

Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing (MICRA)

Seedcorn Funding Call 2020-21

The aim of MICRA seedcorn funding is to further ageing-related research within the University of Manchester. A maximum of £6K will be awarded per application. Applications must meet the following essential criteria, and will be awarded following a detailed review process involving a panel that includes co-funders:

1. The proposed research activity must be explicitly related to ageing
2. The proposed research activity must be interdisciplinary
3. The proposed research activity must lead to at least one specific outcome, such as a research proposal, a new network, an event, a working paper, report or journal article.
4. The award must be held by a University of Manchester member of staff, but can be used to fund collaborations with other institutions and/ or external partners.

A number of general awards will be made; in addition to these we specifically encourage applications to one of the following joint awards:

Joint Awards

Care & Repair England/ MICRA: one project will be supported by MICRA and Care & Repair England, an independent charitable organisation working to improve housing and related services for older people. Proposals are invited that inform the following topic:

Poor housing conditions can cause or exacerbate a range of physical and mental health conditions, increase risk of accidents, and reduce occupants' quality of life. Older people are particularly susceptible to experiencing these negative outcomes in properties that are in disrepair and/or exhibit category 1 hazards, most commonly linked to excess cold and falls risk.

Whilst regulatory enforcement powers to deal with these challenges remain with local housing authorities (Housing Act 2004) there is a national policy vacuum concerning improvement of the current housing stock, and an absence of specific capital funding to reduce the incidence of these hazards, particularly in the owner-occupied sector where most older people live.

Parts of the North West, West Midlands, Yorkshire & Humberside and the North East have some of the highest local concentrations of non-decent homes, whilst low-income older homeowners are the most likely occupants [Ref: [The hidden costs of poor quality housing in the north](#)].

We are inviting proposals that aim to describe the local responses to addressing non-decent homes by a number of local authorities in some of the most adversely affected areas (a minimum of six to include at least one rural area) highlighting the following elements:

- Does the authority proactively seek to identify non-decent homes and/ or the impacts on occupants, and/or address the problems identified, or is their position solely reactive should specific instances present themselves?

- Where non-decent homes occupied by older people, particularly low-income homeowners, are identified what local options exist to address these housing shortcomings (e.g. financial assistance in the form of grants or loans; advice, information and practical assistance to remedy the defects; service of legal notices or rehousing etc.)?
- What do key individuals in the local authorities consider would help them to reduce the incidence of non-decent homes in their locality, particularly for older homeowners?
- **Centre for Ageing Better/MICRA:** Two projects could be supported by MICRA and the Centre for Ageing Better, an independent charitable foundation working to help everybody enjoy a good later life. The proposed projects should not be for pure evaluation research; projects should be relevant to the UK. Proposals should look at inequalities in later life, especially as they relate to Ageing Better's priority goals:
 - Fulfilling work.
 - Healthy ageing.
 - Connected communities.
 - Safe and accessible housing.

The Centre for Ageing Better welcomes proposals that focus specifically on one or more of these areas, as well as the intersections between them, e.g. healthy ageing and communities.

- **Manchester China Institute/MICRA:** The Manchester China Institute at the University of Manchester and MICRA invite research proposals in the following area:
 - Ageing in China (and the UK), particularly multi-disciplinary projects that examine aging in China in a comparative context, especially those comparing China and the UK, as well as those that have an applied orientation.

Application process:

- a. Applicants are required to submit a written proposal for their research activity totalling no more than two sides of A4; please state if you wish to be considered for one or more of the joint awards.
- b. The application should clearly demonstrate that the proposed research meets the above essential criteria (items 1 to 4) and should include:
 - Outline of proposed research including research title or research question, methodology and expected outputs of the research
 - Summary budget of project costs
 - Names and affiliations of the research team (institution/school/ faculty/ discipline as applicable)
- c. Applications from early career researchers will be looked upon favourably.
- d. In order for the proposal to be considered interdisciplinary, there should be a minimum of two members per research team.

- e. The deadline for applications is **12:00pm, Monday 30th November 2020**; all submissions should be made via email to micra@manchester.ac.uk
- f. Funds must be spent by July 31 2021. MICRA will seek a short update in April 2021 (one paragraph) and a one page end of project report will be due by 30th September 2021 to MICRA and any project partners.
- g. The MICRA commissioning panel will meet in December 2020 with input from:
 - **Representative from Manchester China Institute**
 - **Representative from Care and Repair England**
 - **Representative from Centre for Ageing Better**
 - **MICRA Co-Directors and Institute Manager**
 - **MICRA Board Members TBC**

Terms and conditions

- Seedcorn funds can be used to fund a range of research costs including salaries, travel, events and consumables; it is recommended that you seek input from Research Support Services around costings.
- Please confirm that your Head of School or Division supports your application (a line in your covering email)
- Publicity related to the research must include reference to MICRA and, if applicable, the body jointly supporting the award
- Successful applicants are required to submit a brief progress report (one paragraph) in April 2021, followed by a one page summary of research outcomes to MICRA (and if applicable, to the body jointly supporting the award) by the end of September 2021.
- Funded projects are expected to contribute to future MICRA seminars/events, and to inform MICRA (and any organisation jointly supporting the award) of any research successes such as subsequent grants, awards and publications.
- As soon as they receive confirmation of the decision, awardees should contact their school finance team to set up a new account for the seedcorn monies; this will be an AA code for the University of Manchester as the funding is internal. MICRA will transfer the funds to the nominated University of Manchester (or MMU) account code as soon as the details are sent by the awardee.
- Successful applicants will be notified in December 2020/January 2021.
- The awarded funds must be spent by the financial year 31st July 2021. It is the responsibility of the project investigator to manage expenditure and arrange for any unspent funds to be returned. The University does not permit funds in AA accounts to be carried over to the next financial year and MICRA is unable to arrange for any extension of the funds into the 21-22 financial year.

If you have any queries, please contact Kerry Jones, Institute Manager, MICRA
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