Building Brighter Futures Learning & Evaluation Partner Questions & Answers

We have collated the questions provided in advance and during the Q&A session for prospective applicants, held on 10 February 2026, into categories below. If you have any further questions, please email naomi.brill@maudsleycharity.org and yasemin.kirgin@maudsleycharity.org. The deadline for submissions is 5pm Tuesday 24 February.

Contents:

Questions	Answers
Priorities for the Partner	
The Partner role covers quite a broad mix of evidence, learning and influence. In the first year or so, where would you most like the Learning Partner to focus their energy? What elements of the learning/evaluation are key to decision-making? Noting that the tender has a focus on both learning at a portfolio level and cost vs. value analysis.	In the first year, we would like the Partner to become familiar with projects, their activities and their evaluation and learning plans; and create a programme wide evaluation and learning framework and workplan. We've identified the key learning questions as a starting point in the tender document, and we would like to work with the Partner and steering group to develop this further; but our initial priorities are to understand what interventions are proving most effective in improving children and young people's mental health, and why. For example, what are the 'active ingredients', this could include contextual factors such as community setting, partnership structure, family involvement etc. We are also very interested in what is effective for particular groups, especially Black children and young people. Regarding cost vs value, we know that commissioners look for this, and it is often a crude measure. We also know that the NHS is judged on productivity and that preventative approaches are more cost-effective in the long run than treatment – we are interested in understanding how we can usefully add to the evidence in this area.
Scale of the work	
Is the primary focus of this work on the 11 Building Brighter Futures projects and the 2-4 projects that will be awarded in 2026, or just the 2026 projects?	The scope of the commissioned work covers the 11 existing projects, which have recently started, and may include additional projects in the future (this has not been decided yet).

Questions	Answers
Could you provide any more detail on the types of projects that you will be looking to award in 2026 and how they are different or similar to the existing projects in the portfolio? What do you anticipate the number of projects being per year from years 1 to 3?	

How success will be assessed

Questions	Answers
Beyond the delivery of formal outputs, how will the success of the Evaluation Partner be assessed? You mention ambitions to influence practice beyond south London. By year three, what would meaningful influence look like for you? Which audiences do you most hope the evaluation and learning insights will reach (e.g., funders, commissioners, policymakers, delivery organisations), and what kinds of decisions or change would success look like over three years?	Beyond formal outputs, success would be strong communication between the Partner and Maudsley Charity, equitable evaluation processes, and strong sector and place-based knowledge and connections. The outcome of the Partner's work will enable us to identify what has worked well in cross-sector partnership delivery and which interventions prove most effective in improving children and young people's mental health, and why. As a result of knowing these things, we can work out what meaningful influence looks like – likely greater impact and sustainability of the practices delivered by grant holders. We would also like the Partner to explore opportunities to amplify and sustain the benefits of the portfolio beyond the current funding.

Field specialism expectations

Questions	Answers
How important is deep prior specialism in children and young people's mental health compared to experience in learning-led, systems focused evaluation across complex health or social systems?	A field specialist would be an advantage, however if you have clear learning and evaluation expertise and a great profile in adjacent sectors then this will be considered as a real strength.

Questions	Answers
Health economics assessment	
Is a Health Economic Evaluation expected as part of assessing project sustainability and potential extension? What is the expectation for the weighting of the health economics assessment within the overall budget? Are all funded projects capturing evidence that is expected to lend itself to economic assessment? What are your expectations for the economics assessment?	We would ideally like a health economics assessment to be carried out, taking into consideration cost vs value in the context of complexity of need, and would like to explore what is reasonable within the budget and scope of the commission alongside the Partner, noting that not all projects will be capturing evidence that may lend itself to an economic assessment (if you take into consideration their current Standards of Evidence levels).
Capacity building vs portfolio-wide learning	
Projects start from different places on the Standards of Evidence scale. Are you hoping the Partner will help projects strengthen and progress their evaluations over time, or is the emphasis more on working pragmatically with what's realistic and drawing learning across that variation? Typically, in these roles, granting partners have limited capacity to collect data, so we usually build from strengths and use lots of different types of existing data to build a picture at the portfolio level, complemented with some primary data collection where there may be specific gaps in learning questions. As this is co-designed in partnership with partners and children/young people, is this the expectation, or would large pieces of independent work, which may use up grant holder capacity - e.g., economics assessments be preferable?	Evaluation and evidence generation is a core part of this funding programme, however we take a proportionate, open and trusting approach to reporting and evaluation, so do not expect a certain Standard of Evidence level to be achieved if it is not appropriate/relevant for a project to do so. However, we would like the Partner to identify (where appropriate) light-touch support which could be provided to grant holders to build their capacity and increase the robustness of their evaluation practices. This may be carried out by the Partner through individual coaching or during the learning sessions, or by Maudsley Charity's Evaluation & Learning Manager (who will be in post ~July – recruitment for this role is due to go live on 9 March, so please share with your networks!)

