



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Supporting Families Programme Guidance 2021-22

Chapter 2 Delivering Supporting Families

April 2021

What does this document cover?

Guidance relating to the delivery of Supporting Families in 2021-22

Who is it for?

Intended for use by local authority Supporting Families teams and their partners, auditors and analysts.



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How to use this Guidance

This guidance (previously referred to as the financial framework) sets out the objectives of Supporting Families in 2021-22. It also provides a guide for local authorities and their partners delivering Supporting Families.

This guidance is made up of five chapters and whilst each covers a different element of Supporting Families each chapter should not be taken in isolation but read as a whole.

Chapter 2: Delivering Supporting Families

This chapter sets out the key commitments local authorities must sign up to as part of Supporting Families. It also details the key delivery mechanisms for these commitments. This includes:

- The outcomes that must be achieved with families before a results payment can be claimed
- The purpose for which upfront funding is provided, including investment in data and system transformation

Detail is also provided regarding the commitments that are made by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to local authorities delivering Supporting Families.

This guidance comes into effect from April 1st 2021 and covers the period up to and including March 2022

Local Authority Sign up Commitments

As part of the sign-up process for Supporting Families 2021-22, all upper-tier local authority Chief Executives will be asked to make several key commitments:

- To achieve measurable outcomes with the minimum number of families by March 2022, and where those targets are met early, to continue to provide progress information for all families worked with up to March 2022.
- To integrate and transform local public services to embed whole family working using the MHCLG Early Help System Guide to inform the development, refinement and implementation of early help strategies (or equivalent).
- To provide sufficient coordination to achieve the above commitments and nominate a senior responsible officer alongside a Supporting Families Coordinator to lead the transformation of the early help system across your local public service partnership.
- To have sufficient development and analytical resource to improve systems to deliver the following milestones of data maturity, as a minimum:
 - Data governance at a strategic level is established overseeing data sharing and use across all partners to support families.
 - Work with LA and partner colleagues to gain access to person level data feeds including police data feeds for offending, domestic abuse, youth offending services data and education attendance and expulsions.
 - Working towards or establish data sharing agreements for person level data on health, housing (rent arrears and antisocial behaviour) and homelessness.
 - All individual indicators and outcomes (at indicator level) are embedded in the case management system from notification / assessment to closure.

Further detail relating to these commitments is provided below.

Adherence to these commitments may be considered when decisions are taken about the release of funding; payments may be reviewed and reduced or withheld if commitments are not fulfilled.

For Earned Autonomy areas the above conditions apply. In addition, Earned Autonomy areas will be asked to support:

- Testing and piloting the submission of all Early Help data
- Sharing population measures with MHCLG which are used to track the impact of the system of support on reducing crime, homelessness and burden on children's social care services.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Commitments

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government commits to offer local authorities the following:

- Upfront funding to provide intensive family support services and increase the maturity of Early Help Systems. This funding is to improve provision for all families supported through the Early Help system, and not for a specific cohort of families.
- A payment of £800 per family achieving successful outcomes up to an agreed number of families – this is the number Supporting Families will fund via results payments, however local areas are working with many more families and we expect you to continue reporting successful outcomes over this funded number.
- Earned Autonomy areas will continue to receive funding upfront and will be expected to submit successful family outcome numbers quarterly via Delta.
- A focus on sharing good practice amongst local areas, for example through webinars and focus groups, to accelerate transformation across the country. In addition, in 2021-22 the provision of online forums for Supporting Families teams across the country to support each other and share good practice.
- Constructive support and challenge for those who are performing poorly, informed by national learning and experience from local authorities and their partners.
- Regular risk-based assurance review visits to support and challenge to local authorities, informed by national learning and experience from local authorities and their partners.

