

Q&A: Women's & Girls' Health: funding local prevention and early intervention initiatives EoI

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Attendees: Representatives from NHS Trusts, PCNs, VCSEs, and community organisations

A. Project Costing & Budget

- **Q:** What should be included in the project budget?
- **A:** All costs, including staffing, consumables, IT, admin (consider project management support especially when setting up a new service), and any additional costs with setting up a service. Consider sustainability after the pilot, as funding is one-off. Highlight any cost savings the project would bring and future funding sources beyond the pilot.

B. Admin & Set-Up

- **Q:** What admin costs should be considered?
- **A:** Do not overlook admin and project management time. These are essential for sustainability and often underestimated.

C. Start Dates & Timelines

- **Q:** How soon after submission will outcomes be known? When should projects start?
- **A:** Decisions within 1–2 weeks. Funding released quickly. Projects should start as soon as possible, but please be realistic with timelines factoring in mobilisation, recruitment etc. A project plan/timeline is helpful.

D. Timeline & Images

- **Q:** Can we include images or diagrams in the application?
- **A:** MS Forms only accepts text input (no images /diagrams), we designed the application process to be simple and straightforward. If images/diagrams are essential, contact the team separately.

E. Evaluation & Reporting

- **Q:** Can in-house evaluation be used instead of budgeted external evaluation?
- **A:** Yes, if you have in-house capacity, state this and note that it is not an additional project cost.

F. Age Range

- **Q:** Is the focus only on women aged 18–25, or can younger girls be included?
- **A:** The service spec covers ages 13 and above.

G. Partnership Requirements

- **Q:** Must applications involve two partner organisations? Can two VCSEs apply together? What about power imbalances?
- **A:** Applications must involve two or more partner organisations across sectors which means for e.g. an NHS organisation and a voluntary sector group, or an acute provider and primary care provider. One of the organisations must belong to the NHS and be able to deliver one of the eight core services.
- No, two VCSEs can't apply together as they will not be able to deliver any of the eight core services in the Women's Health Hub Service Specification.
- Across SEL, we have other initiatives which are focused in investing in VCSE organisations/partnerships outside of this EOI – for example, we have a 3-year funding initiative targeted towards building trust and confidence in underserved communities to support health creation and improve trust in preventative services and support. We also have funded VCSE partners in each of the boroughs where we have a women's and girls' health hub being piloted (Lambeth, Greenwich and Bexley) via our Local Authority partners in each of these boroughs.
- Power imbalances are recognised; early discussion and clear agreements are advised.

H. Finding Partners

- **Q:** What if we do not have an NHS partner yet?
- **A:** ICBs are legally responsible for how NHS money is spent, so they must clearly know who they are funding and working with. Listing your partners in the initial application helps make sure there is proper oversight, transparency, and accountability for public funds. We're very happy to help facilitate introductions to NHS organisations, as building these connections now will strengthen collaboration between the voluntary sector and NHS in line with the wider move toward integrated care.

I. Prevention Element

- **Q:** Is a prevention element required for all age groups?
- **A:** Yes, but it can be interpreted as early intervention for older cohorts (e.g., perimenopausal women).

J. Mobilisation & Monitoring

- **Q:** How will mobilisation be monitored? What support is available?
- **A:** Applicants should ensure the project/initiative is resourced sufficiently to carry-out their own mobilisation planning and reports into their internal governance structures. The ICB will agree on reasonable check-in points but will not provide intensive support with mobilisation.

K. Evaluation & KPIs

- **Q:** Will KPIs be set by the ICB or in partnership?
- **A:** KPIs will be agreed in partnership with each organisation and tailored to each project. The Women's and Girls' Health Hub programme has a steering group that meets every two months, and we ask that a representative from your group is able to attend at least one of these sessions during your project.

L. Word Limits & Application Format

- **Q:** Are there word limits?
- **A:** Refer to the MS Forms for word limits. References are not required in academic format but can be included if relevant.

M. Funding Details

- **Q:** What is the funding amount? How many projects will be funded?
- **A:** £87,500 per project, up to four projects funded.

N. Delivery Venues

- **Q:** Must delivery be in Women's Health Hubs?
- **A:** No, other venues are encouraged, especially in areas where there is no hub including Lewisham, Southwark, and Bromley.

O. Refining Projects Post-Submission

- **Q:** Can projects be refined after submission?
- **A:** Minor refinements are possible, but major changes are not expected. The team may follow up with clarification questions.

P. Eligibility

- **Q:** Are projects in areas with existing Women's Health Hubs eligible?
- **A:** This funding is intended to support new projects and initiatives. Existing Women's Health Hubs are funded through separate commissioning arrangements.

Q. Age Limits

- **Q:** Is there an upper age limit?
- **A:** No, projects can cover ages 13 and up.

R. Feedback & Flexibility

- **Q:** What if we only just heard about the EoI and need more time?
- **A:** Contact the team; some flexibility may be possible in exceptional cases.