



## **Supporting Nursing in Care Homes: A call for proposals for practice development projects to be funded by the RCN Foundation**

### **Background**

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

- offering financial support to members of the nursing community who are experiencing hardship
- providing education bursaries and career development opportunities to UK nurses, midwives, healthcare assistants and nursing students
- funding innovative nursing-led projects that make a positive difference to the health and well-being of the public

The Foundation's current programme of project grants focuses on nursing in care homes and ways in which care can be improved in this setting. In 2014, the Foundation commissioned the University of York to undertake a research and consultation project which focussed on care and professional development for nursing staff in care and nursing homes. This was followed up in autumn 2015 with a stakeholder event, at which themes emerging from the research were discussed, and next steps prioritised. An overview of the resulting report, *Supporting nursing in care homes*<sup>1</sup>, published in 2015, is given below.

### **Context for the Call**

The public sector, health and social care sectors face significant challenges in reshaping care for older people, as it involves changing the way it provides services while continuing to meet current needs. People in the UK, as in most European countries, are living longer. Many older people are in good health, living independently. As the majority of older people are living with long term conditions, they do not need access to intensive or long-stay health and care services.

In the UK, approximately half a million older people live in nursing and care homes. The sector now provides more beds than NHS hospitals, for a predominantly older population, with increasingly complex healthcare needs. Ensuring older people can access 'good' high quality nursing care in care homes is crucial.

There is a recognised need to articulate, and identify solutions for, the care home sector from a nursing perspective. The care home sector remains fragmented and continues to face growing pressures as demand and grows and funding diminishes. From 2010 onwards, the sector has faced either a freeze or a below inflation increase in funding from local authorities as a result of the austerity measures put in place by the government. This is likely to continue over the next few years.

During 2015-16, there have been a number of developments in the care home sector. A Department of Health taskforce regarding nursing in social care has been exploring a

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<sup>1</sup> *Supporting Nursing in Care Homes*, Karen Spilsbury, Barbara Hanratty and Dorothy McCaughan, University of York, 2015

number of issues, ranging from the availability of data to the dissemination of best practice. This includes work to: improve the status of the sector including Teaching Care Homes; research; and sharing good practice.

### **Supporting Nursing in Care Homes**

The *Supporting Nursing in Care Homes* report, published independently by the University of York and funded by the RCN Foundation, found that whilst the role of the care home nurse is broad and multi-faceted, little is known about the characteristics of the care home registered nursing force, their employment, or their career trajectories and ambitions. Whilst the need for continuing professional development is identified, there are challenges for care home nurses in being able to access learning opportunities.

The report also found that care home nurses require specialist knowledge to manage the care of residents whose health needs are becoming increasingly complex. There is therefore also a need to liaise with, and engage, other health professionals and organisations in ensuring that the needs of care home residents are met and to minimise avoidable transitions to acute care.

Having a registered and non-registered care home nursing workforce which is motivated, has the right skills and is well resourced will ultimately lead to improved outcomes in this growing sector. Therefore, ensuring the future preparation, recruitment, retention and development of nurses in the care home sector is of pressing public and policy concern.

### **Funding call: Supporting Nursing in Care Homes**

The RCN Foundation is inviting applications for the funding of a substantial practice development or similar project in the area of nursing in care homes up to a value of £200,000 to be delivered and evaluated between 2017-2019. The funding available could cover salaries, project expenses within reason and dissemination costs. The funding will not cover indirect costs such as university overheads, capital costs or purchase of non-specialist equipment.

Given the increase in older adults requiring nursing care, the poor recruitment and retention of both registered and non-registered nursing staff within the care home sector is problematic. This is clearly a key priority area for the future. It is expected that the focus of the project will be on practice development rather than research but will need to include both an evidence based approach and an evaluation within the project domain and budget.

The Foundation is keen to encourage innovation and is open about the types of projects that could be funded. The project could address a number of key issues including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Contribute to enabling registered nurses and care assistants to choose to seek employment or remain working in the sector
2. Enhancing learning and development of nurses and care assistants in the sector linked to both retention and tangible benefits for residents
3. A workforce focussed quality improvement project with measurable outcomes

It is likely that the project will also reference current initiatives being delivered by other organisations working in the care home sector across the four countries of the UK, and the



gaps on which the Foundation might focus in the future. Irrespective of the geographical location of the successful project, we would expect that the learning outcomes of the project to be applicable across the four countries of the UK.

Ultimately this project should benefit residents and their families, registered nurses and healthcare support workers. In particular, benefits to residents could include improved mental health, a decrease in isolation and wider community engagement.

### **Outline for the Proposal**

Please submit an outline expression of interest using the headings set out below. This should consist of no more than three sides of A4 at this stage. After initial shortlisting successful applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal.

#### Project Team and Organisations

Please indicate the individual/s who will be responsible for undertaking the project and the organisation/s they work for. Please outline whether they have had previous experience of delivering this type of project. We are particularly keen to support collaboration, such as clinical-academic partnerships, or those between the public and private sectors, but this is not a condition of the application.

#### Project Details

Please provide a general overview of the project. We are seeking applications which lead to practical outcomes. Therefore, please demonstrate how you aim to address this when providing project details. You may find it helpful to structure your project plan with aims and objectives and what methods or means you plan to use. You should state how you will involve residents and families in the project at all stages.

#### Project Deliverables and Evaluation

Please provide information about the key deliverable expected from the project. What outputs do you expect to achieve? What performance measures will you use and how will these be developed? How will you monitor and evaluate the project?

#### Project Timescales

We are seeking projects that will be undertaken during a maximum twenty four month period. Please provide an outline of the timescales for the project. This should include the key implementation phases, deadlines and milestones for the project, as well as any other relevant information. You may wish to include a Gantt chart.

#### Project Costs and Resources

We have a maximum budget of £200,000 to spend on this project. Please provide a high level breakdown of project costs using the format below. Please note detailed costings are not required at this stage but will be required for shortlisted applications.

Item	Cost	Explanatory note

Please also give an indication of:



1. How much of the project costs you are seeking from the Foundation?
2. Whether other funders have been approached or are likely to be approached, who they are and the outcome of these applications if known

#### Dissemination

Please outline how you propose to disseminate the outcomes from the project, identifying the key activities, and the audiences at whom the outcomes will be targeted.

#### **Next Steps**

If you would like to apply for this call, please submit a proposal addressing the key headings in this invitation document. Proposals should be written in size 11 Arial font and be no longer than four sides of A4 in length including references.

The closing date for expressions of interest is 2 December 2016. Expressions of interest received after this date will not be considered.

Shortlisted Candidates will be invited to submit a full application in December 2016. The deadline for the full application is 24 February 2017 and shortlisted applicants in the second round will be invited to present their proposed projects to the Foundation in March 2017 to present their proposal. Successful applicants will be informed in April 2017.

A summary of key dates is given below.

Expressions of interest should be submitted by email to: Deepa Korea, Head of RCN Foundation at [deepa.korea@rcn.org.uk](mailto:deepa.korea@rcn.org.uk)

Thank you for your interest.

#### **October 2016**

#### **Key Dates**

Call opens	Friday 7 October 2016
Closing date for expressions of interest	Friday 2 December 2016
Shortlisted candidates informed by	Tuesday 20 December 2016
Closing date for full application	Friday 24 February 2017
Presentation to Foundation	March 2017
Successful applicants informed by	April 2017