

# Supporting Q Connections

Applicant guidance

## 1. Background

Supporting Q Connections (SQC) is the Q community's ongoing funding programme. This programme enables Q members to create effective, purposeful, and vibrant connections that strengthen member-led activity. It also enables collaborative improvement approaches that can support change across local systems. These are important mechanisms for how Q achieves change in health and care.

This programme aims to:

- fund activities that help you to build and strengthen your networks across the improvement landscape and share and apply learning, to better support the impact of your improvement work.
- enable the development of local system level networks which embed improvement through sharing of learning and ideas. This is a key priority for Q and we are particularly keen to receive bids with this focus.

## 2. Funding requirements

- We will fund projects with set budgets of up to a maximum of £20,000. Please note that this does not mean that all applications need to be at this maximum amount. We will also consider high quality applications that require smaller resources, are match-funded, or can be delivered in a shorter time scale.
- We encourage proposals that actively demonstrate value for money. We also ask projects to consider their long-term sustainability beyond the funding term and explore securing match funding where appropriate.
- Proposals need to include your approach to embedding and measuring environmental sustainability, safeguarding, equity diversity and inclusion, and patient and public involvement in your work.

- The project lead must be a Q member. The project team can be made up of both Q and non-Q members.
- The lead applicant must apply on behalf of a lead or host organisation. Funds will be paid to this organisation.

As a charity, we are required to ensure that our funds are used for public benefit. Private sector organisations are eligible to apply for this programme. However, to ensure that our funds do not give rise to private benefit, we will impose conditions on the use of resulting intellectual property (for example, this could include requiring intellectual property to be free to use or requiring revenue/profit sharing).

SQC funding is intended to catalyse new work or develop existing ideas. It is not intended to be a source of ongoing funding. We are interested in funding projects that have secured match funding, although this is not a requirement for your first application. For those applicants who have previously been awarded funding for similar work, matched funding will need to be secured for a second application to be considered.

Potential applicants should note that:

- we can only cover the direct costs associated with the delivery of a project (ie not core costs or overheads, and without any added margin) and will require evidence of spend.
- we conduct due diligence checks on all applicants and will require more detailed information from private sector organisations.

## What we want to fund

- Activity that builds and strengthens emerging systems and networks of shared learning. We are interested in receiving applications that consider regional priorities and needs, as well as projects that focus on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).
- Local activity that considers how to involve Q members and provides tangible outcomes that benefit Q members across the region. Successful proposals will support Q members to learn, connect and collaborate and consider how to share key developments and learning with the Q community.

## Examples of activity eligible for funding

- Design and development work to support embedding Q effectively into local organisational learning (eg co-design sessions with Q members on

Q's role in supporting learning. Or facilitation capacity to support connections between members).

- Events, or other processes, that bring Q members together to contribute to local work (eg an event where Q members are invited to rapidly collaborate and advise on how to reduce waiting lists locally).
- Activities that support peer learning between Q members and other people working to improve health and care (eg funding for Communities of Practice, Action Learning Sets, or Open space events).
- Convening people around particular areas of interest to enable learning that's applied, rather than general networking. Peer learning activities should consider participant needs and involve them where possible.
- Events or communication activities that build understanding and encourage uptake of promising interventions from the Q community (eg an event to encourage wider engagement in a Q Exchange project or other promising intervention being developed by a local Q member, or a set of case studies or ideas that have emerged through Q members).
- Activities that encourage the spread of promising insights and interventions through Q members (eg local events or a 'campaign' to involve Q members in implementing the intervention).
- Interventions that help build the skills and knowledge needed locally for collaborative learning (eg development sessions on the skills map or collaborative learning techniques).

## What we will not fund

- Organisational overheads such as costs of premises, management, and HR.
- Core staff costs.
- Capital expenditure such as for vehicles or buildings or major items of equipment.
- Staff time for the writing and submission of articles, publications or journals.
- VAT . The project will be supported as a charitable grant and as such is not liable for VAT.
- New projects that are led by an applicant or team member currently holding an existing award, unless for a demonstrably new area of focus.

