



Department
for Education

Family Hubs - Growing Up Well: Local Area Partner (Round Two)

Application guide

August 2021

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1. Executive Summary

We are seeking completed expressions of interest (EOIs) from local authorities (LAs) with high levels of need and basic or higher levels of data maturity to partner with us on the Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project.

The Government has committed to championing Family Hubs. They are a way of joining up locally to improve access to services, the connections between families, professionals, services providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help. Hub buildings are supported by virtual offers, with services for families with children of all ages. How services are delivered varies from place to place, but these principles are key to the Family Hub model.

The Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project is a key part of this commitment and was funded directly by HM Treasury through the Shared Outcomes Fund. The purpose of this fund is to test innovative ways of working across the public sector to address complex policy challenges. The Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project will largely work across education, health and social care to improve outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged families, young people and children. The project aims to address two key complex issues:

1. Information sharing – improve how information is shared between professionals who work with families in a Family Hub; and
2. Access and navigation – improve the ‘user experience’ for vulnerable and disadvantaged families who need to access services through a Family Hub.

To support the practical implementation of Family Hubs, the Department for Education (DfE) will partner with five local areas who will engage in a digital discovery process with the Family Hub – Growing Up Well team. The first two local area partners were successfully recruited in Spring 2021, and we are now seeking to recruit the final **three partners**. As part of the Government’s commitment to Levelling Up, we are aiming to secure LAs with **high levels of population need** and **basic or higher levels of data maturity**. Further information on the selection criteria and eligibility can be found on page 14.

The three new partners will work with digital specialists at the DfE to explore, develop and test, data and digital products across the age range of conception to 19 (or up to 25 with SEND). The new partners will work on either the ‘information sharing’ or ‘access and navigation’ strands and LAs will be given the opportunity to state whether they do not wish to be considered for either strand. DfE reserves the right to make the final decision on the focus for each local area that is selected.

Activities for the discovery project are expected to include, but are not limited to: maintaining regular contact with the DfE team and participating actively in the discovery process; sharing information, insights and knowledge gained from your Family Hub or other integrated services model and transformation process; facilitating stakeholder engagement with local actors such as DfE officials, frontline professionals and families; engaging with discussion events to share insights; and engaging with [The National Centre for Family Hubs](#).

All five local area partners will receive capacity and transformation grant funding to support this process. The total funding is approximately £1.7m. The allocation of funding will be scalable and determined by the needs identified in the discovery phase of the project.

All local area partners will receive an initial instalment of £30k to support staff resourcing of the discovery process. This funding is subject to change, depending on the length of time required for the discovery process.

TABLE 1 – Agile Product Lifecycle explained

Discovery (initial phase)

A short phase, usually lasting 12 weeks, that aims to explore the current landscape of family support in the LA at local level, with reference to the national picture, It will include exploration of technological or other constraints. This phase culminates in a set of proposed solutions which will be tested in the next phase. This will require close partnership working between the DfE, LA and relevant local stakeholders.



Alpha

A short phase in which the LA will prototype solutions to address challenges identified during the discovery phase.



Beta

A phase in which we will release a version of our service to test to a wider but limited number of users in advance of service going live. The solution may require further iterative development against the demands of a live environment, understanding how to build and scale while meeting user needs.



Live

At this stage, the service will go live and be fully operated and resourced by the LA. You will still be iteratively improving your service, reacting to new needs and demands.

2. Background

Case for change

Evidence shows that disadvantaged and vulnerable children suffer from poor outcomes across the four key domains of development from conception to 19. Children in school who are either a Child in Need, have a Special Education Need or Disability, or receive Free School Meals will do much worse than their peers. These domains are key drivers of later life chances, including long-term employment and health, and are fundamental to the creation of human capital for the economy and to build a strong Britain.

We already know that a child's experiences from conception to five play a critical role in their development, and that the early years represent a key opportunity for families, policymakers and the economy. However, we know that measurable gaps in outcomes between disadvantaged and vulnerable children and their better off peers can emerge early, before children are two years of age, are difficult and costly to close once open.

As children grow older and move into adolescence, the risks to them not only come from within their families but also the wider community. These include child criminal and sexual exploitation, gang involvement, county lines, and trafficking, as well as serious violence, and peer-on-peer abuse, and can take place in **both physical and online spaces**. These risks often co-occur and can be further exacerbated by a child or young person's own vulnerabilities, for example if they have a learning disability, or where they have already experienced adversity earlier in childhood.

