

# REIMAGINING RENT: PROGRAMME EVALUATION

## Invitation to Tender

Young Foundation / August 2017

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### Overview

The Young Foundation is seeking to commission an independent and expert organisation to conduct an evaluation of Reimagining Rent. Reimagining Rent is a housing ‘accelerator’ programme that supports innovations tackling vulnerability in the

private rented sector (PRS). The programme will begin in October 2017 and will run through to December 2019.<sup>1</sup> It is funded by The Nationwide Foundation. The evaluation will commence in Autumn 2017 and will run throughout the programme.

- An **initial formative evaluation** to support ongoing learning and development, and confirm progression to the next cohort
- An **interim report** based on formative evaluation to demonstrate progress thus far and to learnings on how to refine the next cohort
- A **final summative evaluation** assessing the impact of the programme on its beneficiary programmes and on the wider housing and innovation sector.

This Invitation to Tender (ITT) sets out the purpose and requirements for the evaluation and instructions for submitting a proposal.

## About Reimagining Rent

The private rented sector (PRS) has rapidly and disproportionately outgrown the social housing and ownership-occupation sector since 2008. In addition, 16% of PRS homes present a severe threat to health and safety.<sup>2</sup> With this in mind, it is clear that those at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum in the PRS are vulnerable in multiple ways because they are locked out of access to both social housing (typically reserved for narrowly defined vulnerable groups) and decent housing options in the PRS.

Reimagining Rent seeks to address these gaps in the existing housing sector in meeting the needs of people who are on low incomes and who are vulnerable. This focus on vulnerable renters reflects both the Young Foundation's commitment to tackling inequality and the Nationwide Foundation's charitable objectives. Reimagining Rent is based on the belief that some of these needs can be targeted by building a 'housing accelerator' – a network of housing innovations with the potential to scale. Through Reimagining Rent, the Young Foundation will work with around 30 existing housing innovations that tackle a broad range of vulnerabilities, both economic and social, across three cohorts (see project plan in Appendix 1). Reimagining Rent will provide a six month 'accelerator' programme of intensive innovation support through regular workshops and bespoke guidance, culminating in a Sharing Event, where each initiative will be presented to key sector stakeholders, potential funders and investors. Each innovation will have access to experienced mentors for strategic guidance and a financial coach to strengthen their financial model.

Reimagining Rent will build on the Young Foundation's previous work in tackling inequality in innovative ways, and draw from our expertise in incubating and accelerating social ventures. Our flagship social enterprise Accelerator programme, originally supported by J.P. Morgan and delivered across the UK since 2012, pioneered an approach based on rigorous business modelling combined with a commitment to understanding and maximising social impact.

The programme will result in a network of housing innovations with stronger business models, effective demonstration of social impact and clear plans to scale. The network

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<sup>1</sup> This is pending approval for Phase 2 and 3 by Nationwide Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Macdonald, K. (2016). The Government's Housing Policy for England. London: Royal Town Planning Institute.

will enable innovations to forge connections with other actors in the sector and across the innovation and funding community, enabling increased capacity and the potential for transformational partnerships. The programme will also influence policy-makers and thought-leaders, highlighting the role innovation can play in addressing key housing challenges. Through an energetic communications strategy, Reimagining Rent will mobilise change by sharing our learning with the housing sector, the innovation support community, policy makers and funders. In the longer term, we anticipate that the programme will initiate sustained improvement in providing decent housing for those most affected by the failings of the sector.

## **Theory of change**

### **Key programme activities**

- Tackling inequality will be at the heart of the design. In selecting participants for this programme, we will prioritise innovations that demonstrate commitment to meeting the needs of vulnerable groups.
- Each cohort of participants will undergo a structured six month programme culminating in a Sharing Event where each innovation will present their refined business model to potential funders and investors.
- We will build partnerships with housing organisations, funders and investors, social innovators, businesses and the voluntary sector
- An advisory group will be established to provide representative and specialist guidance on the housing sector
- A key feature of the support programme will be providing participants with access to mentors and financial coaches
- Each cohort of participants will present their refined business models to our network of potential investors and funders.

The delivery of the programme will be based on an interactive process between the following activities: research, communication and influence, workshop delivery, review and evaluation.

### **Specific objectives for Reimagining Rent**

- Up to 30 innovations with stronger business models and clear plans for growth and scaling, forming part of a national network of housing innovations committed to tackling vulnerability.
- The innovation community more motivated and inspired to address the housing needs of vulnerable people
- Clear recognition from the policy makers in the housing sector and from funders about the role of innovation to deliver results and a greater commitment to drive change.

### **Specific objectives for Reimagining Rent participants**

- Stronger business model and a robust financial plan
- A clear theory of change and clear metrics for evidencing impact
- Improved ability to articulate their proposition to funders and investors
- A strategy for growth and scaling leading to greater numbers of vulnerable people benefitting

- Stronger networks with other housing innovators as well as funders and investors

Figure 1 Reimagining Rent (aka The Housing Accelerator) Theory of Change



## **Purpose and aims of evaluation**

We will undertake an active learning process throughout the programme, consisting of both formative and summative learning and evaluation across the three cohorts. As part of this approach, we are looking for an evaluator who can help us incorporate feedback and learning from participants, mentors and coaches, investors and housing experts throughout the programme. This will inform the adaptation of the programme for the second and third cohorts. Ultimately, the effectiveness of the programme will be measured against the Reimagining Rent objectives and theory of change (outlined above).