## 3. Proposal timescale

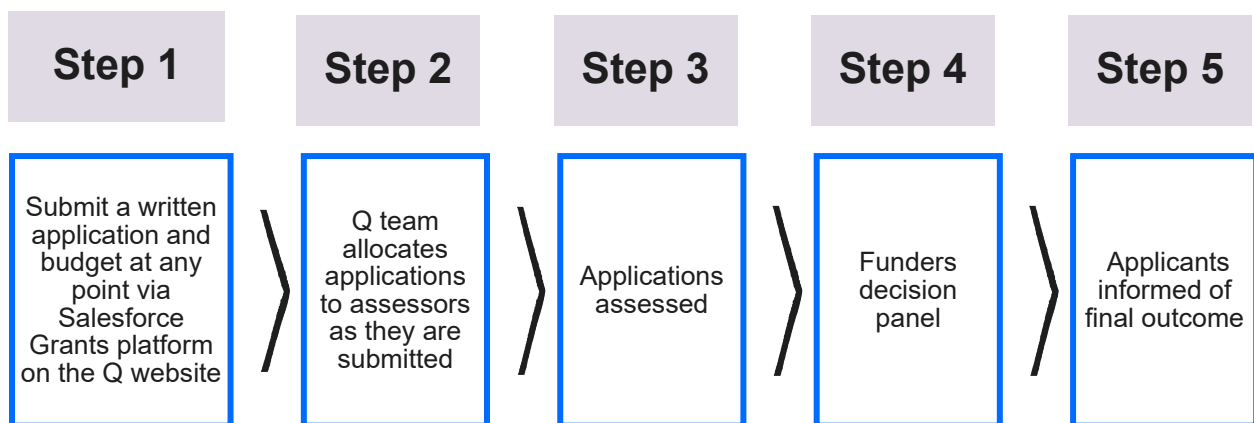
We will fund proposals for a maximum of 12 months. We understand that timescales will vary depending on what is being proposed. However, we will

require an end of award report at the one-year point. We also expect all funding to have been awarded by this point, whether work is complete or not.

## 4. The application and assessment process

Proposals should be submitted in writing via our Application Portal and include a budget overview. You also have the option to upload a project plan and/or risk register. The budget (template provided) should include what the funds will cover, and details of any co-funding, in-kind, or matched funding (although welcomed, no preference will be made for matched funding).

### Starting and submitting applications



This is an ongoing opportunity, you can apply for funding at any time. Please note that we close and reopen the programme every three months. If you start an application in one three-month period you need to submit your application by the end of that period. We are unable to carry over incomplete applications.

### The programme open / close dates are:

- 1 January 2025 – 31 March
- 1 April 2025 – 30 June
- 1 July 2024 – 30 September
- 1 October – 31 December

## 5. The Application Form

The following eligibility questions must be answered prior to starting your application:

### Eligibility questions

- Is the funding requested a maximum of £20k?
- Is the project lead a Q member?
- Is the project duration 12 months or less?
- Will the work be carried out in the UK or Ireland?

### The following questions will not be assessed:

- Organisation and Primary Contact details
- Environmental sustainability, equity diversity and inclusion, public and patient engagement, and safeguarding  
Please confirm that your organisation has a policy or commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion [\(Y/N\)](#)
- At the Health Foundation we are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion. Diverse perspectives enrich collective performance and outputs. How is equity, diversity and/or inclusion embedded in your ways of working? [250 Words](#)
- Please confirm that your organisation has a policy or commitment to safeguarding.  
Detail your approach to embedding this in your work and how will this be measured [250 Words](#)
- How do you plan to involve or engage patients and / or members of the public in your work? [500 Words](#)  
We strongly encourage applications to involve patients, public and those with lived experience.
- Please confirm that your organisation has a policy or commitment to sustainability. Detail your approach to embedding this in your work and how will this be measured. See our [Environmental sustainability guidance](#) for more details. [250 Words](#)
- Living wage
  - Are you an accredited Living Wage Employer? [\(Y/N\)](#)
  - If no, are all posts within this application at or above the real Living Wage rate?

## Answers to the following questions will be shared with assessors:

### Project details

- **What is the title of your proposed work?**  
This title will be used in all documentation relating to your project.
- **Please provide a plain English summary of your proposed work. 500 words.**  
This is helpful for the Health Foundation and assessors, but applicants will not be assessed against this question.
- **Tell us how your proposal meets the needs set out in the guidance including your idea and what you hope to achieve with our funding. 500 words**  
We want to be confident that the project addresses the primary aims of this funding programme: activities that enable collaborative learning, or learning that shares insight across teams and organisations and enables local system level networks to be developed. Please demonstrate a clear rationale for the proposed activity, and appetite among Q members to participate.
- **If relevant, how will your work be governed locally and link to local priorities? 500 words**  
Include relevant information on how it fits within or connects to existing governance structures and accountability. Please share how this links to local or national system priorities and a broader mission or ambition, if not covered elsewhere.

