

### Key information

- Research grants of up to £25K for 12-month projects commencing May 2024
- Vulnerability and policing **open call** with a particular emphasis on the following themes:
  - vulnerability and neurodivergence;
  - race, ethnicity and vulnerability;
  - asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants.
- We are keen to solicit applications that deploy innovative methodologies and/or combine different datasets.
- Aligns with Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre [programme of work](#) and [values and principles](#)
- Further info:
  - webinar on Thursday 5 October ([register for the webinar](#))
  - contact - [vulnerabilitypolicing@york.ac.uk](mailto:vulnerabilitypolicing@york.ac.uk)
- Deadline for applications: **Monday 15 January 2024, 4pm GMT**
- Application form and FAQ available via our [researcher development fund](#) webpage

## Contents

Key information .....	1
1. Aims of the Fund .....	2
2. Criteria .....	3
2.1 What we are looking for .....	3
2.2 Thematic steer/s for the 2023-24 call .....	4
2.3 Eligibility .....	4
3. Funding .....	5
3.1 How much funding is available .....	5
3.2 Eligible and ineligible costs .....	5
3.3 Costing your project.....	6
4. Deliverables .....	6
4.1 Ethics.....	7
4.2 Intellectual Property .....	7
5. Process .....	7
5.1 Scoring criteria.....	7
5.2 Scoring table.....	8
5.3 ECR Development Grants Funding Panel .....	9
6. Timetable .....	9
7. Application Form .....	9
7.1 Budget .....	10

## 1. Aims of the Fund

The aim of the Early Career Researcher (ECR) Development Fund (“the Fund”) is to build research capacity and capability to tackle current and emerging challenges related to vulnerability and policing. Aligned with the strategic priorities of the ESRC Vulnerability & Policing Futures Research Centre (“the Centre”), the Fund will support grants led by UK-based ECRs, that generate new knowledge, embed innovation, demonstrate effective partnership working to facilitate both co-production and impact planning, and seek to generate follow-on research funding through further grant applications.

The Fund aims to widen the reach of the Centre’s work, enabling ECRs to co-produce trailblazer projects that will contribute new findings, methodological applications and conceptual insights. In so doing, it will promote co-production rooted in experimental test-beds of frontline policing. It will provide pump-priming funds to support research

into vulnerability and policing in areas where gaps in knowledge are most prominent and where research benefits are of greatest value.

The Fund will provide financial and logistical support for teams of named researchers and practitioners or civil society groups led by an ECR as Principal Investigator (PI). Teams may include senior researchers who provide mentoring and support but will be led by the named PI. Capacity building and support for ECR project leads/Pis will be provided through structured support overseen by the Centre's ECR Champion, Dr Laura Bainbridge (Leeds). The Centre will also work with PIs to develop engagement, impact, networks and follow on plans that maximise the reach and significance of the research.

## 2. Criteria

### 2.1 What we are looking for

Proposals must:

- Be led by an ECR<sup>1</sup>, employed by a UK research organisation<sup>2</sup> and whose employment contract extends at least to the end of the proposed grant period.
- Include co-production with at least one non-academic partner organisation.
- Present original and innovative ideas.
- Address the theme of vulnerability and policing.
- Advance the Centre's [values and principles](#).
- Be feasible and rigorous in terms of methodology and sound logic.
- Explicitly address equality, diversity, and inclusion issues.

Preference will be given to proposals that:

- Deploy innovative methodologies and/or combine different datasets.
- Complement rather than duplicate the [wider research programme](#) of work across the Centre.
- Enable co-production with service providers and/or service users and vulnerable groups.
- Comprise teams and approaches that are multi-disciplinary.
- Have the potential to secure longer-term 'follow-on' funding and/or scalability across other partners.
- Have high potential impact and identify the pathways to impact, including by explicitly considering the translation and application of the research findings for policy and/or practice and how these might best be secured.
- Leverage match commitments and, where appropriate, resources - either cash or in-kind, from contributing organisations and beneficiaries.

