Applied welfare research 2024: Programme grants

Information about the call

This call includes four types of grants: project grants, programme grants, practice-oriented research fellows and collaboration grants. The call will help to strengthen client- and practice-oriented research within the social services' areas of activity. The research will be conducted in collaboration with relevant target groups. Project grants aims to support individual research projects. Programme grants aim to develop and strengthen research environments for long-term knowledge building and skills development over a longer period of time. Grants for practice-oriented research fellows aim to promote the connection between research and the practice of social services, and can be applied for by those who work with social services issues and who want to do part-time research. The collaboration grant can be used to fund activities that contribute to a knowledge-based and knowledge-developing practice within social services or to improve the conditions for practice- and client-oriented research, and which are carried out in collaboration between researchers within academia and enterprises and authorities within social services' areas of activity.

A total of SEK 182 million is set aside for 2024-2029.

The deadline for submitting an application is 14:00 on 25 October 2023.

Background

Forte is responsible for a national research programme on applied welfare research. The aim of the national research programme is to strengthen client- and practice-oriented research within the social services' areas of activity. Client- and practice-oriented research is based on questions that are relevant based on social services', clients' and users' needs, and can benefit and be useful to clients, the operations of social services and society as a whole. Research that is funded by the programme must be useful for social services to develop and improve operations, as well as users' living situations and conditions. Another of the programme's goals is to increase collaboration between research and practice, and to increase the participation of users and relatives in the research. The programme will also help to ensure that the research results benefit the surrounding community and are translated into development and improvement.

The research that is funded must meet strict quality requirements, address identified research needs and preferably cover several different disciplines and scientific competencies. Forte welcomes studies from different scientific approaches; qualitative and quantitative methods or mixed methods.

Forte Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare
Postal address PO Box 38084, 100 64 Stockholm **Visiting address** Ringvägen 100 **Tel.** +46 (0)8–775 40 70 **E-mail** forte@forte.se **Corporate registration no.** 202100–5240 **www.forte.se**

1 (10)

Focus

The focus of the call is based on eight priority areas. These are presented in more detail in the programme's strategic agenda. Applications for this call must address one or more of the priority areas below. Note that there is overlap between them and that an application can correspond to several areas. The examples of research needs mentioned in the texts should not be considered exhaustive, the call is also open to other lines of research that are related to the priority areas and the programme's goals, provided that the relevance to social services and users/clients can be justified.

1. **Effects of interventions**. More intervention research is required which evaluates the effects of the interventions used in social services based on individual outcome measures. Research is needed both on existing interventions as well as the development and evaluation of new initiatives. The social aspect of interventions needs to be highlighted, such as methods of reception, relationship-building and attitude. More research is also needed on the cost effectiveness of different interventions. More randomised controlled trials and quasi-experimental studies with a control group and repeated measurements are required.

2. **Methods for investigating individuals' needs for interventions**. Research on methods for investigating, assessing and describing individuals' problems, situations and needs for interventions. Quantitative and qualitative research are required to investigate reception, interactions and relationship-building and how this affects the assessment.

3. **Social services' preventive work and early interventions**. More knowledge is needed about the effects of social services' preventive, early and outreach interventions. In addition to an individual and group perspective, the research area also includes community-based social services. There is a need for research on effects and benefits of social services' involvement in community planning to help prevent social problems and help create a good social environment.

4. **Implementation, change management and improvement work**. Research is needed on methods for transferring new knowledge into practice as well as knowledge about how operations can be organised to create a work culture for learning and quality improvement. Research is also required on methods for systematic follow-up, for example development and research on planning and follow-up tools, for social services' core activities as well as for treatment operations.

5. **Coherent intervention chains and collaboration**. Research on coordination at the interface between social services and, for example, healthcare, schools, different authorities and civil society. The research needs to evaluate which effects coordination has on the users. Research is also required on cooperation between municipalities and within local social services, as well as on socio-economic aspects of cooperation.

6. **User involvement/participation**. It is important to develop and assess methods based on the users' needs and to organise the work and working methods in social services from a user perspective. Research on methods for promoting participation and influence, and which effects and consequences user involvement has. User perspective is also an important aspect in research in the other priority areas.

