Why The Ideas Fund?
Question & Answers February

Here are some of the questions and answers that were raised between our First webinar and workshops in February (see the video here and summary and reflection sheets here). If in any doubt, please don't hesitate to get in touch with The Ideas Fund or the Development Coordinators

Questions on links with researchers

"How much should the researcher already be involved in the community? Can I start finding connections now?"

"Can researchers volunteer to be matched up with a community organisation if they have an idea but no research links yet?"

"Would community members be matched with researchers, or do we have to submit an application that identifies who would carry out the research element?"

"Should the researchers be local to you or could they be from a national association?"

If you don't already have a researcher in mind, or need help in finding one, our Development Coordinators can help to play a role in linking you up. Similarly, if you are a researcher who would like to be involved, please contact the Development Coordinator in the relevant area to register your interest.

Please note that we are keen to help establish and support sustainable, long-term relationships between community groups and researchers and we believe this will be easier if researchers are local to the communities they are working with.

The link between the community and researcher/s should be in place by the time you submit your application.

Do remember that we are looking to support projects based on ideas coming from the communities themselves. Proposals that cannot demonstrate this are unlikely to be funded

"Can you define 'researcher' please. Should they be 'in post'?"

"Is this appropriate for undergraduates?"

A research professional could be someone currently working in a university, the NHS or for a health charity or social enterprise, or they could be an independent expert. The research professional will have a record of carrying out and publishing research; we are unlikely to support links with undergraduates through this funding.

Questions on project eligibility

"Is it ok for the lead organisation to work in the area but have an address outside the area?"

"Does the Hull funding also include the surrounding villages or is it strictly within the LA boundary?"

You can still apply if your address is outside the area, but the activities must take place within these areas, and you must be able to show that you have good links with the community who will benefit from the project.

Questions on project eligibility (cont'd)

The project activities must be delivered within the regions as defined on the 'About' page of our website:

Hull: The Hull City Council area

NW Northern Ireland: The Derry and Strabane District Council areas.

Oldham: The Oldham Metropolitan Borough areas.

Highlands & Islands: Highland Council, Moray Council, Comhairlenan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council), Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council, Argyll and Bute Council areas along with the Isles of Arran and Cumbrae.

"Is it important what type of organisation we are? When I looked at the criteria, it appeared that we would get a different answer depending on whether we were a charity or a community group. As an organisation run and managed by disabled people, we are a charity, company and a Disabled People's Organisation. I feel this means we would fit into the criteria, but it didn't appear that we could choose more than one option?"

We can accept applications from organisations registered in different ways, and from the description above, you would be eligible to apply to this Fund. What is important is that your project idea has come about from working with the community, and that you can demonstrate this.

"Are projects able to cross more than one area for this fund? Our community looking at this fund all live with a particular health condition and we were wondering if we could bring people from NW Northern Ireland and Highlands/Islands together through this?"

Please contact your Development Coordinator to discuss these ideas in more detail, so we can understand more about whether they are a fit for the Ideas Fund.

"Really interested in finding out about supporting young people to be involved (supported/trained) as peer researchers? And if that could be tested?"

"If we have 4 partners in place and a community researcher to help research the project idea further, should we apply directly for developed project funding?"

"Can individuals apply?"

Individuals can apply to the Fund, though you must be able to demonstrate that your project idea has been generated by working with the wider community. There will be additional due diligence steps to be undertaken if you are awarded a grant as an individual, and we may work with another organisation to manage the funding in these instances.

Questions on project eligibility (cont'd)

"What type of evidence would you expect to see from an established project looking to make a Developed Idea application?"

You could use a variety of evidence to support your application for a developed idea grant. This could include evidence of previous work that you have undertaken by building links with a researcher, that you would like to develop further, other monitoring or feedback reports from your community, or other reports that you have submitted to other funders. We will ask you for more information on the application form if you are choosing to apply for a developed idea. Please do contact your Development Coordinator to discuss your ideas in more detail.

"How important is it that a proposal works with a wide age range?

There is no requirement for proposals to work with a wide age range – they can work with a whole community (for example, within a village or across an estate), or supporting a specific age group (e.g. a project focused on supporting young people).

"What sort of outcomes and outputs are you looking for, it would really help shape our ideas at the moment? I understand the form isn't available but it would help at this stage of ideation."

The key outcomes for the Fund include exploring the benefits for communities and researchers in collaborating with each other, and understanding what new skills and relationships can be developed as a result, both for the community and the researcher. We're also interested to see how the engagement between researchers and community members can lead to direct impact for community members around their mental wellbeing. Please do contact your Development Coordinator to discuss your ideas in more detail.