We seek to commission an experienced independent evaluator to answer the following key questions, although we welcome evaluators to develop and refine these questions:

1. To what extent was Reimagining Rent designed, implemented and delivered effectively?
2. In what ways could Reimagining Rent have been implemented more effectively?
3. To what extent did Reimagining Rent achieve its intended objectives, outcomes and impact (as defined in the theory of change)?

We welcome proposals that will meet the challenge of producing an in-depth and programmatic evaluation of Reimagining Rent, as well as providing some insights into how the beneficiary innovations are themselves performing against the specific beneficiary objectives (as this is clearly indicative of the effectiveness of Reimagining Rent itself). However, we recognise that a thorough evaluation of each participating innovation is outside of the scope of this evaluation brief.

We also seek an evaluator who will work with us to further develop the theory of change and intended outputs and outcomes, which will be used to assess the programme. We welcome suggestions for the best ways of doing this, perhaps through a collaborative workshop.

### **Suggested 'success indicators'**

Below are suggestions for indicators to measure programme success at each cohort stage, but we welcome evaluators to share further ideas for success indicators:

- Numbers of participants recruited
- Level of engagement of participants
- Strength, relevance and size of network of mentors, coaches, experts and speakers
- Participant surveys and interviews to assess the effectiveness of the support programme
- The progress innovations have made, gained through feedback from mentors, coaches, funders and investors at the Sharing Event and our own assessment
- Feedback from funders and investors involved in the Sharing Event
- Numbers of blogs/newsletter items/contribution at events/engagement with the wider housing and innovation sectors and the reach and influence of the programme

## **Evaluation outputs**

The emphasis on these questions is likely to shift across the three cohorts of the programme. While the evaluations for Cohorts 1 and 2 are likely to focus on **identifying formative lessons learned**, the final evaluation after Cohort 3 is likely to focus on **assessing impact and making recommendations** for the future. We seek proposals for an evaluation design which will best utilise the resources available across the three phases of the evaluation.

The evaluation outputs can be broken down into three parts, however if evaluators believe there is a better way to use the available resources, then we welcome alternative suggestions for outputs. The suggested evaluation outputs are:

- **Short interim evaluation report** on Cohort 1 delivered by May 2018, focusing on the design of the programme and how it can be developed. This will be used to refine the programme for Cohort 2.
- **Formative evaluation report** delivered by February 2019, highlighting lessons learned, areas for development and any evidence of impact on objectives. This will be used to develop and refine the programme for Cohort 3.
- **Final evaluation report** at the end of Cohort 3, highlighting evidence of impact on objectives and recommendations for future delivery. If the programme is deemed successful, this report may be used to seek funding for the next iteration of the programme.

## **Evaluation methods**

We invite interested providers to propose a methodology which will best allow them to fulfil the aims of the evaluation within the required budget and timeframe, and in relation to the outputs suggested above.

We encourage the methodology to include the following elements:

- A mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Analysis of key programme documentation and monitoring data
- Drawing on the insights, perspectives and experiences of:
  - Participating innovations
  - Young Foundation staff and partners
  - Mentors and coaches
  - Investors (if applicable)
  - Housing experts (including a strategy for engaging these people in the evaluation)
- A combination of formative and summative evaluation elements across the three outputs
- Using the flexibility in distribution of evaluation time across the overall programme to design a coherent strategy to track progress and development over time
- A balance between an overarching exploration and assessment of the programme, as well as more in-depth analysis of key cases (e.g. individual innovations)

## **Selection criteria**

We will assess evaluation proposals against the following criteria:

- Extensive experience and successful track record of conducting longitudinal evaluations using mixed-methodologies
- Demonstrable knowledge and expertise in relation to one or more of the following areas: housing sector, vulnerability (in relation to housing), social innovation, programme or organisational evaluation
- Experience in conducting sensitive, ethical and inclusive research with a wide range of people, ranging from experts and policymakers to vulnerable and cross-community groups
- Ability to work flexibly and to be available for the lifetime of the project
- References from two previous clients

## Key dates

The table below presents key dates related to the commissioning and delivery of this evaluation.

Milestone	Date
Tender published	22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2017
Deadline for questions about tender	30 <sup>th</sup> August 2017
Answers to questions published	4 <sup>th</sup> September 2017
Deadline for proposals	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2017
Successful evaluation provider selected	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2017
Project launch	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2017
Interim evaluation report	May 2018
Formative evaluation report	February 2019
Final evaluation report	December 2019

## Evaluation budget

The budget for the evaluation amounts to £24,000 (including VAT). We will cover any travel and subsistence expenses incurred through conducting the evaluation up to the maximum, currently envisaged as £1,000, though some flexibility may be possible as per the proposal requirement. We invite proposals to include how staff time and resources are best distributed within the timeframe and budget in order to produce the evaluation outputs as effectively as possible.

## Submission guidelines

Please submit a proposal of no more than 10 pages to Radhika Bynon (Programme Lead) at [radhika.bynon@youngfoundation.org](mailto:radhika.bynon@youngfoundation.org) by **Monday 11th September 2017**. The proposal should include the following elements:

- A description of the provider organisation
- Understanding of our requirements
- A detailed proposed methodology
- Risk analysis
- Examples of three relevant research or evaluation projects delivered within the last five years
- Details of approach to project management, including a project plan
- Details of proposed team for the project (CVs can be included in an appendix)
- A full and fully inclusive cost breakdown (including day rates)

## **Questions about this ITT**

Any questions about this ITT should be sent to Radhika Bynon (Programme Lead) at [radhika.bynon@youngfoundation.org](mailto:radhika.bynon@youngfoundation.org) by 5pm on **Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2017**, with Reimagining Rent Evaluation in the subject line