### Impact

- **What changes do you expect to achieve through this work? How will you know if your idea is successful? How will you measure your progress and the impact of the work in the short, medium and long term? 500 words**  
Share further information about why this project is needed in your area or setting, what need have you identified? Explain your assumptions or rationale for your project. In what ways will your project meet the aims of the Supporting Q Connections programme? How will activity benefit

Q members and help to establish or strengthen learning networks across the improvement landscape?

- **What learning might be generated through this work and how might this be shared more widely? 500 words**  
We're particularly interested to hear how you would share learning with the Q Community.
- **What approaches might you use to monitor, adapt and reflect during the project? 250 words**
- **How would you measure success and impact from the project? 250 words**

### Details of team members/partner organisations

- **Are there additional team members (aside from yourself) who will be working on the work? (Maximum of 10) (Y/N)**  
Use this section to outline any additional key members of your team and the expertise and experience they bring. This is the core team with responsibility for the day-to-day management and delivery of the project.
  - Indicate which of these people are Q members.
  - Co-applicants are considered part of the core project team. Please also list a named representative from each of the partner organisations you will be working with, if applicable.

If yes

  - First name
  - Last name
  - Organisation
  - Email
  - Description of role
  - Remit/responsibilities
- **If applicable, how will other groups of stakeholders be involved in your work? 300 words**  
In this section we ask you to outline how other groups of stakeholders

might be involved in your work. Please explain in detail your approaches to stakeholder engagement and how this will support both your project plans and approaches to impact. Who in your organisation(s) will be enabling and influencing the conditions for your work to succeed? How will you engage with the Q community on your project? What are the opportunities for them to get involved, to share learning, and expertise throughout? Finally, where appropriate: how are you going to make sure patients, service users and carers are involved in, and can influence, your project?

- **Are there any joint applications? (Y/N)**

If yes, please identify the partner organisations you will be working with on the project. [500 words](#)

### **Project Management**

- **If you have created a project plan please attach it (*this is an optional file upload on the application form*)**

- **Please describe your project management approach or plan ([500 words](#))**

- Please outline how you will approach the set-up and implementation of your project, for example what activities will take place and when, and what are the main methodologies you plan to use? Please outline the key dates and major milestones for the project and describe how progress will be monitored.
- Activity needs to begin within 3 months of receiving funding. We will fund proposals for a maximum of 12 months. We will require an end of award report at the one- year point and we expect all funding to have been awarded by this time, whether work is complete or not.

- **What are the key project risks and how will you manage/ mitigate these? [500 words](#)**

Please share a risk register or table that highlights the top 5 risks to your project and expected mitigations. You have the option to attach a project risk register if you wish but this is not mandatory.

### **Budget information**

- **Total amount requested.** (up to £20k)



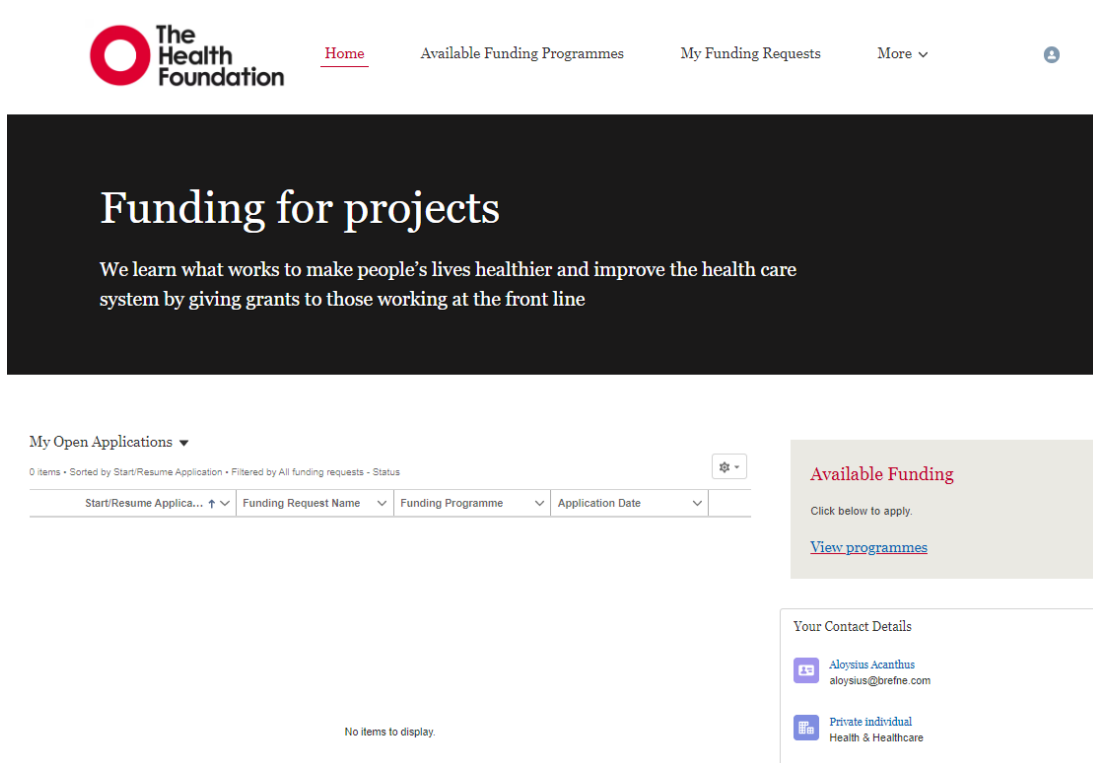
- **Please provide details of any in-kind support/funding if relevant.**  
[500 words](#)
- **Please provide an explanation of why the bid represents value for money.** [500 words](#)
- **Budget download and upload**  
You will need to download the budget template, fill in the required information and re-upload it into your application.