Summary of Programme Commitments and Delivery Mechanisms

Programme commitment	Delivery mechanism
<p>To achieve measurable outcomes with the minimum number of families by March 2022, and where those targets are met early, to continue to provide progress information for all families worked with up to March 2022.</p>	<p>Regular submission of claims for successful family outcomes. Including the number of re-claims where a second claim for a successful family outcome is being made for the same family.</p> <p>Frequency: At least quarterly but monthly submissions are recommended.</p>
	<p>Submission of progress information including the number of families worked with and the number of successful family outcomes achieved beyond the minimum requirement.</p> <p>Frequency: Quarterly submission</p>
	<p>Development of a local Supporting Families Outcome Plan that details the outcomes to be achieved by families for whom a results payment will be claimed. Outcomes plans must comply with the requirements set out in this guidance.</p>
<p>To integrate and transform local public services to embed whole family working using the MHCLG Early Help System Guide to inform the development, refinement and implementation of early help and data strategies (or equivalent).</p>	<p>Work in partnership with local public services to agree how funding should be used to integrate and transform local public services to embed whole family working.</p> <p>All areas should have completed a self-assessment against the Early Help System Guide during 2020-21.</p> <p>Frequency: Areas are not required to submit an updated assessment in 2021-22 but where work is taking place to refresh your local early help or data strategies, the Early Help System Guide should be used to inform this.</p>

<p>To provide sufficient coordination to achieve sign up commitments and nominate a senior responsible officer alongside a Supporting Families Coordinator to lead the transformation of the early help system across your local public service partnership.</p>	<p>Identify an appropriate Supporting Families Coordinator and a senior responsible officer with overall responsibility for the delivery of the programme. Up-to-date contact details must be submitted to MHCLG.</p> <p>Programme governance at a strategic level is established overseeing programme performance, system and data transformation and the embedding of whole family working across partners. This could be the use of a current and appropriate board, the expansion of a current board or the creation of a board.</p>
<p>To have sufficient development and analytical resource to improve systems to deliver the required minimum milestones of data maturity.</p>	<p>Data governance at a strategic level is established overseeing data sharing and use across all partners to support families. This could be the use of a current, appropriate board, the expansion of a current board or the creation of a board.</p> <p>Work with partner colleagues to access or work towards accessing the required person level data feeds.</p> <p>Demonstrate progress towards receiving full population level data feeds.</p> <p>Embed all issues and outcomes into your case management system.</p>
<p>Earned Autonomy areas are asked to help MHCLG pilot two initiatives.</p>	<p>Take part in a pilot to trial the collection of all Early Help case data.</p> <p>Work with MHCLG to identify which population measures can most helpfully be used to track the impact of the system of support on reducing crime, homelessness and the burden on Children’s Social Care services.</p>

Detailed Programme Requirements

Delivering Measurable Family Outcomes

All areas delivering the programme are asked to achieve measurable outcomes with a minimum number of families. For the purposes of the programme, a successful outcome means either:

- 1. Achieved significant and sustained progress against all problems identified at the point of engagement and during the intervention; or**
- 2. An adult in the family has moved into continuous employment.**

Sustained and Significant Progress

Descriptions and definitions of the outcomes and measures that constitute and demonstrate significant and sustained progress for all families in each local authority should be agreed locally and set out in a Supporting Families Outcomes Plan.

Continuous Employment

Worklessness is a problem found in many families and achieving continuous employment can be transformative. Findings from the Supporting Families Programme's independent national evaluation found that an estimated 56% of families were receiving an out of work benefit on entry to the programme.¹

In support of the programme's focus on employment, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provides a network of around 300 work coaches to act as Supporting Families Employment Advisors, based in local authorities. They support individuals in families to get on the path to work and boost the employment expertise of frontline work with families. For instance, enabling workers to have discussions with family members about their employment aspirations.

