## ASCENT: Seed funding call for Social Care Practitioners

The ASCENT Programme aims to facilitate several initiatives to enhance research culture and infrastructure in social care. The programme is funded for two years (April 2024 – March 2026) to support the delivery of practice-based research, the use of evidence in the commissioning and delivery of care services, and the improvement of practitioners’ research skills. ASCENT brings together local partners across social care, the third sector, and healthcare to build a diverse network.

ASCENT is hosted by [ARC EoE](https://arc-eoe.nihr.ac.uk/) and supported by the [Clinical Research Network – East of England](https://local.nihr.ac.uk/lcrn/east-of-england/) (CRN - EoE). ASCENT is a collaboration of key partners in Social Care, led by [[Prof Eneida Mioshi](https://arc-eoe.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/people/core-team/eneida-mioshi)](https://arc-eoe.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/people/core-team/eneida-mioshi) (University of East Anglia) and Prof [Kathryn Almack](https://arc-eoe.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/people/researchers/kathryn-almack) (University of Hertfordshire).

***This new ASCENT Seed funding call aims to support social care practitioners who would like to start or progress on their research development.***

## Who can apply?

This is an opportunity for individuals employed by Adult or Children’s Social Care Services in Local Authorities, by third sector organisations (i.e., charities) or private organisations (e.g., care homes) focusing on adult or children’s social care service provision, across the East of England region\*.

*\*You can see the five counties included in the ARC East of England remit* [*here*](https://arc-eoe.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/about-nihr-and-arcs)*.*

## What can I apply for?

Your Seed funding request can include protected time for research activities, for example, a backfill of 1-2 days/week for a few months. Other options include, but are not limited to, are training courses for research development (e.g., training on research methods, design, co-production, implementation), public involvement activities, conference participation, travel and accommodation expenses, short placement in an ongoing research study, or other similar research activities. We are happy to have a conversation to discuss what those activities might look like, or if you need tips/ideas for your proposed plan.

## What is the maximum amount of funding for which I can apply?

You can apply for a maximum of £2,000. The Seed funding will be allocated to your employer if you wish to backfill your working time. Seed funding can also be used to directly cover the cost of training courses or to claim research expenses, as agreed with the ASCENT team.

## When is the deadline to submit my request for the ASCENT Seed funding?

The deadline to apply for the ASCENT Seed funding is 11th of October. The outcome will be announced during the week commencing 18th of October. Your proposed research plan should be completed by the 1st of March 2025. Please note, awarded funding cannot be carried over the next year and must be spent by 31st March 2025.

## Application form

Please complete the following sections and return this to the ASCENT Project Coordinator, [Lida Efstathopoulou](https://arc-eoe.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/people/core-team/lida-efstathopoulou) (l.g.efstathopoulou@herts.ac.uk). Please keep the application to a maximum of 2 pages.

1. Please describe the research activities you would like to complete by using the ASCENT funding. Please include details about the cost of each activity.

*If you are applying for a backfill of your role, please add details about your current grade, annual salary (full time equivalent), start and end date of backfill, backfill cost and WTE. Please note that the cost of employer's contributions will be met but will not attract Full Economic Costs.*

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1. Please describe any prior experience you have in research, service evaluation, quality improvement projects or other relevant activities.

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1. Please explain how the proposed research activities will contribute to your career development as a researcher.

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1. Please explain how the proposed research activities will have an impact on social care practice.

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1. Please describe the timeline of your research activities or include a Gantt chart.

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