We are looking for clear justification for items requested and the level of funding sought demonstrating effective use of resources and an appropriate budget to deliver the project aims. We expect funding for staff costs to be directly linked to supporting the methods and activities proposed and any expenses to be reasonable and in line with [Q's expenses policy](#).

# Using the Application Portal

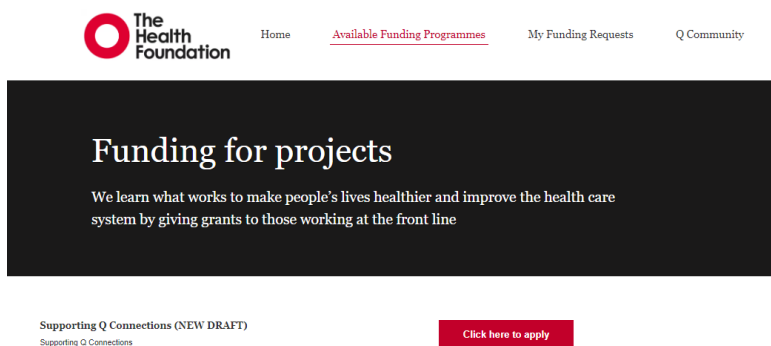
[thehealthfoundation.my.site.com/applicantportal/s/](https://thehealthfoundation.my.site.com/applicantportal/s/)

You will first need to **register**. You will be asked to create a contact record using your email address and a password.



The screenshot shows the Applicant Portal Home page. At the top left is the The Health Foundation logo. The navigation menu includes 'Home' (underlined), 'Available Funding Programmes', 'My Funding Requests', and 'More'. A user profile icon is in the top right. A large black banner contains the text 'Funding for projects' and 'We learn what works to make people's lives healthier and improve the health care system by giving grants to those working at the front line'. Below the banner is a 'My Open Applications' section with a dropdown menu and a table with columns: 'Start/Resume Applica...', 'Funding Request Name', 'Funding Programme', and 'Application Date'. The table is empty, showing 'No items to display.' To the right is an 'Available Funding' section with a 'View programmes' link. Below that is a 'Your Contact Details' section listing 'Aloysius Acanthus' (aloysius@brefne.com) and 'Private individual Health & Healthcare'.

When you have created your record, logon to the Application platform and navigate to the tab 'Available Funding programmes' and click on **Supporting Q Connections deadline Day/Month/Year:**



The screenshot shows the 'Available Funding Programmes' page. The navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Available Funding Programmes' (underlined), 'My Funding Requests', and 'Q Community'. A large black banner contains the text 'Funding for projects' and 'We learn what works to make people's lives healthier and improve the health care system by giving grants to those working at the front line'. Below the banner is a section for 'Supporting Q Connections (NEW DRAFT)' with a 'Click here to apply' button.

You will then be asked some eligibility questions to check you meet the criteria. If you select 'yes' by clicking the circle next to each question then the apply button will appear at the top of the page:

### Required Information

Grants of up to £20,000 are available for activities focused on supporting continued collaborative working at a time of intensified system pressure. We're interested in funding activities that help members to build and strengthen their networks across the improvement landscape, and share and apply learning.

