

## Network Facilitator for Esmée Fairbairn Foundation's New Connections funding stream

Invitation to Tender - by 17 March 2024

---

### 1. About Esmée

Founded in 1961, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is one of the UK's largest independent funders. In 2023, we provided £58.4m in funding towards a wide range of work in support of our three main aims: to improve Our Natural World, secure A Fairer Future and nurture Creative, Confident Communities. We also have a £45m allocation to social investments and a £10m allocation to impact investments. Our funds are generated by our investment portfolio.

[Our strategy is here.](#)

### 2. About New Connections

New Connections is a ringfenced fund of £1.5m to find and support organisations that could not, or would not, usually apply to Esmée. It is a “test and learn” fund for us, with the first phase running for two years from January 2024 to December 2025, starting with work led by and for communities experiencing racial inequity.

We have funded some significant organisations seeking to tackle injustice, including racial injustice, over many years. But we know that our funding criteria for annual income and governance have also limited access for newer, smaller, and historically under-funded organisations. With New Connections, we are testing a new approach to find and support them.

[Our news story about New Connections is here.](#)

We are reaching out to a group of organisations, identified through research, to:

1. Make around 20 grants of £60k for up to two years to organisations working across our strategy that are led by communities experiencing racial inequity, but do not meet our usual turnover or governance bar.
2. Set up a Network for funded organisations, co-designed by them, to enable peer support and learning, but also to help shape Esmée's future processes and funding practice.  
[see point 4 below]  
To support their participation in the network, we will provide an additional £10k over two years for New Connections network members.
3. Give additional capacity building support for organisational development, communications, finance – built around what the organisations want and need. This will be commissioned separately.

### **3. New Connections Network – purpose**

The New Connections Network will run from May 2024 to December 2025 and will have two elements:

- a) A programme of peer support and learning, and additional capacity building, co-designed by organisations funded through New Connections;
- b) Giving guidance, challenge, and advice to the Esmée Fairbairn team, in order to shape our future funding practice.

We will work with the New Connections Network Facilitator to make an initial plan for format, timing, and location for network meetings and communications, as well as additional capacity building support (this can be commissioned separately and integrated into the Network programme). However, it's important that Network members have a say in designing the network, so initial plans are subject to change following a co-design process. To support their participation, Network members will be given an additional £10k over two years.

### **4. The Network Facilitator – role**

- Connect, communicate with, and convene the funded organisations;
- Be a critical friend to Esmée, asking questions and making sure we are being both realistic and ambitious about what we can change;
- Enable learning - facilitate, make connections and enable shared learning and peer support amongst organisations we fund;
- Create a space of safety and hold space for diverse views – ensure that Network members feel safe to express their views, supported to participate, and able to contribute in the way that suits their needs;
- Add value – use their expertise, and draw together the expertise of the funded organisations, to advise Esmée on its processes and funding practice.

### **5. Network Facilitator – deliverables**

- a) Communications and planning
  - Set up the network and communications channels with Network members and with Esmée staff.
  - Initial co-design (with Network members) of a plan for learning and additional capacity building over two years.
  - Co-ordinate peer learning sessions, advice for Esmée, and commissioned capacity building into the Network programme.
- b) Peer support and learning
  - Maintain contact with the Network between meetings, sharing learning and actions from each learning event online in a light touch way (i.e. no long written reports).
  - Plan and facilitate up to 10 Network events (e.g. 4 full day and 6 short sessions) over two years with Network members.
- c) Advice for Esmée
  - Regular meetings with Esmée staff to discuss progress and plan Network events;
  - Manage Esmée presence at the Network meetings, ensuring that we are involved when it's helpful to be there, but don't limit conversations;
  - Ensure that challenge, advice, and guidance for Esmée is extracted from Network sessions and passed on in a useful way. – this might be in short learning reports, or

collaborative events. E.g. two learning events with Network members and Esmée staff intended to influence Esmée’s funding practice.

## 6. Esmée management

- The main point of contact for the Facilitator will be Esmée’s DEI Coordinator, Chebet Kuntai, with our three Funding Directors also being key contacts.
- Each organisation funded by New Connections will have a Funding Manager at Esmée, who will manage grant payments and any specific grant management issues (e.g. further grant decisions, risks, safeguarding). Esmée staff will book venues and catering for any in-person events, and commission and pay for any additional capacity building support.

## 7. What we’re looking for in a Network Facilitator

- Experience of facilitating and convening organisations to work together in a creative and inclusive way - with the aim of sharing learning;
- Knowledgeable about racial justice and understands the challenges for organisations working for racial justice in the UK;
- Awareness of the challenges of working in the Racial Justice space
- Experience of leading, supporting or working in a ‘start up’ or new organisation would be an advantage;
- A commitment to equity in their work – this might be through anti-oppressive practice, participatory methods, or working in a community-led way;
- Ability to maintain an online learning community (using online tools, social media or email).
- Evidence of a clear communication style; and
- A good working relationship with high levels of trust and honesty.

## 8. Timetable for the work

The contract will be for two years, beginning in May 2024.

We are approaching organisations now and hope to have made all our grants by the end of May 2024. We will work with a small group of funded organisations to agree this Facilitator appointment. We would like to bring the funded organisations together in June for the first time to discuss their goals for learning and support during the programme.

<u>Month</u>	
17 March 2024	Deadline for Facilitator tender documents
28 March 2024	Shortlist for interviews agreed and contacted
4, 8, or 9 April 2024	Interviews
11 April 2024	Facilitator appointed
1 May 2024	Contract begins
31 May 2024	New Connections grants offered
June 2024	First Network meeting

## 9. Budget

We have a budget of £50,000 for the whole contract – see deliverables at point 6. Proposals should be budgeted with this in mind and costings should include VAT and travel.

Esmée will arrange and provide any meeting rooms for learning events and pay for catering and travel expenses for participants. We will provide administrative support in organising events, but all event materials and outputs will be the responsibility of the Facilitator.

## 10. Confidentiality, Esmée's role, ethics, and conflicts of interest

- It's important for this work to succeed for the Facilitator to be independent from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and the Network members.
- If the Facilitator has, or is planning to apply for, funding from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, or is involved in other work we fund, we will need to discuss and agree how to maintain this independence and manage any conflicts of interest with care.
- As Esmée wants to learn from the Network too, we will need to agree formats for meetings and events so that Network members can participate fully. This might be a mix of Network-only meetings, and those which Esmée attends.
- There will be some areas of Esmée's funding practice that are more difficult and unlikely for us to change – e.g. direct support for individuals – and we will be clear about this with the Network members from the outset.

## 11. How to apply

If you are interested in tendering for this project, please send the following information to Gina Crane on [communications@esmeefairbairn.org.uk](mailto:communications@esmeefairbairn.org.uk) by 17 March 2024 (details below):

Your tender document, to include:

- A short response to this brief – maximum one page of A4 – saying why you or your organisation would like to deliver the work, and why you're well placed to do so.
- Links to two examples of recent relevant projects you've done (or a very brief summary of them).
- A breakdown of costs for the work, including day rates and details of who would deliver the work.
- Your CV, or relevant CVs of key people who would deliver the work.
- Contact details for two relevant references of people you've worked for.

If you have questions about this brief, please email: [communications@esmeefairbairn.org.uk](mailto:communications@esmeefairbairn.org.uk)