---

<sup>1</sup> ECR defined as ([per UKRI](#)): up to eight years since PhD viva, but not including career breaks for e.g. home schooling/maternity leave etc.

<sup>2</sup> See link to ESRC guidance on eligible research organisations under [Eligibility](#)

## 2.2 Thematic steer/s for the 2023-24 call

For the Fund's second year (for projects commencing in 2024), we welcome applications in all fields relating to policing vulnerability for this Open Call, however we are particularly keen to receive applications that focus on one or more of the following themes: vulnerability and neurodivergence; race, ethnicity and vulnerability; and asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants. Additionally, we are keen to solicit applications that deploy innovative methodologies and/or combine different datasets. All applications will be equally assessed against the criteria regardless of thematic focus and the strength of the proposals will be the first and foremost priority when allocating funding. Future calls will highlight different thematic steers.

## 2.3 Eligibility

- Funds can only be awarded to a recognised research organisation (RO), not a person.
- Guidance on organisations eligible to apply for funding can be found on the [ESRC website](#). This includes a list of independent research organisations (IROs) and other organisations eligible to apply.
- Principal Investigator (PI):
  - Only one person on the application can be named as Principal Investigator (PI).
  - The PI must be an ECR<sup>3</sup> employed by their UK research organisation, with a contract of employment that does not end before the proposed project ends.
  - Applicants must be able to confirm the support of their institution to enable them to fulfil the commitments of the project.
  - A PI can only submit one application to the Fund but can be Co-I on other applications.
- Organisations outside the UK are not eligible to apply to lead an application. They are however, eligible to be included as project partners or Co-investigators (who would be expected to make a contribution, either financially or in-kind) or Consultants; please note, overseas consultants cannot be named as Co-investigators. Please see the '[Funding](#)' section regarding costings for international external partners.
- We would normally expect applications to include collaborations with external organisations, such as public service and/or third sector organisations. Time of practitioners, NGO staff or service users can be costed, where explicitly justified. Non-academic applicants can also co-lead projects. Third sector, government/public sector organisations and businesses can be included for up to 30% of the budget (at full economic costing), but a justification will be

---

<sup>3</sup>As previously defined.

needed. It is not expected that large businesses would be able to justify this, but charities/NGOs/social enterprises could.

- ECR Development Grant awards will be transferred from the University of York to eligible ROs.
- We are not able to fund PhD studentships or Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs).
- Awards funded through the ESRC Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre ECR Development Fund should follow [UKRI's standard funding rules, terms and conditions](#) and align to the [ESRC's research funding guide](#). Please note, however, that all correspondence should come to the Centre.
- Those directly involved in the Centre are not eligible to be PI of any Fund application but they can be included as a part of an applicant's Project Team. This also applies to Centre advisory board members (including National Engagement Group, International Advisory Board and Ethical Oversight Panel).
- Given the stated aim of the Fund to support ECR development and capacity building, applicants should consider the balance of responsibility for the proposed project between the PI (ECR) and any more experienced Co-Is. The primary role of experienced Co-Is in the context of these grants should be to provide guidance and mentorship to the PI.

### 3. Funding

#### 3.1 How much funding is available

Grants of up to £25,000 will be awarded to successful applicants, for projects of up to 12 months in duration.

A total budget of £375,000 has been allocated to the Fund, to be distributed across four annual calls (2023–26), allowing us to fund up to four awards per year.

Unused budget in any given year may be rolled forward to the following year. At present the Centre does not have firm plans to make awards during the 2026–27 year, although this will be kept under review in the context of future funding for the Centre's wider endeavours.

Panel members will be given the discretion to make awards and apply conditions, which means funding awards may differ from the amount requested.

#### 3.2 Eligible and ineligible costs

- Up to a maximum of 50% of the total cost of the application may be allocated to PI staff time. No other directly allocated academic staff time (including for Co-

ls) will be funded from the grant but may be included as institutional match funding.