This is an ongoing opportunity so you can apply for funding at any time. Please note that we close and reopen the programme every three months. If you start an application in one three-month period you need to submit your application by the end of that period. We are unable to carry over incomplete applications. This batch will close on Monday 30 September so all applications in progress need to be submitted by this date.

If you aren't ready to submit your application then a new application should be started on the Application Portal from Tuesday 1 October.

Application Guidance can be found [here](#).

### Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility Criteria

- We will fund projects with set budgets of up to a maximum of £20,000. (This does not mean that all applications need to be at this maximum amount. We will also consider high quality applications that require smaller resources, are match-funded or can be delivered in a shorter time scale).
- Proposals that actively demonstrate value for money and build on ideas around sustainability are encouraged.
- The project lead must be a Q member. The project team can be made up of both Q and non-Q members.
- Funding must not give rise to private benefit.

Work through the questions in the form using the guidance provided on pages 5 – 9 of this document.



### About your project

What is the title of your project? \*

Please provide a plain English summary of your proposed work. (max 250 words). \*

You can **save** to return to your application later at any time by clicking the **save and resume later** button. A new **Save /Submit** button will appear.

If you want to save your progress on this form and complete it later, please tick the box below and press 'Save/Submit'.

Save and resume later

Next Page

If you save your application and log out, when you log back in you will see the application in progress when you return. Go to 'My Funding Requests' if you are not taken there automatically.



[Home](#)

[Available Funding Programmes](#)

[My Funding Requests](#)

[Q Community](#)



## Funding for projects

We learn what works to make people's lives healthier and improve the health care system by giving grants to those working at the front line

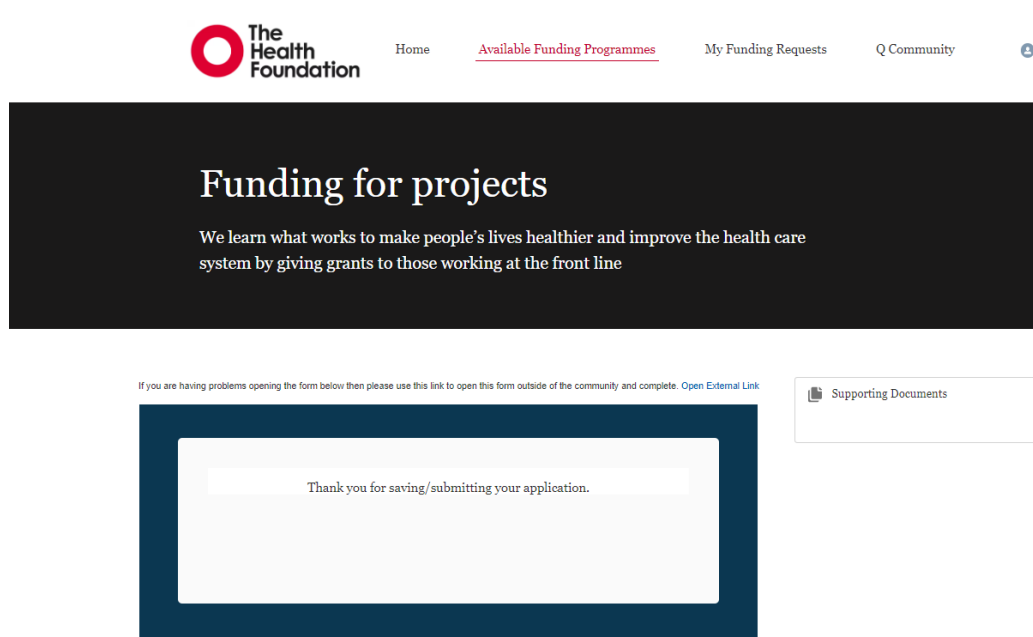
My Open Applications ▾

1 item • Sorted by Start/Resume Application • Filtered by All funding requests - Status



	Start/Resume Application ↑	Funding Request Name	Funding Programme	Application Date	
1	<a href="#">Resume Application</a>	<a href="#">Title Test</a>	<a href="#">Supporting Q Connections (NEW DRAFT)</a>		▾

When you are happy that you have completed your application, click on **Save / Submit** on the final page. If there are any problems with the form you will be directed to those questions that need to be completed. When you successfully submit your application the message below will appear:



You will see an acknowledgement that your application has been submitted. You will also receive an email to confirm submission of your application.

It will now be assessed, and we will let you know the outcome within 8 weeks.

If you have any questions about the application process, or the programme, please email [sqc@health.org.uk](mailto:sqc@health.org.uk).