for the time required to fulfil these obligations with regard to dissemination at key points during the programme.

7.0 Key dates

7.1 For the tendering process

Milestone/activity	Date(s)
Release of invitation to tender (ITT)	21 May 2021
Information call	21 June 2021
Deadline for submissions	9 July 2021
Response to tender	21 July 2021
Interviews and selection	3 August 2021
Inception meeting	10 August 2021

7.2 For the SPHL programme evaluation

Milestone/activity	Date(s)
TAG – first meeting	September 2021

Workshops with project teams	October 2021
Programme launch event (virtual)	November 2021
Updated programme theory of change	November 2021
Updated project-level theories of change and systems maps	December 2021
Evaluation and learning frameworks	December 2021
Mutually-agreed MOUs	December 2021
Year 1 learning report	October 2022
Year 2 learning report	October 2023
Final report	October 2024

8.0 Costs

Responses to this invitation to tender (ITT) should include accurate pricing, inclusive of expenses and VAT. We will assess tender responses based on perceived quality of service and demonstrable ability to meet the brief, rather than lowest cost, but value for money is a selection criterion (see section 11).

Based on previous evaluations commissioned by the Health Foundation, we anticipate bids up to a **maximum of £250,000 (inclusive of VAT and expenses)**.

We will commission this research by issuing a contract for services and we expect VAT is likely to be payable on all aspects of the work. Please consult your contracting team or finance team to ensure that VAT has been included appropriately before submitting your proposal and budget.

9.0 Information call and FAQs

Information calls offer applicants the opportunity to hear more about the programme and ask questions to clarify understanding.

We will hold an information call from 16.00 to 17.00 on Monday 21 June. If you would like to attend, please register your interest by emailing us at sphl@health.org.uk. It is not mandatory, but you are encouraged to take part.

If you have any questions about the evaluation or the wider programme, please email them to us in advance of the information call if possible. Please note that we will not be able to answer specific technical questions about individual tender responses.

Our responses to these questions will be added to an FAQ document, which we will continually update until the ITT closes.

10.0 Tender response requirements

Prospective evaluation partners are requested to complete a tender response form on our online portal, AIMS (aims.health.org.uk). A PDF form is included as an example, but **do not** use this to submit your application – this can only be done online via AIMS.

You need to provide detailed information about your organisation, including:

- organisation name, address, registered address (if different) and website address
- description of the organisation's activities or services
- history and ownership
- organisational governance and management structure
- most recent company accounts.

Your tender response must include:

- detailed information on your proposed approach for the project-level and programme-level elements of the evaluation
- a summary of the experience of the key staff who will be involved in the project
- a tentative reporting schedule (to be refined during setup)
- costs, including a summary of the day rates and required days of those employed on the project, inclusive of VAT and expenses
- potential risks and your risk management approach
- any other relevant information the Foundation should consider
- the name of the primary contact and their contact details
- details of the team carrying out the work – names, roles and expertise relevant to the tender.

In addition, you must be able to provide:

- client references that include a list of comparable organisations to which you have supplied a similar service and a brief project description for each.
- a statement of your willingness to reach a contractual agreement that is fair and reasonable to both parties.

11.0 Selection criteria

The evaluation partner's competence in selecting and applying appropriate methods and measures for the evaluation of systems approaches, and appropriately and competently analysing and presenting the findings, will be the fundamental source of the evaluation's credibility.

The complexity of this evaluation means that the evaluation partner must be able to draw on a range of methods, which are appropriate to each challenge in each context. This would favour proposals from evaluation partners with a broad range of experiences and competencies.

The evaluation could also be undertaken by a lead evaluation partner who can draw upon a network of evaluation partners with different expertise and skills. We would welcome bids from consortia and partnerships. The evaluation could also be undertaken by a consortium

but there will need to be one lead provider to provide quality assurance and project oversight.

Requirements

The requirements for this ITT are:

- skills and expertise in relevant evaluation approaches and techniques
- understanding of systems approaches to intervention and evaluation
- knowledge and awareness of public health issues (an understanding of the role of local authorities in delivering public health would also be desirable)
- appropriateness of proposed methods
- appropriate project management, risk management and quality assurance expertise
- demonstrable capacity to deliver the evaluations on time, on budget and to the required standard, with proven ability to flex resource capabilities and adapt to changing environments where required
- ability to work collaboratively with a range of stakeholders
- strong communication skills
- value for money
- willingness to travel to project sites and programme events.

12.0 Selection process

Please complete the online tender response form on the AIMS system **by 13.00, Friday 9 July 2021**.

Please read the AIMS user guide before starting to complete the form. This is available on our website and via the form on the AIMS system.

A response to your application will be made by **21 July 2021**.

If you have any queries about the application process which are not addressed in this document, please email Hardeep Aiden (hardeep.aiden@health.org.uk) in the first instance. We will try to reply within one working day, making sure that relevant information is shared with all applicants.

Interviews will be held on **3 August 2021** via Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

It is important for prospective evaluation partners to demonstrate that the right calibre of staff would be managing the project from the outset. Therefore, we would encourage you to make sure that the core project team members are available for interview if you are shortlisted.

The exact start date will be agreed following the final decision, but we intend to have an inception meeting with the chosen evaluation partner **on 10 August 2021**.

13.0 Other information

The Foundation reserves the right to adjust or change the selection criteria at its discretion. The Foundation also reserves the right to accept or reject any and all responses at its discretion, and to negotiate the terms of any subsequent agreement.

This ITT is not an offer to enter into an agreement with the Foundation, it is a request to receive proposals from third parties interested in providing the deliverables outlined. Such proposals will be considered and treated by the Foundation as offers to enter into an agreement. The Foundation may reject all proposals, in whole or in part, and/or enter into negotiations with any other party to provide such services whether it responds to this ITT or not.

The Foundation will not be responsible for any costs incurred by you in responding to this ITT and will not be under any obligation to you with regard to the subject matter of this ITT.

The Foundation is not obliged to disclose anything about the successful bidders, but will endeavour to provide feedback, if possible, to unsuccessful bidders.

Your bid is to remain open for a minimum of 180 days from the proposal response date.

You may, without prejudice to yourself, modify your proposal by written request, provided the request is received by the Foundation prior to the proposal response date. Following withdrawal of your proposal, you may submit a new proposal, provided it is delivered before the original proposal response date.

Please note that any proposals received which fail to meet the specified criteria contained in it will not be considered for this project.

14.0 Confidentiality

By reading/responding to this document you accept that your organisation and staff will treat the information contained within it as confidential and will not disclose it to any third party without prior written permission being obtained from the Foundation.

15.0 Conflicts of interest

The Foundation's conflicts of interest policy describes how it will deal with any conflicts which arise as a result of the work which the charity undertakes. All external applicants intending to submit tenders to the Foundation should familiarise themselves with the contents of the conflicts of interest policy as part of the tendering process and declare any interests that are relevant to the nature of the work they are bidding for. The policy can be found and downloaded from the Foundation's website at the following location:

<https://www.health.org.uk/COI>.