

NUFFIELD COUNCIL ON BIOETHICS

Invitation to tender: deliberative public dialogue

The future of ageing inquiry

24 March 2022

Summary

Title of request:	Deliberative public dialogue: the future of ageing
Commissioning body:	Nuffield Council on Bioethics
Aim:	To engage with members of the public in a small-scale deliberative dialogue to test the recommendations developed by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics and its working group for <i>The future of ageing</i> inquiry. This will ensure we are advocating policy changes that are ethical, rational, informed and inclusive of public views and values.
Duration:	3 months
Key dates:	Closing date for applications: 14 April 2022 Shortlisted contractors contacted: 21 April 2022 Informal interviews: 28 April 2022 Contractor confirmed: 29 April 2022 Stimulus materials provided by NCOB: 13 May 2022 Start date / inception meeting: 20 May 2022 Draft report delivered: 19 July 2022 Final report delivered: 29 July 2022
Cost:	Tenders are invited in the range of £30,000 - £35,000

1 Introduction

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics (NCOB) is an independent body that informs policy and public debate on ethical issues raised by biological and medical research. It is

currently running a two-year inquiry on the ethical questions which arise in relation to the role of science and technology in helping people live well in older age.

The inquiry – titled [The future of ageing](#) – is supported by an interdisciplinary [working group](#) who are working alongside NCOB staff to develop recommendations for policymakers and other stakeholders on the key issues addressed by the inquiry. **The purpose of the deliberative public dialogue is to test these recommendations with members of the public to ensure, as far as possible, that we are advocating policy changes that are ethical, rational, informed and inclusive of public values and concerns.**

The public dialogue follows a number of smaller engagement workshops designed and run by NCOB and members of the working group. So far these have included working with diverse older people in Bristol, Manchester, and West Bromwich, including those with lived experience of racial, health and other inequalities. They have explored older people's views on how health and wellbeing technologies might, or might not, support them to live well in older age. More information on the first of these two workshops – which both used creative methods as a means of engagement – is available on our [website](#).

The deliberative public dialogue has a broader ambition, which is to inform the recommendations our inquiry delivers.

2 Background to our inquiry on ageing

Our inquiry recognises the increasing interest in the role that biomedical research and technological innovation can play in helping people live well in old age, and in helping society respond appropriately to the age shift in the population. Such research and innovation are very wide-ranging, and include developments in:

- **geroscience research**, aiming to intervene in the ageing process by identifying and treating the underlying causes of biological ageing, including through a better understanding of genetic factors;
- **assistive and communications technologies** to help people to stay connected and independent for longer; and/or to provide reassurance and support for families and other carers; and
- **innovative medical technologies**, including the use of AI, to support earlier diagnosis and treatment of diseases that commonly occur in older age.

Developments in these various fields offer scope for important future benefits, both for individuals and for wider society, and are currently being promoted in the UK through the [Ageing Society Grand Challenge](#). However, they also raise significant ethical questions. These need to be considered as early as possible, to minimise the risk that unexamined assumptions and approaches to ageing are 'baked in' from very early in the process of research and development.

Issues of concern include:

- **how the challenges and opportunities of ageing are conceptualised** – attitudes to ageing and stereotypes about ageing have a powerful influence

both on the targets of research and innovation, and on the way any innovations are likely to be designed and implemented;

- **how the aims of research and innovation in this field should be prioritised** – who developments are aimed at, who is most likely to benefit, and who has been involved in making those decisions?
- **ethical aspects of the design and conduct of studies**, including considerations of benefits and harms, inclusion and exclusion criteria for participation, and the role of diverse older people in co-design and co-production; and
- **how concern for equity can be considered** throughout the research process, including with respect to access to the benefits of research and innovation.

Our recommendations will aim to address these areas of concern, so that research and innovation aimed at older people's health and wellbeing are approached ethically.

3 Objectives

The aim of the public dialogue is to engage with a range of public voices to deliberate on draft recommendations we have developed for our inquiry on the future of ageing. To fulfil this aim, **the delivery of this dialogue is expected to achieve three objectives:**

- i. How members of the public can help NCOB gain an understanding of how its draft recommendations are inclusive of public values and considerations with respect to ageing?
- ii. How do members of the public feel the report recommendations could be refined and developed?
- iii. How do members of the public identify potential points of consensus and disagreement on the issues raised by our recommendations?

4 Recruitment of participants

Recruitment should be broadly reflective of the UK population including:

- Regional representation across the UK;
- Socioeconomic, ethnic, and gender diversity;
- Intergenerational age groups;
- Representation from people who live in large cities, small towns, and rurally; and
- Variation in people's attitudes towards health-focused technologies.

Contractors should describe how they will ensure that the final sample is diverse and inclusive of the categories above. Please describe the support you would provide and, if necessary, how you might make technology available to those who might otherwise be digitally excluded. Please also describe how you would manage to make enough time available to discuss our draft recommendations in depth, while avoiding fatigue.

Contractors should set out what the optimum number of participants should be, given the budget and focus of the dialogue.

Participant recruitment strategies and the design of the dialogue should be mindful of the ways in which the pandemic has affected people, so that we are still able to include and hear from people who may have reduced personal availability in this period.