7. **Digitalisation and welfare technology**. Research on welfare technology to develop working methods, processes, organisation and interventions in social services. The area covers research on ethical and legal aspects of welfare technology, as well as health economics research on the effects of digitalisation and welfare technology.

8. **Non-profit and private sector organisations as executors of social services interventions**. Research needs to be supported on how changes to social services and the division of responsibility in the form of how privatisation affects users, the quality and content of services, as well as cost trends. The prerequisites for social control of this field are important research questions, as well as the question of how information for users/clients and relatives should be organised and implemented.

Cooperation between research and practice

The research funded by the programme must be planned and carried out in collaboration with the relevant target groups, for example, the relevant professions, user and pressure groups and/or users and clients. The purpose of this is to improve the quality and relevance of the research.

Collaboration can take place in different ways and can vary in intensity. It can take place through consultation of relevant collaborating parties, where they are given the opportunity to influence the design and implementation of the research. Collaboration can also take place through more active cooperation, where the collaborating parties are involved as participants in planning and implementing the research. The research can also be conducted in partnership with several or all of the stakeholders affected by the relevant research question. However, the degree of collaboration should be guided by the focus and questions of the research. Simply involving users and clients or other collaborating parties in the role of objects of study, or data contributors, does not meet the requirements of collaboration in research in the programme for applied welfare research.

Collaboration in research requires an approach in which the project is developed in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders. In the application, the process for this must be described, and how collaboration takes place in the different parts of the research process:

- The design of the study (or intervention)
- Data collection

- Data analysis[1]
- Interpretation of data[1]
- Dissemination of results
- Implementation

To meet the requirements for practice- and client-oriented research, as well as collaboration, applicants must demonstrate in the call that:

- the research question is a priority for these groups
- the outcome measures are important to clients and users
- clients and users will be involved in the research process and
- the costs of this are included in the project's budget.

Similar principles must be applied if the research is to be primarily carried out with practitioners or decision-makers or other relevant stakeholders. Forte is aware that it can be difficult to be explicit about the methods and approaches for collaboration when writing the application since these should be developed in dialogue with those who will be involved in the project. However, the application should be able to describe the different approaches being considered and the process for involving users, clients and practitioners in agreeing on the final methods and approaches for collaboration.

[Find out more about the principles of collaboration in research in the NIHR's guidance.](#)

Programme grants

Programme grants aim to build and strengthen research environments for long-term knowledge building and skills development in the priority areas described above. The investment will make it possible for research teams to tackle new questions and process them over a longer period of time. In addition to the fact that the programmes must answer specific questions, they are also intended to contribute to the building, development and consolidation of participating research teams. The programme must also bring added value compared to if the research had been conducted in individual projects.

The research programmes must be based on the questions and needs of the profession and users/clients. The programmes must therefore be planned and implemented in collaboration with social services, for example by regional support and collaboration structures (RSS), local research and development units within the social services, managers and staff or other relevant stakeholders, such as user and interest groups. The programmes should have an interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary approach in order to highlight challenges from different perspectives and scientific fields. There can be advantages in doing this through cross-disciplinary collaboration between at least two research teams with a complementary focus, and it should then be clear from the application how the programme's cross-disciplinary collaboration creates added value. Participating research team(s) must consist of established and junior researchers to facilitate the transfer of expertise in the programme. International collaboration is

---

[1] Collaboration in data analysis and interpretation of data can, for example, involve researchers discussing their results and conclusions with collaborating parties, and getting reactions and views which the researchers can then integrate into their continued work, that is, as a form of quality assurance.

encouraged. The programme plan must contain a clear description of how the research results are intended to be used within social services.

- **Grant amount:** Maximum SEK 24 million. Note that the max. amount includes indirect costs (OH).
- **Time period:** Grants can be provided for a period of six years.
- **Eligibility:** You are eligible to apply for a programme grant in this call if you have been awarded a doctoral degree by the date on which the call closes. The main applicant must be connected to an approved administrating organisation.
- **Restrictions:** In this call, a person can only submit one application as the main applicant for one of the three types of grant: project grant, programme grant and practice-oriented research fellow. In addition, it is also permitted to submit an application as the main applicant for a collaboration grant. There are no restrictions for applicants who also apply for, or already have, grants in Forte's other calls.

