

UK Futures Programme

Frequently Asked Questions – Workplace solutions to the gender pay and opportunity gap.

These questions and answers are specific to the ‘Gender inequality’ competition. These should be read in conjunction with the [Programme level](#) FAQs.

Question		Answer
About the webinar		
01	Will the webinars be recorded and available online?	<p>Unfortunately the webinars won't be recorded. Instead we will update the FAQ document (this document) with any questions and answers from the webinar and post these online. Secondly the YouTube Videos will help you in your understanding of the competition and these are available on the following links:</p> <p>Gail Cartmail's video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11juhOYFJ38 Helen Kersley's video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61RCFC5KL2s</p> <p>Finally once you have Registered Your Interest in the competition you will be allocated 1 on 1 support from UKCES to help you with your application.</p>
02	Will we see the questions from other participants on the webinar?	We will continue to answer questions via this document and make it available online for all interested parties to see all questions and answers.
03	How can we raise any future questions with you after the webinar?	If you have any further questions please feel free to contact us on the following email address Enquiries.FuturesProgramme@ukces.org.uk
About the competition		
04	Why have you chosen to focus this competition on tackling gender inequality on the lower-paid?	All the issues affecting women at work are important and essential to address. Like the fact that women struggle to make in-roads into male dominated occupations in IT and construction; too few women make it to managerial and leadership positions; too many women get stuck in low paid, poorly valued part time jobs because they need to combine work and family responsibilities. Our scoping suggested that the matter of low pay, opportunity and status for women in industries which are typically ‘feminised’, including adult social care, cleaning and commercial catering has received somewhat less attention from policy makers and practitioners, including employers. If we can start to make improvements for these women we will make an important contribution to tackling gender inequality in our economy.
05	Why have you chosen to focus this competition on Cleaning, Commercial Catering and Adult Social Care?	Our primary target group as part of this competition is women who are on relatively low pay. We are defining this as women earning £10 per hour or less. Following research into this group, and testing across several sector employers we narrowed this competition to these sectors as they have high volumes of women on low pay and the appetite to participate in this competition.
06	What are the timescales for applying?	Your applications need to be submitted by 12 noon on the 13 th July 2015.
07	When will the funding be agreed with the successful applicants?	Decisions as to which applications are successful will be made in early October 2015 and applicants will be informed before the end of October. We would hope to negotiate contracts so projects can start in November 2015.
08	How competitive is the Futures Programme, what are my chances of being awarded funding?	This is difficult to answer. The number of projects that will be successful in gaining funding will be limited to the overall budget of £1 million for this competition. We are looking for a number of projects which will enable us to test and learn from solutions that address the challenges outlined in the Competition brief. The opportunity of being awarded funding depends on how many applications are received and the quality of the applications and ideas. The better the quality of your application and idea, the better chance you will have of being awarded funding.