There is evidence to show that a child's home environment, family stability and parent-child relationships, are central to children and young people's development and their success in life. Local and national services have a vital role to play in supporting families with this and reducing disparities. However, disadvantaged, and vulnerable families often experience significant difficulty as they interact with a complex service landscape and have to constantly 're-tell their story' to different services. Often professionals working in these services face practical barriers to working together as a team around the family, such as information sharing.

For families, there is no consistent public-facing point for access, assessment, and navigation of family services that directs them to the services across the myriad of needs they might have – such as maternity services, support for SEND, mental health, housing, parental support, and debt advice.

A single gateway for family support services, such as Family Hubs, could improve join-up between organisations, offer a whole family approach with relationships at the heart

of family help, manage statutory pressures more effectively, reduce waiting times for early help interventions and ensure that families are offered support at the first time of asking.

Innovations in digital and data may provide opportunities to support local areas to develop integrated services offers such as Family Hubs. While the pandemic provides a challenging backdrop, it has also sharpened awareness of how some disadvantaged and vulnerable families risk being left behind and has encouraged local agencies to share information.

Outcomes

The Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project seeks to improve a wide range of cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes in disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people across the four domains of development to help achieve their potential and provide benefits throughout their lives.

The areas of development are:

- **Physical** – physical development involves physical health and obesity, sexual maturation and the presence or absence of a physical disability. Physical outcomes targeted by early intervention activities include improving birth outcomes, reducing the incidence of infectious diseases and decreasing obesity.
- **Intellectual** - intellectual development includes children’s acquisition of speech and language skills, the ability to read and write, numeracy capabilities and logical problem-solving. Positive intellectual development is strongly associated with a child’s success in school and young people’s entry into the workforce. Outcomes typically targeted by early intervention include performance on standardised tests, school achievement, and higher education and employment opportunities for young people once they leave school.
- **Social and emotional development** - social and emotional development is the process by which children and young people acquire the knowledge and skills to understand and manage their emotions, sexual identity, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Social and emotional development is highly associated with children and young people’s ability to form positive relationships with others, increase pro-social behaviour, and reduce the risk of depression and other clinically diagnosed mental health problems.

- **Behavioural** - behavioural development involves children's ability to monitor and regulate their own behaviour, their attention, and their impulses. Children's self-regulatory skills are highly associated with their ability to form positive relationships with others, as well as their success in school. Behavioural self-regulation difficulties during childhood are highly predictive of children's involvement in criminal activity during the teenage years and adulthood. Behavioural outcomes frequently targeted by early intervention include reducing young people's antisocial behaviour and crime, violence and aggression at school, and affiliation with antisocial peers.

Early intervention also targets three key additional 'threats' to children and young people's development which are strongly associated with adverse outcomes during adolescence and adulthood: child maltreatment, substance misuse and risky sexual behaviour. Appropriate and timely support for young people on their journey to adulthood is essential to ensure future health and wellbeing.

Objectives

We know that professionals working with children, young people and their families work incredibly hard and have developed and deployed much good practice. However, we are aware that a range of constraints mean that in many cases it is still difficult to engage families and meet their needs in a way that is integrated and personalised.

Family Hubs are one approach that many areas have deployed, with encouraging early signs. This project aims to use the opportunities created by digital and data to help give professionals the tools they need to collaborate more easily as a 'team around the family', including through Family Hub models. We aim to do this in a way which can be spread across other local areas. This aims to allow professionals to spend more high-quality time working with the families who need it most, and less time on administration and lower impact work – yielding better value for money and outcomes. It also aims to improve the use experience of services for families– so that they are more able to find and access the right help, engage, stay engaged, and be supported to a positive outcome.

As part of this work, we will also want to engage with the partner LAs to explore a) how services are funded and their value for money, and b) the role that a Family Hub approach could play in the above, and more widely.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be a crucial component of the project from the beginning. The partner LAs will be expected to work together with DfE and our evaluation partner/s to carry out evaluation activity. This will require input from your teams and possibly information and data from your service providers locally.