- Directly incurred research staff time (e.g. postdoc researchers/research assistants) may be included.
- Any staff time may be included only as direct costs; no overheads, i.e. estates or indirect (FEC) costs may be included.
- Up to a maximum of 30% of the total cost of the application may be allocated to external partner costs, with specific justification provided.
- Other direct costs associated with delivery of the proposed project, including reasonable travel and consumables.
- Information regarding costing a UK business, third sector or government body can be found in the [ESRC's Research Funding Guide](#). Please note: the combined costs for business, third sector and government bodies must not exceed 30% of the total FEC of the grant application. Investigators involved as project team members (whether academic or non-academic, or within/outside the UK) must bring their own funds. [Further information on eligible partner costs](#).

Please note: we are **not** using the joint electronic submission system (Je-S) or the newly introduced Funding Service so some details on ESRC guidance documents do not directly apply. All funding awarded will be received via the University of York, not directly from the ESRC. Financial reporting will be required according to Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre and University of York requirements. All eligible costs will be funded at 100% FEC in line with the agreed budget for the project and within the funding limits for individual awards.

### 3.3 Costing your project

Costs should be calculated using the full economic costing model, and submitted in the budget table provided as part of the application form (see section 7). As noted above however, no estates or indirect costs may be included in the requested funding for the project, and Directly Allocated staff time is limited to the PI only (up to a maximum of 50% of the total cost of the award).

These principles have been applied in order to maximise the potential for the relatively small grants to have maximum impact and reach in terms of the work they can fund.

## 4. Deliverables

Each funded project will be required to provide an **accessible final summary report** (4 pages), which will be peer reviewed by members of the Centre team and made publicly available on the Centre website, acting as a briefing document on the project and its key findings for a non-academic audience.

Additionally, researchers will be expected to produce a more **detailed report** of their research findings and methods and asked to present a **webinar or workshop** following the completion of the project, to be arranged and promoted through the Centre.

The 4-page report and webinar or workshop will be conditions of funding.

In line with the Centre's **commitment to open research**, we encourage grant holders to explore formal means of sharing their methods and tools to support replication and extension by others. Similarly, where datasets can be appropriately anonymised to permit sharing, we encourage this.

Other project-specific deliverables outlined in proposals will be reflected in individual Award Letters but will not be deemed conditions of funding.

#### *4.1 Ethics*

PIs will be responsible for ensuring ethical approval from their own institution.

#### *4.2 Intellectual Property*

Authors retain Intellectual Property rights. The Centre will have the right to publish, share, and use the short summary reports.

### **5. Process**

Following the Fund launch, a webinar will be held to publicise the Fund, explain the criteria and answer questions from potential applicants. A recording of the webinar and FAQs will be available via the Centre website. Applicants are invited to review the overview and detailed guidelines, and to submit an online application using the Fund application form (see below), by the deadline.

Initially, applications will be checked for eligibility against criteria. All those eligible will be peer reviewed, and depending on volume of applications received, a shortlisting exercise may be undertaken. Those that meet a scoring threshold will be considered by the ECR Development Grants Funding Panel, who will review applications against the criteria and make recommendations. The Centre's Leadership Team will ratify decisions and issue offer letters to successful applicants. All applicants, whether funded or not, will receive feedback on their application.

#### *5.1 Scoring criteria*

Essential (each scored from 6/Outstanding to 1/Poor in line with the scoring table below):

1. Intellectual rigour, originality, and significance
2. Potential for impact on vulnerability and policing policy and practice
3. Feasibility, and rigour of methodology
4. Collaborative approach to research, including a good level of co-production
5. Alignment with Centre Values and Principles
6. Potential for academic development - career development/capacity building of ECR
7. Attention to equality, diversity and inclusion

Desirable (weighted less heavily, but still scored)