09	How many bids are expected to be funded?	We are looking to fund between 5 and 8 successful projects.
10	You mention in the competition brief that collaborative projects can involve commissioners - What do you mean by a commissioner?	Here we are referring to organisations that procure or buy in catering, cleaning or care services, so it includes business / organisational supply chains, and also public sector bodies like Local Authorities, hospitals, schools etc.
11	I work in the Care Sector and our funds are restricted by Local Government, we simply can't pay our staff more. How can I get involved in the competition?	We recognise that raising wages for lower paid workers, mainly women, in the sectors we have chosen is not easy; these are price-competitive markets and many providers are small in size. But we are taking a broader focus than pay alone. We want to support projects that raise pay if they can while recognising that may be a longer term goal for some organisations. There is much that can be done right now, though, to value these workers better by using non-financial as well as financial means. We are interested in how the jobs that women in these industries do can be made more secure, how these jobs can be enriched, how workers' voices can be heard and how their imagination and energy can be used better to improve the quality of their organisations' offer to clients.
12	Do you need an external evaluator - e.g. a university to test the intervention or will you do evaluation of your own?	We have commissioned evaluation of the Futures Programme as a whole. We will shortly be issuing a new Invitation to Tender to cover this competition.
About the Eligibility		
13	As we have progressed the competition we have received feedback leading us to expand the scope of eligibility for applicants. In addition to providers in the cleaning, commercial catering and adult social care industries themselves we are now opening the competition to innovative proposals from intermediary organisations (such as universities, research centres, recruitment agencies or civil society organisations) with innovative proposals which can be tested with cleaning, catering and adult social care workers who earn no more than around £10 per hour. We are keen to maximise the outcomes and learning from this competition. Expanding eligibility in this way will allow us to widen our learning base on good job design for frontline workers. It will also broaden the applicability of this learning to different settings and organisation types. The competition brief eligibility section has been amended accordingly. We have also removed the eligibility criteria stipulating a threshold proportion of women employed in your organisation.	
14	The Application form seems to allow for selection of one sector only, can we cover more than one sector (e.g. cleaning and catering)?	Yes you can work across multiple sectors. This has now been changed on the application form to allow you to select multiple sectors.
15	What definition of 'commercial catering' are you using to determine if an organisation is eligible to apply?	Commercial catering refers generally to catering on a large scale. Specifically for this competition we are looking for large scale contract food caterers who contract out their services to multiple clients rather than a single restaurant. These organisations could be one-off caterers for large scale events or regularly contract caterers that provide ongoing services in perhaps school canteens for example.
16	Can public sector and voluntary sector organisations apply?	Yes the competition is open to public and voluntary sector organisations to apply.
17	Can a University apply?	Yes a University can apply. This would be according to the description of eligibility in our second bullet point under the Eligibility heading of the Competition brief
18	I am a small employer can I put in a proposal on my own or do I need to join a consortium?	You can put in a proposal on your own, or as part of a consortium, whichever you would prefer. Our preference is around testing solutions with a range of employers in these sectors, so we welcome multiple employers involved in the testing if possible. We are also open to collaborations between employers and social partners such as research centres, third-sector organisations, or employer representative bodies. If you think such partnerships could help you in terms of adding capacity or expertise then that might be a route to explore.
19	Would a 1 nation based project be acceptable?	Yes, the Programme and all the competitions we run will be open across the UK (unless stated otherwise for further competitions). Applications focussed on one country, region, city or other local area would also be welcome.

20	Could I make two separate bids?	If the applications are related we would be expecting the "whole story" to be presented in one application. If the projects are unrelated we would welcome two separate applications.
21	I have already begun testing some ideas, would I still be eligible to submit a proposal to upscale these pilots?	Absolutely, if your solution is already showing signs of impact to your workforce this will only strengthen your proposal.
22	I have a couple of innovative ideas that I would like to test but I'm not sure they will work; can I still submit a proposal?	Yes, the UK Futures Programme is all about testing out solutions to see what works, what doesn't, and why. If the potential for impact is there we will welcome these kinds of proposals.
23	I ideally would like to do some more research before I develop ideas / solutions is that ok?	As part of this competition we would specifically like to see development proposals rather than research based proposals. You could build 'research' into the development of a solution and test this through the development.
24	Can a college submit an application?	Yes, a college can be the applicant but to reiterate the application must be employer led, and about employers thinking differently, so this isn't just about training.
25	Can projects already be underway or do they have to be new ones?	We prefer new and innovative ideas but there may be scope for existing projects to be scaled up or tried out in a new setting or in a new way.
26	If you are just one large employer and no other employers are involved can I still apply?	Yes we can accept applications from single employers. You would need to be able to demonstrate that you are willing to share the learning from your project with other employers involved in the competition and more widely.
27	We have a number of employers wishing to consider making an application, is there any preference for national versus regional applications?	There is no preference for national or regional applications. Some applications will be locally focused and that's fine.
About the Successful Projects (Including Testing & Shared Learning)		
28	What timescales are expected for the live projects?	Projects are expected to run for 12 months starting in November 2015 and running until November 2016.
29	12 months is a short timescale. What kinds of outcomes do you want to see in that period? And how long past that period should the evaluation strategy still be measuring outcomes?	We would be looking for some short-term outcomes if possible which may be quite closely associated with outputs within the project period. We would look to the logic chain to show how those short-term outcomes could be expected to contribute to longer term ones in the future. We can work with you to establish a longer term evaluation strategy that is feasible and that makes sense for the project.
30	How will you be looking to measure the success of the projects?	<p>The 2 main long-term success measures we are looking for are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress towards lifting female workers, particularly those over the age of 40, out of low pay. • Positive outcomes for business. Examples include increased productivity, cost savings through more efficient work organisation, reduced wastage, improved staff satisfaction and motivation, improved customer satisfaction and feedback. <p>Since these types of impact may accrue over time beyond a 12 month project a logic chain or theory of change can help map the journey towards achieving them and highlight measurable indicators along the way. Logic chains are described in the Potential for Impact section of the UK Futures Programme Guidance documents.</p>
31	Could solutions / projects be designed to be longer than the project timeframe (12 months?) and the fund be used to kick start the work?	As per the response above we fully anticipate that some of the longer term aims of this funding may not be seen within the 12 month funding period. The project fund can be used to kick start the work, although we will expect to see in your application how you intend on measuring the interim success of the project, and what the potential for impact will be in the short and long term.
32	How much testing will I have to do? I know what I want to implement and just want to get on with it?	The Futures Programme is about learning 'what works', this is to benefit both the broader Programme but also individual projects. Testing what you are doing along the way, rather than waiting until the end, can give you a better project with a more sustainable future, because you can adapt as you go.