The application process

All applications must be sent via the application and review system Prisma. Before starting your application, make sure the following conditions are met:

- You have created a personal account in Prisma
- Everyone involved in the application as a participating researcher has created personal accounts in Prisma
- CV and publication details for the main applicant and participating researchers have been stored on the respective researcher's personal account
- Your administrating organisation has an organisation account in Prisma and has been approved as an administrating organisation at Forte. Find out more about Forte's criteria for approving administrating organisations »

One condition for your application being processed is that final accounts for any previous grants have been submitted. This only applies to grants where the deadline for final reporting has passed. We take into account any previously granted extension of the availability period and therefore the postponed date for reporting.

Since the applications will be assessed by international experts, they should be written entirely in English (except for fields where text in Swedish is specially requested). If your application is written in Swedish, the quality of the assessment is at risk. Forte accepts no responsibility for the quality of any translations.

For more information on how to write the application, see the instructions on the website for the call.

The assessment process
When you have submitted your application, it is passed to the review panel for assessment. The review panel is made up of researchers who are experts in their fields

and representatives of organisations in social services' areas of activity. Based on their assessment, Forte's board will decide which applications are to be accepted.

To be granted funding by Forte, an application must be of high scientific quality, socially relevant and feasible. Applications are assessed based on the assessment criteria and requirements below. The assessment is an overall assessment which weighs up all the criteria and requirements and relates them to the call and its purpose. Central to the assessment is how the applicant has justified the different choices made in the application (of question, theory, method etc.).

In cases where two or more applications in the assessment are assessed as equal, the review panel has the option of prioritising the applications from applicants of the under-represented gender in the first instance. By under-represented gender, Forte means the gender that has a lower award rate in relation to the application rate. In the second instance, the review panel can prioritise applications which contribute to greater variation in questions and topics among the funded projects.

[Find out more about Forte's processes for assessment and decision-making »](#)

Application requirements

All applications must meet the requirements below to be granted funding. Part of the review panel's overall assessment involves judging to what extent these requirements are met.

- The research must be relevant in relation to the focus of the call and the description of the type of grant.
- The application must address and justify whether a gender-perspective is applicable to the research and how this will be taken into account in the research.
- The research must be conducted ethically and the application must address research ethics aspects, and account for the handling of any ethical problems.

Assessment criteria

The various criteria are given equal weighting in the assessment, unless stated otherwise in the call text. The extent to which these criteria are met is part of the overall assessment by the review panel.

Scientific quality

- Purpose, research questions, theoretical framework and background
  How well and coherently the purpose, research questions, theoretical framework and background of the research are described, justified and grounded in previous research.
- Study design, empirical material and methods for data collection and analysis
  How well and coherently the research design, methods and empirical material are described and justified, as well as the appropriateness of these in relation to the purpose of the research, research questions, and the potential for relevant results.

- Originality
  The originality of the research and its potential to develop new knowledge (including novel methods, theories and/or data).
- Multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approach, where applicable
  The relevance of a multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approach, and how this is considered and justified in the application.

Societal relevance and utilisation

- Relevance to the wider community
  The societal challenges to which the research relates, how the research intends to help address these challenges, and how well the need for the research is described and justified to the research stakeholders, the general public and/or the wider community.
- Benefit for the wider community
  How the research is expected to lead to short or long-term benefit for the research stakeholders, the general public and/or the wider community, and how this benefit is intended to be promoted.
- Collaborating with the wider community
  How inclusion in the research process of actors affected by the research (such as users, patients, practitioners, professions, policymakers) has been considered and justified in the application, and, where applicable, how well this has been formulated.
- Communication of research results
  Whether dissemination of research results is planned for all relevant audiences, as well as the soundness of planned communication (such as in academic and/or popular science articles, books, seminars, workshops, training materials).

Feasibility

- Quality of the work plan
  The clarity and reasonableness of the work plan (including the schedule) in relation to the needs for conducting the research.
- Competence of the project manager and project team
  Competence and skills of the participants (based on previous experience and achievements) in relation to the needs for conducting the research.
- Staffing and budget
  Reasonableness of budgeted costs and participants' planned activity level for conducting the research.