1. Deploy innovative methodologies and/or combine different datasets
2. Potential for further academic development and/or impact – i.e.
  - Explicit consideration of translation and application of research findings for policy and/or practice and how these might best be secured.
  - ECR Development Grant investment creating further external funding opportunities and/or scalability across other partners
3. Multi-disciplinary and/or mixed methods approach
4. Co-production with service providers and/or service users and vulnerable groups
5. Complementarity with Centre existing programme of work
6. In-kind/match contributions

## 5.2 Scoring table

Score	Assessment	Description
5	<i>Outstanding</i>	The proposal is outstanding in terms of its potential merit against the criteria and is likely to produce important outcomes.
4	<i>Excellent</i>	The proposal is excellent in terms of its potential merit against the criteria and is likely to produce valuable outcomes.
3	<i>Good</i>	The proposal is important as it has considerable potential merit against the criteria and is likely to produce beneficial outcomes.
2	<i>Fair/some weaknesses</i>	This proposal will add to understanding and is worthy of support, but is of lesser quality than more highly rated proposals.
1	<i>Poor</i>	The proposal is flawed in its approach, or is repetitious of other work, or otherwise judged not worth pursuing; or, though possibly having sound objectives, appears defective in its methodology.



### 5.3 ECR Development Grants Funding Panel

An assessment panel will be convened to review shortlisted applications to this fund, comprising a mix of academic and practitioner representatives to bring a balance of research and service delivery expertise in the context of vulnerability and policing. Membership will be built from a sub-group of the Centre's existing Core Academic Team of Co-Investigators, combined with representation from a range of the Centre's external partner organisations.

The composition of the panel will reflect the principles and values of the Centre.

## 6. Timetable

The timetable for the 2023-24 call is included below. Note this will be reviewed and may be adjusted for future years.

Fund launch	Monday 4 September 2023
Webinar	Thursday 5 October 2023
Application deadline	Monday 15 January 2024 (no later than 4pm GMT)
Review proposals	January-February 2024
Successful Applicants Notified	Mid-March 2024
Contracts agreed	March-April 2024
Projects commence	Early May 2024
Projects conclude & report	End April 2025

## 7. Application Form

Applications should be submitted using the application form. For reference this includes the following sections:

- Project PI
- Project title
- Brief project summary, including aims, methods, impact (maximum 50 words)
- Chosen thematic steer/s
- Co-applicants
- Partner organisations

- Project aims (maximum 200 words)
- Brief summary of the research need/problem, indicating how this relates to the mission and research of the ESRC Centre (maximum 300 words)
- Academic and practical significance (maximum 200 words)
- Project work plan, design, methods, data collection and analysis (maximum 2 pages)
- Anticipated deliverables, outcomes, impacts and follow on plans (maximum 1 page)
- Ethical approach and fit with Centre values and principles (maximum 200 words)
- Expertise of the research team and relationship with the project partners (maximum 200 words).
- How the PI is well placed to lead the project and how they see themselves benefitting from an ECR Development Grant and the support provided by the Centre (maximum 300 words)
- Project costs (see below)
- Justification of costs (maximum 300 words)
- Letter(s) of Support from Project Partners (outlining any match commitments)
- Letter of support from the lead institution (where the PI is based) - this must be provided by someone with authority to sign contracts and in-kind commitments on behalf of the institution, e.g. a Head of Department/School/Contracts team.

We ask applicants to adhere to the word count limits provided. Please note a list of references can be provided as a separate supporting document if required.

### *7.1 Budget*

A breakdown of the total cost of the project should be provided in the table included in the application form. This should include the total anticipated costs per budget item, and details of the funding requested. A justification of all costed items should also be provided.

Please note that Directly Allocated (DA) costs are not eligible (other than a contribution to the PI salary costs, up to 50% of the total grant value). Applicants should include other relevant DA costs as an indicator of institutional in-kind support, but a zero value should be entered against these in the 'Amount requested' column. Where in-kind support is indicated, these should be included in the 'Other costs' section.