The movement of a family member into continuous employment often represents the culmination of significant and sustained progress across a range of outcomes for many families. For example, mental illness, substance misuse, offending behaviour, poor school attainment and experience of domestic abuse are all well evidenced barriers to employment. To overcome these barriers, secure work, and maintain it for 13 or 26 weeks represents a major step forward for families.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-evaluation-of-the-troubled-families-programme-2015-to-2020-findings>

For a local authority to claim an outcome payment for someone moving into continuous employment, an adult in the family must meet one of the following thresholds:

- Working age/legacy benefits (such as Jobseekers Allowance): move off out of work benefits and be in employment continuously for 26 out of the last 30 weeks
- Universal Credit: reach the Average Earning Thresholds (AET)² or above continuously for 26 weeks out of the last 30 weeks.
- Not required to actively seek employment (i.e. in legacy benefits under Employment Support Allowance / Income Support type arrangement): move off out of work benefits and be in continuous employment for 13 weeks or reach the AET or above continuously for 13 weeks.

Supporting Families Employment Advisors will provide information about earnings thresholds to local authorities and access data for families claiming or moving onto Universal Credit.

Reclaiming for Families

Whilst it remains in the wider interests of local authorities and their partners to ensure that successful family outcomes are sustained and do not deteriorate, MHCLG recognise that there may be some circumstances in which families require additional support after a claim has been made for an outcome payment. This is particularly pertinent as families recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A second claim may therefore be made for a family receiving support in the following circumstances:

- It has been at least two years since a claim was made for a successful family outcome
- Any re-claims must relate to families recently worked with, families should have been open to services with support ongoing from 1st April 2020.

Areas will also be asked to:

- Declare the number of 're-claims' when submitting a claim for successful family outcomes.

² An administrative earnings threshold (AET) has been established to ensure that only those claimants on very low pay receive more intense DWP support. The threshold is currently set at £338 per month for a single person and £541 per month for a couple and is assessed against gross taxable pay/earned income (self-employed earnings do not count towards this threshold).

Significant Change in Family Composition

Where a claim has been made for a family but there has been a significant change to the composition of the family a claim may also be made. For example:

- A child from a family where a claim has previously been made has gone on to have their own children and the family are being supported by services.
- One adult in the family where a claim has previously been made has left and has now joined a new family who are being supported by services. In these circumstances a second claim for continuous employment should not be made if the previous claim relates to the same adult moving off benefits and into employment. A claim for significant and sustained progress can be made should the family demonstrate the required progress as set out in the local Supporting Families Outcome Plan.

Payment Terms

A results-based payment of £800 will be offered for each family for whom the local authority claims to have either:

- (a) achieved significant and sustained progress, or
- (b) had an adult move into continuous employment.

The opportunity to claim results is offered on a regular basis through a rolling claims window that is open for most of the year. Claims must be submitted through the Delta system and we strongly recommend claim submissions are made monthly. The local authority's internal audit service should check and verify at least a representative sample of results for each claim before it is made. All claims made must be valid on the date that they are submitted and must be certified by a Section 151 officer or an officer with designated responsibility.

Claims made may be subject to additional checks by MHCLG as part of assurance process. Should invalid claims be found as a result of these checks any corresponding results payments made may be recouped by MHCLG.

If a family has achieved significant and sustained progress and a claim for a results payment is made, the local authority may not claim a further result payment if an adult in the family subsequently moves off benefits and into continuous employment. This would constitute double payment for the same family.

Performance Requirements

All areas delivering Supporting Families are required to achieve measurable outcomes with the minimum number of families by March 2022.

Where progress towards this minimum is not considered satisfactory MHCLG may decide to review future payments which can be reduced or withheld.

Areas who did not reach the required threshold in 2020-21 will receive their upfront funding for 2021-22 in two tranches. The second tranche paid upon the demonstration of agreed performance improvements.

Progress Information

Areas are required to submit quarterly progress information including but not limited to:

- The number of claims for successful family outcomes made during the year
- The forecast number of successful family outcomes to be made during the year
- The number of families supported and worked with during the year, where a whole family approach has been demonstrated
- The forecast number of families to be supported and worked with during the year

Transformation of local public services to embed whole family working

The majority of funding in 2021-22 is delivered as an upfront funding grant. This funding is to improve provision for all families supported through the Early Help system, beyond the specific cohort of families for which results payments are available.

