



Funding opportunity for DARE UK Community Groups: Working Group implementation

June 2025



1. Background

DARE UK Community Groups are collaborative environments established under the DARE UK programme's Community building, engagement & standards workstream to encourage different communities within the UK sensitive data research landscape to co-create components and pieces of work that align with the DARE UK programme's vision. With a focus on open communication and fostering the sharing of information and best practices, these groups will look to enhance sensitive data research and practice in the UK.

DARE UK Community Groups are modelled after similar groups at the [Research Data Alliance](#) and [IETF](#) and are established according to a charter outlined by the group conveners, which covers the 'why', 'what', and 'how' of each group. Each group will be subject to an [endorsement](#) process prior to set-up and will be guided by a [code of conduct](#) to ensure that community management best practices are upheld. The DARE UK Community Groups are open to anyone to propose, join and/or contribute to, and each serves a unique purpose.

There are two community group categories we fund: Interest Groups and Working Groups.

- **Interest Groups** are open-ended and focus on a broad-based challenge within the programme's scope. These groups will motivate Working Groups to address specific pieces of work. Illustrative examples of DARE UK Interest Groups include the [UK TRE Community Management and Engagement Interest Group](#) and [Public Engagement in Data Research Initiative \(PEDRI\)](#).
- **Working Groups**, on the other hand, are short-term (typically one year) in terms of their longevity and focus on specific, tractable pieces of work. The [AI Risk Evaluation Working Group](#) is one example of a DARE UK Working Group, producing a [report on the development of safe AI in sensitive healthcare data](#). They are generally linked to an Interest Group but may come from anywhere, providing they are within the scope of the programme and the sensitive data research landscape the programme is aiming to serve.

With funding from UKRI, the DARE UK programme is making up to £100,000 available to enable capacity to support the activities of DARE UK Working Groups to produce specific, community-defined outputs over a period of not more than a year from October 2025 to the end of October 2026. These working groups will often, but not always, be scoped and brought together out of existing DARE UK Interest Groups.

Additional funding is also being made available to support Interest Group activities in a separate funding call. Please see [our website](#) for more details.

2. Purpose of DARE UK Working Groups

Drawing together a diverse network of researchers and relevant stakeholders, DARE UK Working Groups work together to:

- Take forward and produce specific outputs to address identified technical and governance barriers to enable better data connectivity and cross-domain analysis.
- Review, evaluate and make recommendations on different tools and technologies, data standards, or governance models for more secure and efficient cross-domain linkage and analysis of sensitive data.

- Organise community events and/or workshops to enable knowledge exchange and/or gain wider community and stakeholder input into Working Group outputs.

Examples of Working Group outputs include, but are not limited to:

- Recommendation documents/green papers
- Open-source software (including documentation)
- Metadata schema(s)
- Best practice standards
- Academic papers

We invite all those interested in sensitive data research to propose new Working Groups to collaboratively tackle specific, tractable challenges in support of the UK sensitive data research community.

3. Funding opportunity

New **DARE UK Working Groups** can apply for funding of up to **£125,000** to support activities over a 12-month period from October 2025 to the end of October 2026.

Funding will be provided at 80% of the full economic cost, capped at a maximum of **£100,000**. Funding may be requested for specific, community-defined outputs and activities such as the following:

- Salaries and overheads for Working Group management, coordination, and administration.
- Salaries and overheads for Working Group members' time to develop and produce the Working Group outputs.
- Workshops and events, including venue hire, travel, and subsistence.
- Support for communications and engagement activities for monitoring and dissemination of Working Group outputs and software licenses.

4. Eligibility

Funding is available at 80% of the full Economic Cost (fEC) for all eligible organisations, up to a maximum of £100,000.

While anyone may propose the formation of a DARE UK Working Group, **only individuals affiliated with eligible organisations may apply for funding**. For full details on organisation eligibility, please refer to the [UKRI website](#).

Please note that [active Working Groups](#) that currently receive DARE UK funding are not eligible to apply. New Working Groups that do not currently receive funding are welcome to apply.

5. How to apply

DARE UK Working Groups seeking funding to support their activities need to have completed a [Working Group Charter](#) and [a funding application form](#). Detailed guidance on what to include in these is described in the charter template and funding application form.

All applications should be submitted by **18:00 on 4 August 2025** to enquiries@dareuk.org.uk with procurement@hdrug.ac.uk in cc and the subject title: 'Working Groups Funding Opportunity Submission'.