"Can a researcher collect data for publishing papers that involve the community as participants?

"I run a CIC that's helping people with hidden disabilities (autism, ADHD and others) in Oldham. We have some limited feedback that the workshops we provide are improving wellbeing for children and their families. Would we be able to apply for a project to research into how the workshops affect families and how demand on local council services could be reduced as a result of the improved wellbeing?"

A key focus of the Ideas Fund is to build links between community groups and researchers. We will not fund projects where community involvement is limited to being participants in research.

Questions on working with a community

"Would you class schools as a community?"

"Can you clarify what you mean by a community a little more. Our community would be young people and the people who work with them. Is this ok?"

We are using quite a broad definition as to what a community could be, and so a project working with young people, and the people who support them could be eligible. However please note that we cannot fund activities which are mainly or solely delivered within schools or formal education settings.

"I represent a remote community who face the challenge of loneliness and isolation. We want to engage the community in outdoor activities. We are keen to explore how we can create a programme of activities that utilises our natural environment including our shoreline. How do we get a researcher? Do we need to have a track record of working in the community?"

Our Development Coordinators can help to play a role in linking community groups and researchers together. Please contact them to register your interest in the Fund. It is important that your project idea has come about through working with the community, and that you can demonstrate this.

Questions on mental wellbeing

"Is the fund interested in non-clinical therapeutic activities that benefit mental health and wellbeing? i.e. activities/programmes that are complementary to existing health/social services?"

"Can you explain what you mean by it is not about funding mental health interventions? What is the difference between this and the projects you will fund?"

We are using a broad definition of mental wellbeing for the purposes of this Fund:

"*You care about yourself and for yourself. You look after your physical and emotional health – by eating well, sleeping well, exercising, connecting with others and enjoying yourself. You can cope with the stresses of life and can work productively – whether that's in a job, in education or through chores and hobbies.*"

Thus therapeutic activities could be eligible for funding, however please note that we cannot fund the delivery of existing activities, or frontline services or interventions.

Additionally we cannot fund activities around the treatment of specific diagnoses or mental health conditions.

Questions on costs

"Will the funds awarded need to fund the university researchers as well as the community people? Will they be waiving their usual overheads?"

"Re the £25k fund – how do you quantify what that is spent on – in terms of I am assuming, facilitating the researchers?"

"Is the funding split between researchers and the actual project itself?"

"Would you require you to be the only funder or would you consider splitting costs of funding with another funder?"

The FAQ's section of our website outlines the costs that can be covered by the grant. These include associated costs for people who are essential to the project, including researchers. As we expect the grant to support communities to develop their ideas around mental wellbeing, it is likely that the majority of the grant would be spent in support of this, with a smaller proportion of the grant to be used to cover researcher costs. We'll look at this on a case-by-case basis; our Development Coordinators can help you think this through.

There is no requirement for the Ideas Fund to be the only funder of a project. However, if you are a researcher, the grant you are applying to should not be essential to any of your current research. Please also note that we cannot fund the ongoing delivery of existing activities.

Questions on geography

"The funding areas are quite specific – how have these areas been identified? i.e. We're from Oldham and were very grateful for the opportunity to apply for this fund, however, we just wanted to know why these areas have been targeted specifically."

The Ideas Fund is committed to connecting communities with researchers as well as diversifying the voices within health research. During the development of the Fund, it became clear that a targeted, place-based approach would be the most efficient way of achieving this goal. We're focusing on just four areas so we can test and learn from our new approach to funding, and so we chose areas with differing characteristics in terms of rurality, different types of community groups, etc. This will help us to explore the challenges and opportunities of supporting communities and researchers from different backgrounds, to work together in different settings.

Questions on the application process

"Are the reflection sheets to be part of the application, or are they simply part of the applicants' own reflective process?"

The reflection sheets are part of the applicant's own reflection to help them develop their idea - and could be a good prompt for conversations with Development Coordinators.

"With the deadline for applications being 14th May, what would be the latest start and end date for a project?"

We would hope to make decisions on projects in June and communicate these decisions during July. We'd expect projects to then start within three months of receiving a decision. There isn't a fixed end date for when projects need to be completed, however we expect projects for early-stage ideas to be around 6-9 months in length, and developed ideas to be around 12-18 months in length.

"If a project is initially funded for £25k, is there a plan/pathway to provide future developed project funding?"

We anticipate that there may be an opportunity for smaller projects to apply for further funding if they are successful. We expect to confirm any approach around this early next year.

"Will there be other opportunities to meet the development coordinators if we are unable to make the sessions next week?"

Yes, you can contact our Development Coordinators outside of the local workshops. You can find their details on our website.