5 Deliverables

Contractors should describe their approach for delivering the following:

- Dialogue process and materials
- Expert facilitation of the dialogue
- Demographic information about participants to monitor diversity
- Participation in regular project team meetings (with 1-2 NCOB staff and working group members)
- Quality assured final report with at least one draft and one comment round
- PowerPoint slides summarising key findings
- Visual presentation of the findings, such as infographics and quotes
- Media related to public dialogue activities, including photos and videos
- Willingness to attend and be involved in the launch event of NCOB's inquiry report

We would like the final report to have a **creative element** so that it's engaging for the reader. This could include, for example, infographics. Contractors should describe a plan as to how they would produce a creative final report with potential mixed media reporting elements.

6 Dialogue design

This specification does not provide a detailed design or methodology. We are open to carrying out the public dialogue either online or face-to-face. Contractors should propose an appropriate programme for development, delivery, and reporting to meet the objectives within the given timeframe, and to meet a budget of approximately £30,000 - £35,000. Please describe which method, either face-to-face or online, would be the preference for carrying out the public dialogue and explain the reasons why.

NCOB will supply its draft recommendations on the appointment of the contractor on **13 May 2022**.

For further information on the focus and approach of NCOB recommendations for previous inquiries, see our in-depth reports on our [website](#).

7 Media activities

We will communicate the outputs of the dialogue widely to stakeholders, policymakers, and the public. Media activities are likely to include a press release announcing the start of the dialogue project, and updates about the appointment of the successful contractor before the dialogue activities take place. These developments will be reported across NCOB's website, newsletter, and social media accounts.

However, media activities to highlight the findings of the dialogue are unlikely to take place until *after* NCOB's inquiry report is launched at the end of 2022. It is therefore important that the report of the dialogue remains confidential until that point.

8 Publication of written materials

All written materials generated during the dialogue project will be published on NCOB's website. We expect that the contractors will do the same on their website.

9 Evaluation

NCOB will undertake an in-house evaluation of the dialogue, with support from its working group members. This will not be published openly but will be used to inform NCOB's future engagement programme.

10 Timescales

Contractors should set out a timeline for each stage of the dialogue, including delivery, analysis, and reporting. They should demonstrate that they will be able to meet the following timescales for the start and end of the project:

Start date: 20 May 2022

Draft report delivered: 19 July 2022

Final report delivered: 29 July 2022

11 Budget

Tenders should demonstrate that the dialogue and its outputs can be delivered to a budget of approximately **£30,000–£35,000**. Please supply a breakdown of costs.

12 Project governance

The commissioning and reporting process for the dialogues will be overseen by a dialogue management group set up by the commissioning body, made up of NCOB staff and working group members, to liaise with the contractor and oversee the delivery of the dialogue.

The Contractor will be responsible for running the dialogue.

The Research Officer from NCOB will act as the first point of contact for the Contractor.

Contractors should allow for sufficient meetings with NCOB, including an inception meeting, weekly project update meetings, and a presentation of the findings of the dialogue at a final meeting for the project.

13 Consent for the use of project materials

The Contractor will ensure that dialogue events are recorded (in an appropriate and good quality format including audio, video, and transcripts), and that signed consent is sought from participants and other recorded stakeholders to enable the material to be used by the NCOB.

14 Data security

The successful Contractor must comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and any information collected, processed, and transferred on behalf of the

NCOB, must be held and transferred securely. Contractors must provide assurances of compliance with GDPR.

The successful Contractor will need to ensure that individual views of participants are not reported/published in any way that links them with personal details such as names and addresses of the participants.

The Contractor will, on behalf of NCOB, seek permission from public participants and stakeholders attending dialogue sessions to contact them again in the future, and those tendering should include in their proposal the arrangements for seeking this consent.

Participants should be offered the option of sharing their contact details if they wish to be updated about the project's progress. Those tendering should include in their proposal the arrangements to be made for secure transfer of participant details (names, addresses, etc) to the NCOB if participants wish to share their details.

15 Selection criteria

The evaluation of tenders will be subject to criteria including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- A. **Capability 60%** - the quality of the proposed methodology demonstrating an understanding of the project objectives and proposed methods for how these will be achieved, and the *suitability* of the proposal against the specification set out in the invitation to tender.
- B. **Capacity 10%** - sufficient resources for the requirements of the project with appropriate timescales and consistency of a core team.
- C. **Quality assurance 10%** - appropriate quality assurance processes and risk mitigation.
- D. **Price 20%** - demonstration of value for money.

16 Selection process

A commissioning team including representatives from NCOB and its working group on the future of ageing will assess each application and shortlist contractors based on the selection criteria listed.

Shortlisted contractors will be contacted by **21 April 2022**. Informal interviews with those who have been shortlisted will take place on **28 April 2022**. Contractors should ensure that they are able to be free for interview that day, as alternative dates will not be available.

NCOB supports the [guiding principles](#) for public dialogue on science and technology related issues as identified by the UKRI Sciencewise programme. Applicants should be guided by these principles as best practice in public engagement in their tender proposals.

17 How to apply

The deadline for submissions of full applications is **17:00 on 14 April 2022**.

Applications should include details and costings as outlined in this specification.

Electronic copies of the tender should be emailed to:

Molly Gray
Research Officer
Nuffield Council on Bioethics
mgray@nuffieldbioethics.org

Receipt of your application will be confirmed by email. If you do not receive confirmation within 24 hours of the deadline, please telephone +44 20 7323 6240.