6. Selection criteria

Funding will be prioritised to Working Groups that bring together a new, diverse, and inclusive network of researchers and relevant stakeholders to achieve their goals through partnership working, evidenced by the inclusion of **co-chairs from multiple organisations** (at least two, but usually more) and including **at least one public contributor** (see Section 7 below) as well as broad-based representation amongst the wider group membership in the Working Group charter.

Although the charter and funding application can be led by a subset of the group membership (for example, the co-chairs), we expect the plans to be co-developed with all members of the Working Group. Only applications that all members of the Working Group have been consulted on and support (please confirm at the end of Q1 of the funding application form) will be considered for funding.

In addition to the need to demonstrate broad-based representation in the Working Group charter, we are particularly interested in funding applications that support partnerships working to address needs in areas including, **but not limited to**, the following:

- Technology/tool evaluation and comparisons in the (semi)-automation of Trusted Research Environment (TRE) operations (e.g. linkage of sensitive datasets by person, by place, etc.; privacy protection during data ingress; output checking; running AI/ML learning tools across TREs).
- Reviews and recommendations of data standards (e.g. open metadata for automated discovery and cross-domain data interoperability)
- Reviews and recommendations of governance models (e.g. standardising researcher or TRE accreditation; risk tiering of TREs; managing digital federations)
- Reviews of and recommendations of cost-recovery and other funding models for TREs
- Defining effective public engagement strategies around building and running secure, trustworthy infrastructure and conducting open, transparent research using sensitive data.

Teams must be able to start in October 2025 at the earliest and complete all funded activities by the end of October 2026 at the latest. As the Working Group funding period spans two fiscal years (October 2025 to March 2026, and April 2026 to October 2026). Please ensure this cost allocation is clearly explained in Section 5 of the funding application form. We encourage applicants to front-load as much of the costs as feasible into the fiscal year ending in March 2026.

Questions to be used by the selection committee for assessment are listed in the relevant section of the [funding application form](#) and will be assessed according to the [scoring criteria](#).

Selection will be based on the scoring criteria until the maximum funding is allocated, taking into account the portfolio of Working Group funding proposals with a balanced overall spread across the strategic themes, such as those outlined above.

7. Public involvement and engagement

DARE UK is committed to meaningful public involvement and engagement. For DARE UK-funded Working Groups, this **must include** public involvement in Working Group governance structures, with plans for at **least one public contributor** to participate as a Working Group co-chair. In addition to public involvement in Working Group governance, Working Groups **must also include plans to undertake other kinds of public involvement and engagement activities**, such as:

- workshops and focus groups with members of the public to seek public input into the Working Group's output(s)
- input of public contributors to review Working Group descriptions and outputs

[See the DARE UK PIE guidelines for more information on how to meaningfully involve the public in research.](#)

Public involvement and engagement (PIE) plans should be clearly embedded into project timelines and fully costed into project proposals. There is no upper limit for the proportion of the award that can be dedicated to public involvement and engagement, with a typical expectation of ~10% allocation to PIE, depending on the nature of the work being undertaken.

8. Timeline

- 9 June 2025: Funding opportunity opens.
- 16 July 2025: Public webinar and Q&A about the funding opportunity
- 4 August 2025: Funding opportunity closes.
- w/c 15 September 2024: Funding decisions communicated to applicants.
- 6 October 2025: Funded Working Group activities commence (earliest).
- March 2026: DARE UK Community Group annual plenary event.
- May 2026: Mid-point project report and check-in meeting to discuss progress and identify any bottlenecks.
- 31 October 2026: Final short report due detailing Working Group progress and outputs.
- 31 October 2026: Funded Working Group activities end (latest).

9. Enquiries

Please submit any enquiries or clarifications to enquiries@dareuk.org.uk and procurement@hdruk.ac.uk, with the subject title: 'Working Groups Funding Query'.

10. Terms and conditions

This award will be subject to the [UKRI standard terms and conditions for research grants](#), as well as the [MRC Additional Terms and Conditions](#). This award will also be subject to the [DARE UK Community Groups Code of Conduct](#) and any additional requirements as set out in the award letter.

11. Future funding opportunities for DARE UK community groups

DARE UK will likely run an additional funding call for community groups between 2026 and 2027. Indicative timelines for these funding calls and funding periods are below, but are subject to change.

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) and [subscribe to our monthly newsletter](#) to stay informed about future funding opportunities and programme developments.