

Carer Poverty Commission Northern Ireland

Invitation to tender

September 2022



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About Carers NI

Carers NI is Northern Ireland's membership charity for unpaid carers. We work to represent and support the over 290,000 people in Northern Ireland who provide unpaid care for ill, older or disabled family members or friends – fighting for increased recognition and support for all carers and to ensure they have a voice in policymaking.

Introduction

1. Carers NI has been awarded a grant from the Carers Fund ^[1] to establish a Carer Poverty Commission (CPC) for Northern Ireland. The CPC will seek to deliver new research evidence on the scale and drivers of poverty among unpaid carers and the interventions that could make the biggest difference to tackling carer poverty, informing future policy development from the NI Assembly and Executive.
2. We wish to commission a research team/organisation to contribute to the delivery of the CPC. This invitation to tender provides an overview of our research objectives, the funding available, the timeline for delivery, information on the tender application process, and other important information about the project.

Context and overview of the Carer Poverty Commission

3. Nearly one-third of carers in Northern Ireland were estimated to be living in poverty in 2020, the highest rate of carer poverty anywhere in the UK. ^[2] Since then, unpaid carers here have been among the groups hardest hit by the cost of living crisis – often managing a complex mix of pre-existing financial pressures, growing caring-related living costs, barriers to paid employment and inadequate support from the social security system. ^[3]
4. It is within this context that the Carer Poverty Commission is being launched. The CPC will seek to further our understanding of the scale and drivers of carer poverty in Northern Ireland, as well as generating the policy solutions that will help provide the financial support local carers need.
5. Overall, the CPC will include a wide range of policy, public affairs, campaigning, media and research activity. This invitation to tender is concerned with the research objectives of the project only.
6. The funding available for the research objectives of the Carer Poverty Commission is up to £35,000.

Research objectives and deliverables

7. We invite interested teams/organisations to submit tender proposals outlining which of the following objectives/deliverables they would prioritise within the research funding available – utilising innovative and creative approaches which maximise impact and value for money:
 - **Research on the current scale of carer poverty in Northern Ireland.**

¹ The Carers Fund is delivered by the Community Foundation NI, supported by the Department of Health. For more information see: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/ps900000-funding-awarded-support-carers>.

² Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2022). Poverty in Northern Ireland 2022.

³ Carers NI (2022). Unpaid carers, poverty and the cost of living crisis in Northern Ireland: Policy solutions white paper.

- Development of a measurable definition of carer poverty and projections on carer poverty rates in the future.
 - Literature review on carer poverty.
 - Development of a new model to identify poverty risk factors for carers – e.g. employment status, existing financial resources, current and projected income, intensity of caring role, condition of person being cared for, additional household costs, equipment and adaptations, household bills etc.
 - Evidence-based policy recommendations for reducing/mitigating carer poverty, based on quantitative modelling of the potential impact of new interventions from the NI Assembly and Executive.
8. We would expect these objectives to be met through mixed methods research, including a mixture of quantitative modelling, direct engagement with carers in Northern Ireland, engagement with other key carer stakeholders (e.g. community and voluntary sector groups, statutory bodies) or focus group sessions.
 9. The successful research team/organisation will be responsible for conducting and delivering all research outputs against agreed timescales (see section below on *Timeline for delivery*). Support for the recruitment of carers and other key carer stakeholders will be provided by Carers NI's Policy and Public Affairs team.

Timeline for delivery

10. The Carer Poverty Commission will be funded until 31 January 2024. All findings from the research element of the project must be completed and ready for publication by summer 2023. They will be included in a final policy report, to be launched at a future poverty conference organised by Carers NI as part of the project.
11. Interim research publications before this final deadline will be looked upon favourably by Carers NI when we are shortlisting tender proposals.
12. The successful applicant will be expected to provide regular progress updates to Carers NI in writing and via update meetings throughout the project. This will include attending and contributing to meetings of the project steering group.

Who should consider making a tender submission for this project?

13. Carers NI would welcome tender submissions from any person, team or organisation with sufficient experience in mixed-methods research in the fields of poverty, social security or social policy.
14. We would particularly welcome proposals from:
 - University research teams
 - Think tanks with expertise in poverty, social security or economic policy
 - Economic research consultancies.
15. Interested research teams/organisations will be considered based on their expertise and experience, not geographical location. We are happy to work virtually with a research partner based outside of Northern Ireland, provided they can meet the research objectives/deliverables of the project.

Editorial oversight and ownership of Carer Poverty Commission research products

16. All research products published as part of the Carer Poverty Commission will be labelled as such and jointly branded using the names and logos of Carers NI and our research partner.
17. While conducting and writing up the findings of any quantitative or qualitative research will be the sole domain of our research partner, Carers NI will have editorial input into all other content in all research products, including policy analysis and recommendations. Carers NI will be the lead author of the final project policy report referenced in paragraph 10 above.

Grant funder reporting requirements

18. The successful research team/organisation will be required to support Carers NI in meeting our grant funder reporting requirements. Full details will be provided to the successful applicant.

Submitting a tender proposal

19. The deadline for tender submissions is **12noon on Monday 7 November 2022**.
20. As a minimum, tender submissions should cover the following key information/themes:
 - Information on the research team/organisation, including an overview of recent projects or work (ideally undertaken within the last 3 years) that demonstrate your suitability for this opportunity.
 - CV information for the lead applicant and any other staff who will be working on the project if your submission is successful.
 - A detailed research proposal that illustrates which of the potential research objectives (as set out in paragraph 7 above) you would prioritise, how you would deliver them within budget and on time, including a proposed methodology, and how your work would make an impactful contribution to the overarching goals of the Carer Poverty Commission.
 - Costings for each element of your proposal.
21. We would encourage interested parties to be creative and innovative in their proposals, outlining how their proposed approach would maximise impact and value for money.
22. Proposals from research teams/organisations based outside of Northern Ireland should detail how the research objectives/deliverables will be met using digital technologies.
23. The research commissioning process will have two stages. Tender proposals will be short-listed, with those researchers/organisations invited to deliver a follow-up presentation afterwards. These second-round presentations are provisionally scheduled for **Wednesday 23 November** and will be delivered virtually. The successful applicant will be notified after this date.
24. The successful applicant will be required to enter into a contact with Carers NI, which will set the terms and conditions for taking part in the project.

Tender submissions should be sent as a PDF email attachment to craig.harrison@carersni.org by 12noon on Monday 7 November 2022, using the subject line: Carer Poverty Commission NI – Tender submission.

More information

If you require any further information before submitting your tender proposal, please contact:

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