Grant-specific criteria

- Skills and career development
  To what extent the programme facilitates the transfer of expertise between senior and junior researchers and how the programme contributes to junior researchers' career development.
- Added value of the type of programme

To what extent the programme creates added value for long-term knowledge and skills development compared to if the research had been conducted in individual projects.

Guiding questions

The guiding questions are based on the assessment criteria. The purpose of the questions is to provide support for applicants in formulating their applications and for Forte's reviewers in the assessment process.

General requirements
- Does the research match the focus of the call and the description of the type of grant?
- Can a sex and gender perspective add anything important to the research, and if so, has this been appropriately included?
- Is the research described in accordance with the principles of research ethics and good research practice and have any ethical issues been appropriately addressed? [Read more in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity »](#)

Scientific quality
- Is the need for the research well justified and grounded in existing research?
- Are the research questions well formulated and well substantiated?
- Are central theoretical perspectives and concepts well described and well justified?
- Are the research methods clearly described and are they best suited to answer the research questions posed?
- Have potential problems with the research methods (such as systematic errors) been taken into account as well as measures for dealing with these?
- Does the research have the potential to generate important findings and significantly advance existing knowledge in the field of research? Are theories, data, methods, etc. used in a novel way to answer the research questions?
- Would the quality of the research benefit from a multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approach, and if so, is such an approach used effectively?

Societal relevance and utilisation
- Are the research questions, outcome measures and central perspectives relevant to actors affected by the research (such as users, patients, practitioners, professions, policymakers)? Is this relevance well described and justified? Is a party missing who is important to the research or a central perspective in the project?
- Is there a well-described plan for how the research will be of use in the wider community and for the actors affected by the research?
- Will actors affected by the research be involved in conducting it? Is there a well-described plan for how and in which parts of the research process collaboration will take place? Are roles and mandates clearly described for the parties involved? Are there documents that confirm the collaboration (for example a letter of intent)? Does the project budget include costs for this collaboration?

- Is there a well-described plan for how the research will be communicated, both within academia as well as to the wider community and relevant stakeholders?

Feasibility
- Is the work plan realistic and suitable for conducting the research and reaching the set goals?
- Is it clear from the application that the project manager and project team have the competence needed to conduct the research and reach set goals?
- Are the budget and the participants' planned activity levels realistic and suitable for conducting the research and reaching set goals?
- Have potential problems or risks associated with conducting the research been described well, and is there any plan for dealing with them?

Grant-specific assessment criteria
- Are there prerequisites for junior researchers who are involved in the programme being able to learn from the senior researchers and in this way develop their skills and further their academic career?
- Can the programme as a whole contribute to long-term knowledge and skills development which the different parts of the programme could not do individually?

Guidelines for how Forte handles applications where parts of the research are to be conducted abroad

Forte looks favourably on international research collaboration. Forte's areas of responsibility cover complex social challenges where international research collaboration can make important contributions.

Forte's grants can be used to fund research where certain parts are conducted in other countries, but the research must be initiated and led from Sweden or a distinct part of the collaborative research.

Applications that include international collaboration are assessed using the same criteria as other research applications and by the same review panels.

In the assessment of the research applications, the reviewers in Forte's review panels must assess whether a potential overseas component of a project brings added value to the project or is a prerequisite for a project, for example with a global or comparative approach.

It is the responsibility of the main applicant to find out how their own administrating organisation views funding research where certain parts are conducted in other countries and to find suitable forms of collaboration in each specific case.

It is the administrating organisation for the grant that decides on and is responsible for appointing foreign staff, if necessary, or paying for activities and services that take place in other countries.

Plan S and open access

Results from research funded by Forte must be published with open access. Find out more about Forte's guidelines for publishing with open access »

SweCRIS

Forte sends information about awarded grants to SweCRIS, a national database of grant-funded research set up on behalf of the government. Find out more about SweCRIS »

Schedule

The call opens	2023-09-07
The call closes	2023-10-25
Forte's board makes decisions on funding	February 2024
The decisions are published	March 2024
Start of project	2024-04-01