Questions	Answers
How do you see the balance between strengthening individual project-level evaluation and producing portfolio-level learning and synthesis? Where would you expect the Learning & Evaluation Partner to focus most effort? What does light-touch support look like in practise?	Portfolio-wide learning should take precedence over capacity-building of individual grant holders, and we expect the Partner to draw on other data, alongside that provided by the grant holders, to develop evidence and learning at a portfolio level. (See above re: economics assessment).
Steering group	
Please can you confirm who would be responsible for recruiting and managing the steering group? Is there an opportunity to build a specific steering group which includes and/or represents the cohorts supported by the funded projects. Is there a pre-existing young people's group for the programme that we could tap into for the evaluation? Do you have a young people's group at Maudsley Charity that might like to be involved in this work and, if not, is there any potential for bringing together a group from the funded organisations? Would the appointed supplier be responsible for identifying and recruiting the steering/advisory group?	We would like the Partner to recruit for, set up and manage the steering group for this piece of work. We expect the group to include a variety of stakeholders, including young people with lived experience of the risk factors ideally from our four key boroughs, family members, practitioners, as well as grant holders and Maudsley Charity representative where appropriate. We have been working with a group of Young Advisors to review grant and tender applications, and feed into the design and delivery of Building Brighter Futures, through a partnership with Leaders Unlocked. The Young Advisors have been recruited from the four boroughs where the projects are based (Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark), and some may be using their services/have been involved with project organisations. These young people were recruited on the basis that they have lived experience of the risk factors the programme is based on and have an interest in children and young people's mental health.

Questions	Answers
Does Maudsley Charity already have a youth panel or youth representatives that we could seek to engage in the SG/Advisory group?	If you don't already have an existing group, you could consider working with Leaders Unlocked (working together with Maudsley Charity to align to the work that we are doing with them).
The steering group will be "managed" by the partner, but is the expectation for the partner to recruit the group too? If so, what is your recruitment criteria for this group? And if not, who will be recruiting this group?	Involvement of grant holders in the steering group could also be considered. We would be interested in your views on how, if they were involved, this could be achieved effectively. There are some projects with a dedicated evaluation person within the team, and they may have the desire and capacity to explore this. If there was a grant holder that could represent the cohort more broadly, beyond their specific team, that could also be appropriate.
Could you clarify your expectations around access to a steering or advisory group that includes young people? Specifically, should the Learning & Evaluation Partner bring established youth advisory structures, or would they work with Maudsley Charity's existing networks and governance arrangements?	
Can you please clarify if the steering group needs to include representatives from the grant holder projects?	
Mapping interventions against mental health need	
When referencing the need to map support options, you reference 'severity of mental health need'. Please can you clarify what you mean by this? Is it the need for interventions within a geographical area, need for a demographic of people, or the specific severity of an individual's mental health need?	The programme is focused on children and young people with emerging and developing mental health difficulties, and we know there will be a range of need within this. We would like to have a visualisation that maps the interventions across a spectrum of need.
Risk factors	
What definition of deprivation are you using? If you are using IMD, are specific sub domains such as health given additional consideration?	We have not given a specific definition of deprivation however, when we carried out the research and development that underpins the

Questions	Answers
	programme's focus and aim, we used the IMD data to understand the relationship between poverty and developing poor mental health.
Literature review	
Are you looking for a stand-alone literature review as an output or are you looking for the findings of the evaluation to speak to the relevant literature?	We would like the Partner to draw on wider evidence and literature in children and young people's mental health to contextualise project findings within the broader field and policy landscape. We are not expecting the Partner to produce a literature review as an output itself.
Tender application	
Is the £255,000 budget intended to cover all evaluation, learning, engagement and dissemination activity, or are there elements (e.g., events, communications, youth participation costs) outside this contract? How should we handle inflation? Are we expected to build in annual uplifts into the budget template, or will Maudsley account for that centrally? Are you scoring the costings submitted? Do you have details on scoring in terms of weighting of each question? What decision-making approach does MC use as an organisation? Would you be open to video submissions for the questions reviewed by the young people's advisory panel?	The £255,000 budget should cover all activities, except for venue hire and catering of the learning sessions. Maudsley Charity will separately cover the costs of producing the final report and the dissemination event. We have factored inflation into the budget already. Please note in your application budget if this will not be possible for you. The budget and value for money question will be scored along with the rest of the application. The higher weighted questions are those on experience and expertise; approach, methodology and capacity; and budget and value for money. We will be sharing a selection of questions with our Young Advisors who will be providing feedback. Applications will be scored internally by the Programme Lead, Head of Impact & Effectiveness and Grants