Areas are required to:

- Work in partnership with local public services to agree how funding should be used to integrate and transform local public services to embed whole family working.
- Continue to employ a Supporting Families Coordinator to work with partners to deliver Supporting Families and drive system transformation.
- Use the MHCLG Early Help System Guide (including the data maturity model) to inform the development, refinement and implementation of the early help system across your local public service partnership. Areas will not be asked to submit an update of the work completed during 2020-21.

Early Help System Guide

To enable local authorities and their partners to make an assessment of the maturity of local public service transformation MHCLG produced the Early Help System Guide including a Data Maturity Model. This is designed to be a practical tool to help local authorities and their partners direct their focus and activity, embedding whole family working, family practice and a mature data infrastructure to support Early Help. It captures national learning from local areas about the activity that makes the most difference in driving whole system change to establish a strong and sustainable early help offer.

It is expected that the guide informs the development, refinement and implementation of early help and data strategies (or equivalent) in every local area. The results of self assessments during 20/21 will also help MHCLG identify good practice and regional variations which will be used to aid national policy development and to inform the support and challenge provided to different organisations working within the early help system.

Data transformation

Mature data systems are a key part of the infrastructure supporting families and practice, providing a strong evidence base to help support families and commission appropriate services. Upfront funding should also be used to ensure sufficient development and analytical support to improve systems to deliver as a minimum the following milestones of data maturity:

- Data governance at a strategic level is established overseeing data sharing and use across all partners to support families. This could be the use of a current, appropriate board, the expansion of a current board or the creation of a board. All key local public service partners should be included on the board to work together to drive local public service data transformation. We would also recommend information governance representation to expediate data sharing issues.
- Access regular person level data feeds. At a minimum areas should:
 - a. Through discussions with police colleagues, work towards sharing datasets (including, where possible, offending data relating to different age ranges, and domestic abuse data) to enable joint analytics to support families. Partners will work together to identify any barriers to data sharing and overcome these barriers, through sharing good practice.
 - b. work with the youth offending service to receive youth offending data,
 - c. work with the relevant LA department and schools to receive education

- data (attendance, expulsions, free school meals and, where possible, attainment)
- d. work with the relevant LA department and settings to receive Early Years data

Accessing these as full population, rather than cohort level feeds would help enable local use of these data to conduct needs analysis and allow for the immediate identification of issues at the point of referral for family support.

- Work towards or establish data sharing agreements for person level data on health, council tax exemptions, housing (rent arrears and antisocial behaviour) and homelessness.
- Embed all issues and outcomes into your case management system. This should be flexible to allow for changes in outcomes and enable the measurement of all issues (at indicator level not headline level), so it might not be limited to your Supporting Families Outcome Plan. You should be able to measure all issues faced by all families referred to Early Help, through to all outcomes achieved by families at the point of closure.

Earned Autonomy areas will be asked to additionally work with MHCLG to scope out and trial the collection of all Early Help case data. This will be anonymous data, including basic details such as (but not limited to) key dates, number of family members, key worker organisation/service, issues identified, outcomes achieved.

We will also ask that Earned Autonomy areas work with MHCLG to identify which population measures can most helpfully be used to track the impact of the system of support on reducing crime, homelessness and burden on Children's Social Care services. These reflect the Secretary of State's three key priorities.

Data Submission Timetable 2021-22

Data	Who does this apply to?	Apr-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Mar-22
Outcome submission to DELTA	Payment by Results (PbR) and Earned Autonomy (EA) areas	Rolling Submission Window Open: 23 April - 30th June 2021		Rolling Submission Window Open: 26 July - 30 September 2021		Rolling Submission Window Open: 25 October 2021 - 05 January 2022		Rolling Submission Window Open: 31 January - 28 March 2022	
Engaged with figures and forward look projections submitted to DELTA (PI - Progress Information)	Payment by Results (PbR) and Earned Autonomy (EA) areas	PI to Supporting Families Team 8 April 2021		PI to Supporting Families Team 8 July 2021		PI to Supporting Families Team 7 October 2021		PI to Supporting Families Team 7 January 2022	
Data survey	Payment by Results (PbR) and Earned Autonomy (EA) areas			17 September 2021					