



RCN Foundation

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation in Care Homes in Wales

A Call for Applications

1. Background

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 nursing staff to improve the health and well-being of the public by:

- Offering advice and financial support to members of the nursing team who are experiencing hardship
- Providing education grants to UK registered nurses, midwives, healthcare support workers and nursing students
- Funding nursing-led projects that make a positive difference to the health and well-being of the public
- Nurturing nursing-led innovation
- Increasing public understanding of the contribution nursing makes to society

The RCN Foundation focuses its grant giving on particular areas of priority. The current areas of priority include nursing in care homes, to achieve better patient care.

The Foundation has developed its programme of care home nursing projects over the past 4 years. Funded projects include a research project to identify priority focus areas of the sector and practice development projects that aim to address these priorities across the UK.

In order to develop the care home grants programme the Foundation is commissioning a practice development project that will focus on pertinent issues within the care home sector in Wales.

2. Context for the Call

In the health and social care sector in Wales it is widely acknowledged that loneliness and isolation are amongst the most significant issues facing the older generation. Loneliness and isolation are fast becoming public health issues in Wales and the Welsh Government will publish a strategy for tackling this issue in 2019.

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee of the Welsh Assembly published an Inquiry into Loneliness and Isolation in 2017. This stated that people aged over 80 are at high risk of experiencing loneliness and isolation. Approximately half a million people in Wales felt lonely always or often.¹

Wales has the highest percentage of older people within the population than any other part

¹ <http://www.assembly.wales/en/newhome/pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=1794>



of the UK. This means that more people are reliant on social services and have more complex needs. Loneliness and isolation can have both mental and physical consequences which may increase the pressure on these services.² Research has suggested that loneliness and isolation have a similar effect on mortality to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.³

The Inquiry noted that older people can feel particularly lonely in a care home setting. Older people often move into care homes at times of crisis and require significant adjustment and are subsequently vulnerable to feelings of loneliness and isolation.⁴

There is no 'one size fits all' solution to this issue. The Inquiry found that responses that are tailored to the individual are the most effective and that short-term support and one-off interventions can be detrimental. In addition it was found to be essential that older people are involved in the development of initiatives at every stage. Examples of services and initiatives that can have an impact on loneliness and isolation included:

- Befriending schemes
- Inter-generational activities
- Group activities
- Volunteering
- Digital inclusion

There are numerous examples of work in these areas, however the short term nature of funding has resulted in the closure of many programmes.⁵

A significant outcome of tackling loneliness and isolation is the reduction in inappropriate prescribing of anti-psychotic drugs.

The role that the nursing team can play in recognising and responding to the wider determinants of health has been recognised within the sector.⁶ In particular, the nursing team working within the care homes can help to identify where loneliness and isolation are a problem for residents and work to address this issue.

The RCN Foundation aims to fund a nursing-led practice development project that will focus on the methods that the nursing team can use to prevent loneliness and isolation within care homes and in so doing, contribute towards the improvement of mental and physical health.

3. Funding Call

Given the increase in older adults requiring care and the recognition of loneliness and

² <http://www.assembly.wales/en/newhome/pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=1794>

³ <http://www.ageingwellinwales.com/en/themes/loneliness-and-isolation>

⁴ <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11310/cr-ld11310-e.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.assembly.wales/en/newhome/pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=1794>

⁶ <https://www.nursingtimes.net/opinion/expert-opinion/why-nurses-are-key-in-the-fight-against-loneliness/7021742.article> and <https://journals.rcni.com/nursing-older-people/loneliness-a-challenge-for-nurses-caring-for-older-people-nop2006.06.18.5.22.c2424>



isolation as issues within the sector in Wales, the RCN Foundation has developed a call for applications to address this issue.

We are seeking to fund a project that aims to develop innovative nursing-led solutions that identify and tackle the issue of loneliness and isolation within care homes. It is expected that the focus of the project will be on practice development within the care homes sector. It is also expected that a successful bid will utilise the current evidence base.

The project should reference current initiatives being delivered by other organisations working in the care home sector across Wales.

Ultimately this project should benefit residents and their families and staff, and make a contribution towards tackling the problem of loneliness and isolation within care homes. In addition the project should also address how it will achieve long-term sustainability beyond the funding period. The project should focus on the whole nursing team including health care support workers.

Funding available is up to the value of £30,000. The project is expected to be delivered and evaluated between 2018-2019. The funding available could cover direct project-related 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.

Projects should aim to inform a Wales-wide wellbeing strategy. Projects that demonstrate collaboration with partners and that have match funding, are particularly welcome to apply.

4. Outline for the Proposal

Please submit an application using the Foundation's application form. The application form will include the following information:

Section A: Applicant details

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

Section B: Project Details

Please provide the project title and a description of the proposed project. You should state how you will involve residents and families in the project at all stages. Please include details of any necessary ethical approvals that the project will require.

Please describe how the project is nurse led.

Provide a lay description of the project for communications purposes

Please provide information about the outputs and outcomes expected from the project. What outputs do you expect to achieve? What will be the outcomes of these outputs?

How do these outcomes meet the Foundation's priorities?



How will you evaluate the project? What performance measures will you use and how will these be developed?

Please state the project timescales. We are seeking projects that will be undertaken during a maximum twenty four month period. Timescales for the project 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.

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.

Please describe how your project will adhere to the principles of equality and diversity.

Section C: Project Costs and Resources

We have a maximum budget of £30,000 to spend on this project. Please provide a detailed breakdown of project costs. Please note indirect costs such as non-specialist equipment will not be funded.

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

5. Next Steps

If you would like to apply for this call, please submit a completed application form Applications should be written in size 11 Arial font.

The closing date for applications is 7 September 2018. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

Shortlisted Candidates will be invited to interview in September 2018 to present their proposal.

Successful applicants will be informed in October 2018.

Applications should be submitted by email to: grants@rcnfoundation.org.uk

Closing date: 5pm on 7 September 2018

Thank you for your interest.