Questions	Answers
The tender outlines a broad range of areas and questions. Are these intended as areas for applicants to respond to and shape, or as fixed requirements that would be written into the contract and monitored? How much detail are you expecting in the submissions around what the evaluation methodology would look like if co-production processes are used?	Programmes Officer, with the highest scoring candidates being interviewed by the Programme Lead, Head of Impact & Effectiveness and Director of Programmes. We will bring our recommendation of the selected Partner to our Board of Trustees for final approval. As long as the questions are addressed in full, we will accept video submissions for the questions reviewed by our Young Advisors. The first question (suggested word count 200) shouldn't exceed ~1.5 minutes of speaking. The second question (suggested word count 400) shouldn't exceed ~3 minutes of speaking. We don't expect applicants to respond to the learning questions in the application itself. Once shaped, they will form part of the Partner's workplan and objectives. If you are building co-production processes into your approach, we appreciate that the detailed evaluation methodologies will be unknown until you have carried out the co-production practices. In your application, it would be great to hear about your approach to co-production and your past experiences of evaluation methodologies for similar pieces of work.
Reporting and learning outputs	
What is your anticipated frequency of reporting? It would be great to get a little more detail on how joint ownership of outputs is intended to work in practice. In particular, would partners retain independence over findings and messaging? And would we be	We would like the Partner to share an inception report and evaluation framework within the first 6 months, annual reviews of findings, and a final report at the end of the commission.

Questions	Answers
able to publish related blogs or additional content on our own websites?	There may be scope to extend the contract beyond 3 years – if so, an additional report would be expected alongside other learning outputs. We really want to share the learning for this work and work together to produce creative and accessible outputs. We encourage the Partner to produce blogs or articles, for example (Maudsley Charity must be referenced accordingly). We want this to be an independent evaluation so we will not influence the findings, however we would reserve the right to edit for accuracy, if that was appropriate.
Research ethics	
Do you have any specific ethical requirements that we need to take into account? Do you anticipate the need for ethical approval for this assignment?	As part of the tender application, we would like to understand the Partner's approach to research ethics, however we don't have an ethics approval process at Maudsley Charity. Other than collecting qualitative evidence for case study materials, majority of the raw data will be collected by grant holders (see below re: grant holder data collection). At interview stage, we will share our safeguarding policy, safeguarding code of conduct and supplier minimum standards (or earlier upon request). If successfully through to this stage, tender applicants will be expected to read these and confirm their compliance.

Questions	Answers
	At this point, we will also ask applicants to provide their organisation's policies and approaches on safeguarding, data protection, governance and research ethics. All contractors delivering projects for Maudsley Charity where they come into contact with vulnerable adults or children must agree to comply with our policies as part of the terms of their contract. Anyone who has direct contact with children, young people or service users must have an up-to-date Basic DBS check.
Partner contract	
Do you plan to administer the evaluation as a grant or a contract? At what point in the project timeline would Maudsley Charity determine an extension is needed? Is there an allocated budget amount already set for this possibility?	This commission will be administered as a contract. The potential contract extension is beyond our current strategy period so we cannot budget for this at this time. Planning for the next strategy period will likely start in 2027, and we anticipate we would inform the Partner of whether there will be an extension at this point.
Grant holders' awareness of the external evaluation	
How aware are projects about this evaluation/learning partner commission and what is their willingness to engage with the evaluation? Will projects have permission to share data from any tools that they use with the evaluator?	All grant holders are aware of the learning and evaluation commission and expressed willingness to engage. We shared an extract of the tender briefing (including the learning questions and methodology and approach section) with grant holders and invited them to feed back before we opened the invitation to tender. During project set-up meetings, we requested their permission to share data, but the Partner will need to work with each grant holder to identify the datasets that they require to carry out their evaluation

Questions	Answers
Are all funded projects aware of the external evaluation, and if so, have they agreed for data and reporting to be share with the evaluation, and to participate in the evaluation?	study (acknowledging that some sensitive data may need to be shared and therefore permission needs to be granted).
Grant holder data collection	
Are projects using the same or similar tools to measure mental health and wellbeing? If so, what are these? And are there expectations on when they administer these with young people, e.g. baseline, half-way and end of intervention? Are you asking projects to collect any consistent management/monitoring information, including any standard outcome measures? What data will be made available to the successful partner? • Which outcome measures have been collected to date? • What patient-level data (e.g., demographic variables) will be accessible for analysis? • What is the current quality, completeness, and readiness of the data that will support assessment of intervention effectiveness? What are the expectations around grant holders' individual evaluation including: a. Frequency and content of progress reports b. Involvement of project partners in reporting To what extent are the funded projects capturing evidence using standardised/consistent metrics across them all? Or are they	Evaluation and learning are key elements of the Building Brighter Futures programme. The assessment process looked carefully at the evaluation plans, outcomes and data collection methods. Each grant holder is responsible for developing and delivering to their own evaluation plan. There are some common tools, e.g. WEMWBS that are being used, but not across all projects. It's important for us to take an open and trusting approach to grant-making, which includes not being prescriptive about the outcomes, indicators or methods of evaluation (as long as there is alignment with our Change Model) or for grant holders to request data from project participants that isn't relevant to the intervention that is being delivered. We acknowledge that it makes aggregation unlikely in some cases. The only standard data we are requesting from grant holders is reach (direct, indirect and wider) and demographics of project participants (but only the categories/protected characteristics that are relevant to their projects and evaluations). We would like the Partner to undertake a review of data that the grant holders stated that they plan to collect in their applications.

