



POPULATION MENTAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

BUILT ENVIRONMENT SANDPIT: INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

The [Population Mental Health Consortium](#) (the Consortium) is part of the UKRI-funded Population Health Improvement network. Its mission is to bring together expertise and insight from across research, public health and communities to improve health and reduce health inequalities through the development and evaluation of long-lasting interventions, as well as to advance population mental health research by integrating diverse perspectives, policy, practice, and lived experience.

As part of this mission, the Consortium is hosting three sandpit competitions, each designed to bring together participants from various sectors, including early career researchers, non-academics, voluntary organisations, and people with lived experience, who will then develop a project idea together in the area of population/ public mental health¹.

This document is for participants to be aware of the criteria of projects that will be funded at the sandpit.

Essential details

Award Funding

Each sandpit will have up to £40,000 available for multiple external groups not currently involved in the consortium, with awards ranging from £1,000 to £10,000.

We especially encourage applications from:

- Early career researchers
- Voluntary organisations
- Non-academics
- Individuals with lived experience

Participants must not already be funded by the consortium but should have a demonstrable interest in population mental health research.



Selection Criteria

At the Sandpit event, for projects will be considered for funding, they must:

- Include an academic partner and an organisation partner
- Be directly relevant to population mental health (see appendix on upstream prevention for what is in scope or out of scope), addressing upstream determinants of mental health in research and practice
- Broaden the reach and diversity of the Consortium

Other selection criteria include:

- Innovation
- Impact
- Collaboration
- Relevance/Alignment
- Feasibility
- Inclusivity Deliverables

Delivery Requirements

- All projects must have a clear timeline and measurable deliverables.
- Successful applicants will be expected to deliver at least 1 research-related output which could include a peer reviewed publication, toolkit, report, practice-based output, etc.
- Participants are encouraged to engage in regular knowledge-sharing events, including network meetings and learning sessions, to support the consortium's wider objectives.
- Key outputs (e.g., research findings, practical solutions) must be shared with the wider Consortium to ensure integration of learning across the themes. Research publications and other outputs must be reported to the consortium manager (Patrick Wong)
- All publications must acknowledge funding from UKRI/ support from the consortium and follow co-authorship guidelines. (please see publication guidelines document).
- Intellectual Property rights apportioning will be in line with the collaboration agreement (as detailed in associated appendix).
- Successful applicants will be invited to give a short presentation about their project to a network of researchers in population mental health, and will be expected to provide a brief report at the end.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Participants must be willing to collaborate with others from outside their sector, e.g. academic, community and practice partners (e.g., VCSE, housing associations, schools, local councils)



- The lead investigator must be UK based but other collaborators can be internationally based.
- Successful applicants will be asked to sign the Population Mental Health Consortium publication agreement and adhere to this for any resultant publications.
- Co-funded projects will be considered, but project teams should discuss this with the sandpit lead as early as possible.
- The funds cannot be used for conference travel or training costs.

Budget, timescale and evaluation

Each sandpit will have a maximum of £40,000 available for project awards, managed by King's College London (KCL). We anticipate awarding multiple projects up to a maximum of £10,000, **smaller amounts may have a larger success in being awarded**. The budget can be used for any expenditure directly attributable to the project, e.g., directly incurred salary, consumables, data access, costs of involving people with lived experience, creative design, and travel related to project delivery. Funding will not be awarded for organisational overheads or indirect costs, training or conference travel. **Participants will be remunerated for their time at the event itself in accordance with the Consortium-wide remuneration policy, which states that non-salaried participants will receive £25 per hour for their participant**. Travel expenses will be requested in the initial EOI form and will be reimbursed within the budget available for those whose travel expenses are not being provided by their organisation.

The Consortium can also support with the following:

- Showcase and promote the project through the Consortium's networks and social media
- Host any resources from the organisation on our website
- Opportunities to take part in training courses to build capacity.
- Provide mentorship in formulating bids.

Selection

- The panel will collectively review each project against the criteria of this sandpit.
- Projects will rank alongside other applications after which the panel will make a funding decision.
- The panel will be empowered to recommend the strongest overall portfolio of complementary projects for the sandpit or the portfolio that provides the greatest added value.

Timescale

The first sandpit will be in 5 March 2025, 12pm to 5:30pm in Manchester, followed by two additional sandpits in subsequent quarters. All projects must be completed by Q4 2026.



Evaluation

As part of the evaluation process, awardees will be required to submit:

- Number of participants and collaborators
- Project milestones and achievements
- Demographic information of participants (where relevant)
- Impact assessment (e.g., wellbeing outcomes)
- Case studies and recommendations for future research or practice

Regular evaluation meetings will be held to track progress and ensure that the awarded projects are on course to meet their objectives.