

Q&A from launch webinar 12 June 2023

1. Are partnership proposals accepted?

Yes, we welcome partnership proposals. Please explain how you will work together in your proposal.

2. If we applied for this phase and were unsuccessful, would it preclude us from applying for the primary school phase?

No, we welcome EOIs from organisations for both rounds of funding. However, if you were awarded a grant under the first round you would not be awarded a second grant under the next round.

3. My organisation trains students to be peer mentors which is part of oracy and developing speaking skills. Do organisations need to directly target literacy or would associated skill development like this be eligible?

It would depend on how those speaking and listening skills feed into developing literacy skills and how your project fulfils the overall aim and objectives. We are open to proposals that take different approaches so please look at the guidelines and see if you think your project fits.

4. Can you think of anything else you really want us to cover in the five EOI questions?

Please see the 'top tips' slide. This is a light touch form so we're looking for a flavour of your proposal. It's always good to clearly outline what you're proposing, and, why you're well placed to deliver the work (i.e. you have existing relationships within the communities of beneficiaries you want to support in the proposed area / are experts on supporting those facing particular disadvantage etc.) Also, do let us know if your work will achieve anything beyond what we've outlined in the guidelines, you're the experts in your work so please do tell us what the wider impacts might be.

5. Would work exclusively in SEN/D schools be eligible? Would you fund SEN/D children if they were between 12-16yrs?

Yes, please tell us why that's the group you've chosen, and how you plan to work with them. This funding round is focused on key stages 3 and 4 (12 – 16yr olds).

6. Does the work have to be exclusively for 12-16yrs olds or can it incorporate younger children too?

Work can incorporate children in the final years of primary school, for example if you're looking at supporting school transition. However we would expect the majority of beneficiaries to be aged 12 – 16 years.

7. Can you provide more information around the learning partner?

The Learning Partner will be selected based on their subject expertise, facilitation, evaluation, and dissemination skills. A tender process for the Learning Partner will launch in Autumn 2023 and grantees introduced to the appointed Learning Partner in early 2024.

8. Does it matter how many beneficiaries we plan to work with? Would we be penalised for working with a smaller number more intensely?

We understand that some children have more complex needs and therefore would not discount applications on this basis. We would rather fund the right level of support for the children who would benefit most, than support large numbers. We don't ask for numbers in the EOI. However, those invited to submit a full application will be asked how many children they expect to work with alongside other beneficiaries, i.e./s parents/carers, volunteers, teachers, etc. We recognise often work happens with wider support systems to ensure it's sustainable for the child longer term.

9. Do you have a preference on size/turnover of organisation, or the mix you'd like in the cohort?

We don't have a preference on size of organisation. The maximum grant size is quite open (between £150,000 and £300,000 over four financial years) to enable different sized organisations to apply. We look for a balance within a cohort and consider things like geographical spread across London, target beneficiaries, types of activities / approach.

10. We have had previous funding from one of the Mercers' programmes, does this prohibit us from applying for this fund? Would you be happy to award a grant to a previous grantee organisation?

Yes we are happy for past grantees to apply, and to award funding if they are successful. However, current grantees, funded under Phase 1 of our Literacy Special Initiative, are not eligible to apply for this first funding round of Phase 2. They are welcome to apply for the second funding round of Phase 2.

11. Do you know when the next funding round will open for work with primary schools?

We anticipate launching a second funding round, which will be similar but focus on supporting primary school aged children, in spring / summer 2024. Organisations signed up to this webinar will be notified when that funding round goes live.

12. Why have you decided to fund in 2 phases/cohorts?

We have just launched Phase 2 of our philanthropy framework which will run for five financial years from 2023/4 to 2027/8. Two cohorts are being funding within Phase 2 of the Literacy Initiative to enable a feasible cohort size (5-8 organisations) and a focus on a similar age group (12-16 years-old in cohort one and 5 – 12 years- old in cohort two). It is intended that Cohort 1 will run from 23/24 to 26/27 and Cohort 2 from 24/25 to 27/28.