Role of the Local Authority

We are looking for a partnership approach. We are looking for LAs with a willingness to engage with the Family Hubs concept or to develop Family Hubs, or further Family Hubs, in their local area. The exact role of the LA will evolve as the project does, but we anticipate that it will broadly involve working in partnership with the DfE to drive forward the project and provide local insight, with input sought at leadership, management and working levels to develop solutions grounded in local needs. We envisage this will involve:

- Providing strategic direction by identifying the key problems faced by the LA in relation to the objectives set out on page 6. This may include identifying users, frontline health and childcare professionals and services of interest in your local area.
- Working closely with the DfE's Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project team (policy and digital delivery leads, user-researchers, service designer and business analysts) to share ideas on potential solutions to these issues.
- Providing insight and advice on how potential solutions would sit within the wider local context of the LA area and providing feedback on any potential solutions identified.
- Providing advice, information and data to support the Family Hubs – Growing Up Well team's wider policy work on the areas set out on pages 7-8 including on funding of services.
- Engaging with DfE's in-house analytical teams and external evaluation partners, participating in local and national evaluation activity as required.
- Engaging with [The National Centre for Family Hubs](#).
- Providing DfE with regular reporting on expenditure of grant funding.

3. Funding and Eligibility

Available Funding

The Family Hubs – Growing Up Well LA capacity and transformation grant will be distributed between all five LA partners to support their engagement in the project. Each LA will receive an initial instalment of £30k to support staff resourcing of the initial discovery process, though is subject to change and dependent on the length of time required for the discovery process.

Grant funding that is provided to each LA in future phases will be scalable and determined by the needs identified in the first phase of the project. Funding will only be allocated as required for successful completion of the project's objectives. We reserve the right to not issue the full funding pot.

How will the funding be used?

The first local area discovery phase will run from November to January (2021- 2022) and will focus on how to improve 1) information sharing between professionals and agencies in a Family Hub so that they can more easily work as a 'team around the family' and 2) the family experience of accessing and navigating services. LAs may wish to express a preference in their EOI on which strand they wish to focus on should they be successful. The discovery will also consider, to a lesser degree, the other areas set out on page 8.

This work will be carried out by the DfE Family Hubs – Growing Up Well team and local area lead contacts/stakeholders working together in partnership (the latter utilising the initial instalment of £30k to assist with resourcing). The discovery will aim to identify a set of costed opportunities which could be pursued over the remaining project funding period (through to March 2024) to fulfil the project's objectives. In consultation with the LA, DfE will decide which to fund with a view to releasing further funding to achieve this.

We anticipate that the funding is likely to be for the following purposes¹:

- To develop, test and deploy digital or data products and infrastructure that contribute to the project's objectives.
- To develop, test and deploy other products, processes or staffing necessary to achieve the project's aims, this could include, but is not limited to:
 - Relevant workforce training e.g., to create new expertise, system familiarity or cultures.

¹Not an exhaustive list and remains subject to change.

- Relevant staff capacity e.g., new strategic, digital or data staff to carry out change programmes.

Who can submit an EOI?

Only the 151 top tier LAs may submit an EOI application to be considered for selection for round two.

A maximum of one application form per LA can be submitted. Joint bids involving more than one LA will not be accepted.

The Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project is expressly concerned with the integration of services and reducing barriers between them and for families. Therefore, we expect work to be conducted in partnership by the relevant local organisations in participating areas using a multi-agency approach. However, for the purposes of administering funding, we expect the LA to take the leading role and ‘hold’ the funding.

The funding may then be transferred to other organisations to facilitate delivery of the project in a manner which will be agreed between DfE and the successful authority in the grant funding agreement.

Should my LA submit an EOI?

If the answer to the following questions is yes, then your LA is a likely a good candidate:

- ✓ Do you see improving cognitive and non-cognitive development outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people from conception to age nineteen (up to 25 for SEND) as a priority in your area, and want to go further?
- ✓ Do you already have strong senior strategic buy-in and working-level relationships across services in health, education, social care, and early help in your area?
- ✓ Is your local workforce already working/moving towards working in an integrated way across services/professions to form a ‘team around the family’?

4. Application Process

How to apply

The application period will open from Monday 9 August 2021 and will close at 23:59pm on Sunday 12 September 2021.

Key dates and deadlines for the application process are set out in the table below.

Milestones	Dates (subject to change)
Bid round for Round 2 opens	9 August 2021
Bid round for Round 2 closes	12 September 2021
Assessment of EOI applications	September 2021
Decision announced	October 2021
First funding instalment to LAs and commencement of discovery process	November 2021

Completing your application

Please complete the accompanying EOI application form to the best of your ability. Information on what is expected in each section of the form has been provided within the EOI form to support you in completing your EOI. Please make sure you refer to these prompts throughout to ensure you have addressed the questions fully.

A limit on the number of words is stated for each section where a text box is provided, any text that exceeds the stated limit will not be assessed. Please include the total number of words for each section at the bottom of each text box.

Sections marked with * are mandatory and must be completed in order for your application to be accepted.