Questions	Answers
conducting bespoke evaluations/monitoring, exploring different indicators? How extensive are the evaluation expectations of grant partners, and how consistent is the data arising from these likely to be? I see that one of the deliverables is to establish baseline data across the portfolio, but have any data been collected so far, such as from any routine outcome measures?	This is to help us establish a starting point (baseline) for the evaluation and learning framework. 11 of the Building Brighter Futures projects started between Nov 25 – Jan 26 and majority are expected to run for three years. The grant holders will be collecting data and reporting progress to us annually. We expect grant holders to submit annual progress reports which cover a range of aspects, including what's going well, what's not going well, progress against the original budget, progress against project outcomes, and lessons learnt. Responsibility of the progress reports sits with the lead grant holder of each project, but delivery partners are expected to feed in.
Grant holder touchpoints	
What are the other requirements of the grant holders and moments of engagement within the programme (individual and group)? Is there already a Community of Practice/any kind of forum in which grant holders come together in place?	We plan to hold at least two check-in meetings with each grant holder/project team every year. We will also be organising two learning sessions a year which will be co-created with grant holders – these however will not be mandatory for grant holders to attend. The Partner will be expected to meet each of the grant holders and, if possible, visit each funded project, at least once a year to engage with delivery teams to capture qualitative insights and the active ingredients behind what's working well.

Questions	Answers
	There may be other touchpoints with Maudsley Charity's Comms and Impact teams.
Learning sessions	
Do you have any preferences in terms of the scale of communities of practice? What would projects feel is manageable? To which specific services, teams, or staff groups would the successful partner be expected to deliver reflective practice across the programme?	We expect to run two learning sessions every year which we are planning to shape with the grant holders, but the Partner may not be required at all sessions. We would like the Partner to help us design and deliver relevant sessions for Building Brighter Futures grant holders, possibly grant holders from other programmes, possibly other unsuccessful applicants, and other key sector stakeholders to share insights, build evaluation capabilities, and encourage peer learning. There will be maximum ~50 attendees at each session and they will not be mandatory for the Building Brighter Futures grant holders. (NB: Maudsley Charity will hold budget separately for venue hire and catering).
Lived experience involvement and remuneration	
You're clear about the importance of young people's lived experience. How far do you see young people shaping the learning and recommendations, versus contributing to data collection and storytelling? Does Maudsley Charity have a particular policy regarding remuneration for those involved in co-design/advisory roles that we should take into account in our proposed approach?	We think that it's important to include a variety of stakeholders in the shaping of the evaluation plan and learning framework; young people being one stakeholder, alongside a range of different practitioners and professionals. The young people sitting on the Partner's steering group are unlikely to be involved in data collection and storytelling – this will be the

Questions	Answers
Should this be costed into the budget? Is there an expectation around what this figure should be?	children and young people involved in the grant funded projects (i.e. the project participants).
	We are in the process of developing an Involvement Policy (to be approved) that states that we will reward people with lived experience (e.g. children and young people) for volunteering their time, skills and expertise – this may look different for different activities.
	This should be included in the Partner's budget. In the context of this piece of work, it is likely to include children and young people, family members and community organisations. We are keen to make sure people's time is rewarded as appropriate, and any costs incurred as a result of being involved is renumerated accordingly.
	In respect to there being an expectation of a figure for this, we would be grateful for your steer on what you think is proportionate based on your experience.
Expected impact of projects	
Which methods or measures have been used to assess project impact from the lived experience perspective? Which methods or measures have been used to evaluate project impact from the perspective of staff or service providers?	In their application to the Building Brighter Futures fund, all applicants answered a question about the existing evidence and rationale for their project, which included perspectives of young people with lived experience and relevant professionals in the delivery of those interventions. We also asked projects to explain how the learning from co-production approaches had been taken into account in the development of their projects.

Questions	Answers
Pilot project review	
Which organisation helped you test the work previously?	We carried out an internal review of the three projects which tested the partnership approach between CAMHS and VCSEs – we didn't commission an external organisation to undertake an evaluation at this point.