		The Testing and Shared Learning Guidance suggests that there are likely to be 3 areas you would want to look at: the end product you are developing (e.g. new job roles – testing how best to change task organisation or shift patterns); the methods you use (e.g. the way changes are communicated to staff to achieve high engagement) and the logic chain you will apply (e.g. how the improved pathways will improve retention). So, whilst you may know what you want to do, we would be looking to ensure you had tested those ideas beforehand in your application, or would want to see how you might test through the project itself. It need not be complex, but ensuring a process of reviewing and testing with an appropriate audience and reviewing or revising what you do as appropriate.
33	Will we need to submit monthly progress reports to UKCES when the projects are up and running?	No, the monitoring arrangements will be light touch, and agreed with your relationship manager who will be in regular contact with you throughout the project. Progress reporting is likely to be quarterly. We are much more focussed on co-creation and supporting your projects through development.
34	Do I have to test and share my learning with wider employer groups?	Yes, all successful applicants will be expected to attend the Innovation Labs and share their learning.
About the Finances and Investment		
35	What would be considered public sector contributions?	The public sector contributions we refer to are from UKCES. You can also provide other sources of other public funding such as funding from other government departments.
36	Is there an expected proportion of the employer contribution e.g. does it need to be 50:50 employer: UKCES?	There is no minimum amount of employer investment that we expect to see, you simply need to be able to show that the employer contributions are appropriate to the type, shape and scale of the project.
37	Do you have a list of allowances or benchmarks that you use to evaluate the costs listed in the finance element of the application? For example if we booked a meeting room is there a cap on the amount we are allowed to spend?	We have no minimum or maximum allowance lists, or benchmarks, or caps for the finances. If you feel that any of the costs are high you can provide narrative in your application form to explain this.
38	Does our investment need to be cash or can it be in kind?	It can be in kind, in cash or both but again needs to be appropriate to the type of project.
About the Partners and Employer Engagement		
39	How many employers can you work with?	There is no limit on the number of employers you can work with, but it would need to be demonstrably manageable for the project.
40	How many partners should be in the proposal	There is no fixed number of partners. It is a matter of making sure that the partners involved in the project make a valuable contribution. We are looking for quality over quantity.
41	Given the timeline for the application i.e. by the 13th July can you include prospective additional employers you may wish to work with downstream but who are not yet fully bought into the project?	Yes you can include additional prospective employers. Just highlight them as either committed or projected within the Key Employers and Partners template . Please be aware though that the strength of your proposal would be increased with employers being committed from the beginning.
42	Would you recommend or prefer a specific range of partners within project team?	You (or the organisation leading the proposal) are best placed to know who should be involved in your project. You should include whoever you think will strengthen your proposal - from our point of view, it is important that the organisation leading the proposal has identified why particular partners are involved and has a strong rationale for what they will add to the project. All projects should be led by employers with a range of employers engaged throughout the project.

43	Is there a limitation in terms of numbers of employers / employees involved in the project?	No there is no limitation on the amount of employers / employees that can be involved in the project
44	Can we have to organisations leading the proposal?	For contracting purposes we need just 1 organisation leading the proposal.