

*The Stena A Olsson Foundation's call for research proposals  
on the theme of children's and young people's mental health*

## **Research Programme: Mental Health of Children and Adolescents Collaboration Between Societal Actors, Prevention and Intervention**

The Stena Foundation welcomes applications addressing both individual and systemic levels in understanding and describing the prevalence of mental health problems among children and young people in Sweden, and how these can be prevented and mitigated.

The call concerns the funding of one or several major projects, potentially consisting of sub-studies that together shed light on the main question. Projects are expected to run for 3–4 years, with total funding in the range of SEK 10–20 million per project.

The research is expected to be interdisciplinary. Existing research groups may apply, but new constellations of researchers or research groups formed to address the research questions are equally welcome. The proposed projects should be problem-oriented and focus on possibilities to improve functioning at both the societal and individual levels. Prevention and intervention should be a clearly integrated component of the planned studies.

The interaction between individuals and various organizational and societal levels, as well as collaboration between different actors, are important aspects. Through this call, the Foundation aims to support research with strong potential to create conditions for positive change for individuals and society in both the short and long term.

The research should be characterized by an interdisciplinary approach, new and relevant research questions, innovative methods, and elements of prevention and intervention.

### **Background and Research Profile**

Interdisciplinary studies are needed to better understand why mental health problems among

children and young people are increasing, and what can be done to prevent and mitigate them. Such studies need to address both societal and individual levels in order to improve well-being, enhance opportunities for a good life, and strengthen young people's long-term participation in working life.

Mental ill-health among children and young people is often a complex condition. Many are affected by neuropsychiatric difficulties that may be exacerbated by social factors. Questions of particular relevance include how children with neuropsychiatric challenges can be identified, diagnosed, and supported at an early stage, in order to prevent social exclusion, learning difficulties, and prolonged school absenteeism.

Research may focus on environments such as preschool, school, after-school centers, the home, parents/caregivers, and involve key institutions such as preschool, school, after-school centers, student health services, child and adolescent psychiatry (BUP), primary care, social services, and civil society organizations. Of particular importance is how these institutions collaborate, how mental health is recognized, and whether children and young people receive the support they need.

Studies examining the impact of interventions targeting lifestyle factors such as sleep, digital media use, diet, and physical activity are also encouraged.

Comparative research analysing mental health among children and young people in Sweden in relation to other countries is also welcome. Such studies may focus on factors such as educational systems, grading practices, and transitions to working life, and if these can be systematically related to mental health and changes in mental well-being.

In general, applications should include a plan for intervention and prevention aiming to improve the mental health of children and young people.

## Application Procedure

### *Step 1: Preliminary Proposal*

A project outline of no more than 4 pages (font size 12, single spacing, including references) must be submitted digitally to the Stena Foundation no later than January 31, 2026.

Following review, a number of applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. The invitation may include feedback and recommendations from the Foundation regarding aspects that should be emphasized or clarified.

### *Step 2: Full Proposal*

The full proposal should not exceed 10 pages (font size 12, single spacing, including references).

## Guidelines for Applications

*(applicable to both preliminary and full proposals)*

### *Project Description*

The application should include a description of the overall aim and specific research questions, anchored in a concise account of previous research in the field. It should clearly specify the project's expected contribution in terms of originality and new knowledge.

If the project builds on previous research by the applicant, this should be explicitly stated. The proposal should outline how the research questions will be addressed, both in terms of theoretical framework and empirical approach, specifying whether relevant data are already available or how they will be collected.

The project's societal relevance should also be discussed. The project description must be written in English. A short summary in Swedish should also be included; this summary is not included within the page limits for the preliminary, 4 pages, or full proposals, 10 pages.

### *Project Participants*

The application should list all project participants and specify the scope of each person's contribution. A CV should be attached for each participant (maximum 4 pages for the principal investigator and 2 pages for other team members). CVs should include research qualifications, current grants, and up to 10 publications most relevant to the proposal.

### *Timeline and Budget*

The application should indicate whether the project duration is 3 or 4 years and include a work plan in the form of a Gantt chart.

The budget should specify annual costs for personnel, administrative fees, materials, and other expenses such as travel. One-time costs for data collection or data purchase should be itemized. The administrating institution must be indicated.

### Eligibility

The principal investigator must hold the title of Professor or Associate Professor (Docent) and should preferably be affiliated with a university or higher education institution in the Västra Götaland region or Halland.

### For more information

For more information, please contact: Erland Hjelmquist, Board member.

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### Address

The application is sent to Erland Hjelmquist, [erland.hjelmquist@stenastiftelsen.se](mailto:erland.hjelmquist@stenastiftelsen.se)

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