**RCN Foundation call for applications**

The RCN Foundation seeks an organisation to undertake a project which aims to support Registered Nurses Learning Disability to undertake a research study or project which addresses health inequality and enhance health related quality of life outcomes for people with a learning disability in Northern Ireland. The voice of people with a learning disability must be front and central to the work.

**Introduction**

The RCN Foundation is an independent charity (1134606 – England and Wales, SC043663 – Scotland) and a company limited by guarantee (7026001). It was set up in 2010 and aims to support and strengthen nursing to improve the health and well-being of the public. The Foundation delivers its purpose by:

* ***Supporting*** individual members of the nursing team (nurses, midwives and health care support workers) by providing grants for hardship and education purposes
* ***Investing*** in the nursing profession to improve patient care by funding research and practice development projects in our priority areas
* ***Championing*** nursing by raising the profile of the profession and public understanding of its contribution to improving the nation’s health

Our grants are open to any current or former nurse, midwife or health care support worker, and they do not need to be a member of the RCN to receive support from the Foundation.

**Background**

A key grant-making priority within the RCN Foundation is Learning Disability Nursing. In 2019, the Foundation funded a scoping review by University of West London (UWL) to understand the impact that Registered Nurses for Learning Disability (RNLD) can have on improving the health and well-being of children, adults and older people with learning disabilities.

To complement the UWL review, the Foundation carried out further scoping work to identify specific challenges facing the Learning Disability Nursing field across the United Kingdom. This work identified challenges specific to the devolved nations in relation to learning disability nursing. As a result, it was agreed to fund a nurse-led project within each devolved nation with the aim of addressing the challenges unique to them.

**Northern Ireland**

The scoping work undertaken by the RCN Foundation identified each devolved nation experiences its own challenges in relation to Learning Disability Nursing. Consequently, it was agreed by the Board of Trustees to provide a grant to each of the devolved nations, which would enable them to focus on research or a project in their own country.

This call is for a research study or project which supports RNLDs to address health inequality and enhance health related quality of life outcomes for people with a learning disability in Northern Ireland. This will include a co-production approach to ensure the voice of people with a learning disability central to the work.

### Call for applications

The RCN Foundation is seeking applications from individuals or organisations to work with us over a 12-month period. Funding available is up to a maximum value of £30,000. The study should aim to start in late 2025 and finish in late 2026. The funding available could cover direct research and development-related salaries and dissemination costs. There should be at least one open access paper published setting out the findings and recommendations of the study or outputs of a project. The funding will not cover indirect costs such as organisational overheads, capital costs or purchase of non-specialist equipment.

Applicants will attend regular virtual meetings with Foundation staff. The successful individual/organisation will be required to submit an interim report mid-way through the project, and a final report. A payment schedule will map to the reporting deadlines.

Examples of RCN Foundation funded research studies can be found [here](https://rcnfoundation.rcn.org.uk/Research-projects/Children-and-young-people-mental-health).

**Application**

To apply for this funding call, please submit a proposal to: [grants@rcnfoundation.org.uk](mailto:grants@rcnfoundation.org.uk)

The proposal should address the following headings:

**Section A: Application details**

Please include the details of the project lead and the organisation from which you are applying. Please give a brief description of the organisation and list the team. In addition, please list any partner organisations involved in the project.

The application should demonstrate:

* How co-production involving both individuals with lived experience of a learning disability and RNLD students across Northern Ireland will be achieved
* Considerable experience of carrying out projects to enhance evidence-based teaching and learning strategies for learning disability nurse education
* Experience of producing influential reports at a policy or programme design level
* Excellent written and verbal communication skills
* Experience of providing written reports and presenting findings to both nursing professionals and lay people
* Understanding the equity, diversity and inclusion principles relating to individuals with lived experience of a learning disability in Northern Ireland

**Section B: Proposal Format**

Research/Project design and methods

This section will introduce the aim and objective(s) of the research study/project. It should identify the design and methods you plan to use to address the aims and objectives of the work.

Ethical approval

Please indicate what type(s) of ethical approval are required for the study/project. It would be helpful to understand the timelines for any ethical approval processes.

Safeguarding

Please include any safeguarding policy from your organisation and any safeguards which will be in place to support the project team and participants.

Timescales and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Please present the timescales of the project in a Gantt chart. This should include the key phases, deadlines and milestones for the project, as well as any other relevant information.

Please use the following table format to outline the proposed KPIs and timelines.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**  *e.g. x number of participants recruited; x number of research sites recruited; ethics approval secured* | **Date**  *Please provide the date by which each KPI is expected to be achieved* |
|  |  |
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|  |  |
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|  |  |

**Impact**

Outputs, outcomes and impact assessment and evaluation

Please describe what the expected outputs and outcomes of the study/project will be and how these meet the RCN Foundation’s priorities. Please explain how the short, medium and long-term impact of the study/project will be measured and how the outcomes will be sustained in the future.

Please also explain how the impact of the study/project will be evaluated.

Dissemination

Please outline a dissemination plan, identifying the key activities, and the audiences at whom the outcomes and outputs will be targeted. Please include details of the communication strategies which will be required to support the dissemination.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Consideration needs to be given to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion within the proposal. Please provide information on how this research/project will address and incorporate these principles within the design.

Environmental Sustainability

Does your organisation have an environmental sustainability policy and how does this project adhere to this?

**Section C: Project Costs and Resources**

The maximum budget for this call is £30,000. Please provide a detailed breakdown of costs in the format used for the table below:

**Budget:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Cost £** | **Explanatory note** | **Funded by?**  *i.e. RCN Foundation/other organisation/applicant organisation* |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Next Steps**

Applications open on **17 September**  and close at **5pm on 29 October 2025**

Interviews will be held week beginning 17 November 2025.

Proposals received after the closing date will not be considered.

Completed proposals should be submitted by email to: [grants@rcnfoundation.org.uk](mailto:grants@rcnfoundation.org.uk)

**Please ensure you submit an Easy Read version of your proposal; we will have people with lived experience on the shortlisting panel and want the process to be inclusive.**

Should you have any questions about this funding call please contact Dr Sarah McGloin, Head of Grants and Impact at the RCN Foundation: [sarah.mcgloin@rcn.org.uk](mailto:sarah.mcgloin@rcn.org.uk)

Thank you for your interest.

**Application checklist**

Please ensure that you have included the following in your application:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Does the research require:   * NHS Research Ethics Service approval for Northern Ireland * University ethical approval | Yes/No |
| A comprehensive proposal including:   * Project design and methods * Evaluation method * Comprehensive dissemination plan * Impact measurement * Longer term sustainability of the project * Greener and sustainable practices | Yes/No |
| A clear and comprehensive indicative budget | Yes/No |
| CVs for the project team | Yes/No |
| A timeline presented in a Gantt chart | Yes/No |
| KPIs presented in a table | Yes/No |
| Risk register | Yes/ No |