A maximum of one application form per LA can be submitted, and joint LA bids will not be accepted.

Submitting your application

Please email a single Word or PDF version of your completed application to project.growingupwell@education.gov.uk

Your '**LA name**' followed by '**Family Hubs - Growing Up Well Round 2 EOI**' should be included in the email "subject" field when submitting your application.

When you have sent the department your application form, you will receive an automatic email response letting you know that your application has been received.

Deadline

The Department for Education must receive all completed applications by email by **23:59 on 12 September 2021**.

The Department will not be able to consider applications that miss this deadline as to do so would be to unfairly discriminate against those applicants who submitted their application within the allowed timescale.

5. Assessing the application

We are seeking to recruit three local area partners with:

- **high levels of population need:** to be eligible, your application form must clearly demonstrate you have a high proportion of: Children in Need (CiN); children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM); and children eligible for Free School Meals in less than Good Ofsted-rated Schools. All data will be conception to nineteen (or twenty-five with SEND).
- **basic or higher levels of data maturity.** To be eligible, your application form must clearly demonstrate you have a data model that corresponds to model 3, 4, 5 or 6 on [MHCLG's Data Maturity Survey](#).

The Assessment Panel

All eligible EOIs will be sifted by a cross-government assessment panel. The membership of the panel has not been finalised but will include officials from relevant government departments. DfE Ministers reserve the right to make the final decision on which LAs are successful and the distribution of any funding.

All completed EOIs will be assessed alongside published national and local data, and wider intelligence from LA engagement with DfE directly or through other agencies such as PHE, and other government departments or partners.

Scoring Criteria

The following factors will be used when considering applications:

Stage 1: Pass or Fail Qualifying

To be eligible for funding, EOIs must pass all the qualifying criteria (on a yes/no basis) listed below to proceed to the assessment phase (Stage 2).

	Checklist	
1	Data maturity: your LA must have a data model that corresponds to model 3, 4, 5 or 6 on MHCLG's Data Maturity Survey ² . If you judge	

² This is the survey which would have been completed for MHCLG's Supporting Families programme.

	that your LA has changed category since this survey was last completed, please submit evidence to support your judgement in the EOI form.	
2	Senior stakeholders buy-in: your LA must provide a declaration where the bidding officer indicates that they have secured sign-off from all senior stakeholders including the Director of Children’s services, Director of Public Health, Local Health and Wellbeing Board and Senior Information Security Officer(s) (or equivalent) for all organisations represented confirming their commitment to the project.	
3	Local digital declaration: this declaration affirms your LA’s ambition to bring local public services into the internet age, and your commitments to realising it. Your LA must have signed the declaration or commit to sign it.	
4	Funding information: your LA must agree to share information with the Family Hubs – Growing Up Well team on how existing funding is used to deliver services for families. This will inform the development of digital and data solutions as well as our broader understanding of how services can be delivered in a way which creates values for money.	

Stage 2: Scoring

LAs will be ranked using the following process and the 10 highest scoring applications will proceed to stage 3.

Scoring methodology

1. Level of need

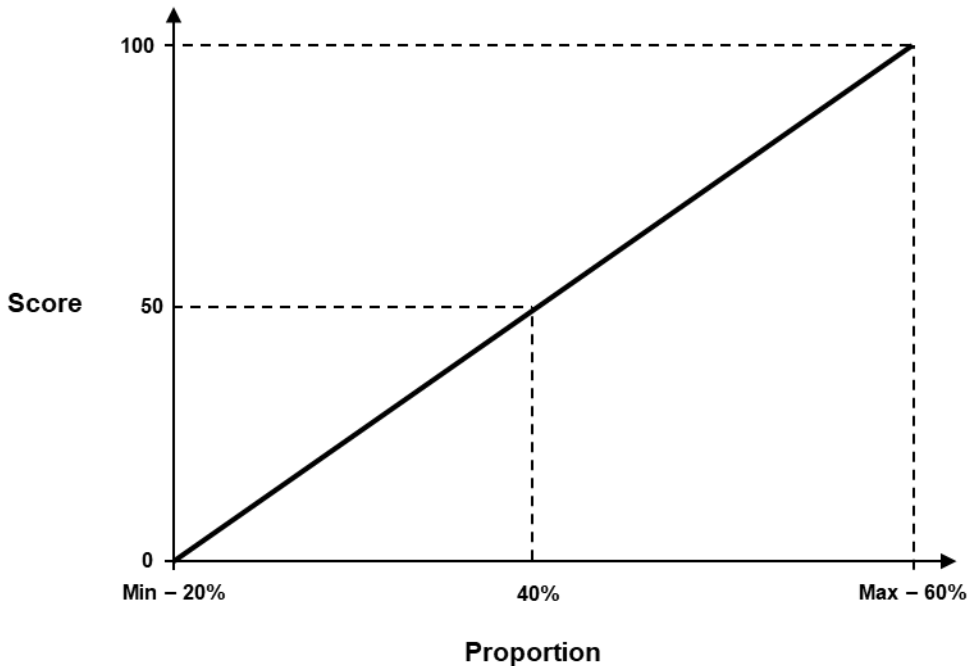
LAs will receive a score from 0 to 100 based on their performance relative to all other LAs in England for each of the three metrics below:

