**Multiple Long-Term Conditions Challenge Fund**

**Round 3 – Amendments from Round 1 & 2 and FAQs**

This document summarises some key changes and learning points from Round 1 & 2 and guidance from the panel on writing successful applications to this scheme.

Q. What were the main shortfalls from applications submitted to round 1 & 2?

1. Projects that were **overly ambitious** for the duration of the project and resources requested. Applicants should consider carefully the feasibility of achieving their stated objectives. Projects do not have to cover the entire scope of the MLTC programme.

2. Applications that were **under-resourced**. Applicants should carefully consider the amount of work undertaken by research assistants or other staff. Teams often were missing key skills required for their project. For example projects with qualitative/quantitative methodologies should ensure they have sufficient qualitative/quantitative expertise in the applicant team.

3. Projects that were not **clear about their research questions and methodology used**. Applications should clearly describe their research questions and what the project aims to achieve. Feasibility studies are within scope, but the primary objectives should be framed accordingly. Applicants should be clear what research questions the data are able to answer and ensure the study is sufficiently powered.

Changes made to the application form and advice when planning your project:

* The maximum duration of projects has been extended to 24 months.
* The maximum budget amount has been increased to £175k.
* Applications must include a timetable/workplan. This may be in the form of a Gantt chart, but should convey a timetable for achieving the stated objectives (new section of application form added).
* Projects should be realistic about the amount of time it takes to start their project including securing ethics, recruiting researchers, and conducting their research and analyses. Projects should be feasible to start within 3-6 months from the communication of the outcome.
* Applicants should indicate if the project is part of a larger study or can take advantage of aligned infrastructure and support which will enhance the feasibility of completing the project within the stated timelines and budget (new section of application form added).
* Projects should ensure they include all costs necessary including patient and public involvement, statistical support, data linkage costs etc.
* Applicants should carefully describe the objectives of the project and the questions the project will address and link these closely to their methodology. If including quantitative analyses make clear whether the data has the statistical power to answer the stated questions.
* Be realistic about the questions that your data can answer, and the limitations of that data. For example, do you have sufficient data to match for confounders or to look at interactions between factors specified in your research questions? Have you considered the prevalence of conditions in your cohort population?
* Applicants should think carefully about their methodology. Some applications that combined qualitative and quantitative analyses did not sufficiently convey expertise in both aspects. If you are using a mixed method approach be realistic about the amount of work required for this, and the rationale for use of both methods.
* Applicants should think carefully about how the project will inform actionable work. Guy’s and St Thomas’ Charity’s Multiple Long-Term Conditions Programme is a 10-year programme, investing in slowing down progression from one to many conditions, with a focus on Lambeth and Southwark. Implementation science and applied research in partnership with practitioners in our place which will have a tangible impact within our place will be warmly received. As such projects which aim to develop or test actionable interventions are particularly welcomed.
* Applicants should think about the wider determinants of health, particularly social determinants (e.g. employment, financial and housing circumstances). This is key to understanding who is at greatest risk of progression to multiple conditions and what is most effective in slowing down people’s journeys. Projects examining the social determinants of health are particularly welcomed.
* We encourage applicants to talk to the Research Design Service (<https://www.rds-london.nihr.ac.uk/>). The RDS offers drop-in sessions or you can request support (at least 4 weeks in advance of the deadline). Other sources of support include the research development team at KCL (<https://internal.kcl.ac.uk/innovation/people/teams/Research-Strategy-Development>), the Unit for Medical Statistics (<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/lsm/research/divisions/hscr/research/groups/biostatistics/biostatistics>) and GST Charity Multiple Long Term Conditions Programme team (Jen Taylor-Watt Jen.Taylor-Watt@gsttcharity.org.uk and Barbara Reichwein Barbara.Reichwein@gsttcharity.org.uk ).

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