- Proportion of children eligible for free school meals³ – lowest proportion equals 0; highest proportion equals 100, etc.
- Proportion of children in need⁴ – lowest proportion equals 0; highest proportion equals 100, etc.
- Proportion of pupils in schools that have an Ofsted rating lower than good⁵ - lowest proportion equals 0; highest proportion equals 100, etc.

³ Source: [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, 2020/21](#)
⁴ Source: [Characteristics of children in need, 2020](#)
⁵ Source: [Identifying priority areas for raising school standards, June 2021](#)

Example:

If the LA with the lowest proportion has a proportion of 20% (Score = 0) and the LA with the highest proportion has a proportion of 60% (Score = 100), a LA with a proportion of 40% will receive a score of 50 as it is equally between the lowest and highest LAs.



The average of these metrics will be combined into one score which will be used to determine the overall score for level of need from 0 to 100.

LAs with the **combined** highest proportion of children eligible for free school meals (FSM), highest proportion of pupils in schools that have an Ofsted rating lower than good, and with the highest proportion of children in need will score the highest. This will allow us to prioritise areas with large proportions of disadvantaged children and who, all things being equal, would benefit most from the project.

2. Data maturity

LAs with the strongest data model (model 6) will be given a score of 100; LAs with data model 5 will be scored 75; LAs with data model 4 will be scored 50; and those with the minimum-required data model (model 3) will be given a score of 25.

LAs with the strongest data model as per MHCLG's Data Maturity Survey will score the highest.

3. Final Score and Ranking

Each LA will then be given a final score from 0 to 100 by combining the individual Level of need and Data maturity scores using the following weighting:

Criteria	Weighting
Level of need	65%
Data maturity	35%

Final Score = (Level of need * 65%) + (Data maturity * 35%)

This score will then be used to rank LAs. LAs with the highest final score will rank the highest.

Stage 3: Contextual Factors

A cross-government assessment panel will examine the 10 highest scoring applications with consideration to the following contextual factors to determine strategic fit:

- Geographic and demographic balance
- Rural Urban classification (level of rurality)
- Child population and potential reach of intervention for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people.
- [EIF Early Intervention Matrix](#) self-assessment scores.
- Current and future involvement in Government- and non-Government funded programmes/projects:
 - Local digital and data transformation programmes – i.e. Shared Outcome Fund projects, NHSx Digital Transformation programme, NESTA Early Years Innovation Partnership.
 - Intervention programmes (which include an early year focus) – i.e. DfE Opportunity Area programme, MHCLG Supporting Families programme, Reducing Parental Conflict Programme, The National Lottery’s Better Start Fund.
- Family Hubs – i.e., whether the LA considers itself to be running a Family Hub model, uses Family Hub branding or integrates services for children and young people aged conception to 19.

After considering these contextual factors, the panel will determine which applications will be recommended to Ministers to be successful. At least one successful LA will be located in the North and at least one will be rural. DfE Ministers reserve the right to make the final decision on which LAs are successful.

6. Next Steps

What happens if your application is successful?

We will inform you via email if your application is successful or not. We expect this to be in October 2021. If your application is successful an award letter will be sent directly to the relevant Director of Children's Services (DCS) and Director of Public Health (DPH), together with an acceptance form. At this time, we will also send a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) setting out the expectations for spending the funding. The acceptance form and the GFA must be signed by the DCS and DPH or equivalent in the organisation. This will demonstrate that they agree to the requirements of the funding.

Drawing of funding

We will make payments to LAs through a Section 14 grant. All grants will be subject to standard Section 14 grant funding terms. The successful LAs will receive an initial instalment of £30k to facilitate engagement in the first phase of the project. This funding is subject to change, depending on the length of time required for the discovery process. We expect the allocation of funding for future project phases to be determined by the needs identified in the first phase of the project.



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