



Department
of Health

Driving improvements in maternity and neonatal safety - The Maternity and Neonatal Safety Innovation Fund 2016-17

Guidance - Information and criteria

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Contents

Driving improvements in maternity and neonatal safety - The Maternity and Neonatal Safety Innovation Fund 2016-17	1
1. Background	4
The National Maternity Ambition.....	4
The Maternity Safety Innovation Fund.....	4
2. The Funding & Eligibility.....	5
Available funding	5
Eligibility Criteria	5
Eligible Projects.....	6
What is not eligible?.....	6
3. The Application Process	7
How to apply	7
Deadline	7
Assessment process	7
What happens if successful	8
Drawing of funding.....	8
Reporting on progress.....	8
Accounting for your fund award	9
Acknowledgments.....	9
Further Information.....	10

1. Background

The National Maternity Ambition

In November 2015, the Government announced a national ambition to halve the rates of stillbirths, neonatal and maternal deaths and intrapartum brain injuries in babies in England by 2030. To maintain progress towards achieving this ambition, there is an interim expectation that national rates of these adverse maternity and neonatal outcomes will reduce by 20% by 2020.

To support maternity and neonatal services and commissioners with their contribution to the achievement of this ambition, the Secretary of State for Health launched 'Safer Maternity Care: Next steps towards the national maternity ambition' on 17 October 2016. The plan details the actions needed at national and local levels by all parts of the health and care system to build on the progress that has already been made and to continue to improve the safety of maternity and neonatal services. It is part of the 'Promoting good practice for safer care' work stream of the Maternity Transformation Programme, through which the health system is working together to respond to the vision set out in the report of the National Maternity Review, 'Better Births'. The 'Safer Maternity Care' plan focuses on five key areas:

- **Creating strong leadership** for maternity and neonatal systems at every level;
- **Identifying and sharing best practice**, and learning from investigations;
- Prioritising and investing in the **capability and skills** of the maternity and neonatal workforce and promoting effective multi-professional team working;
- **Improving data collection**; and
- Creating a space for accelerated improvement and **innovation at local level**.

The Maternity and Neonatal Safety Innovation Fund

To achieve the National Maternity Safety Ambition we need to implement what we know will make a difference now. We also need to continue to develop the evidence base on how maternity and neonatal services across England can improve the quality of the care they provide by becoming safer and more responsive to the individual needs of women, their babies and families.

The Department of Health has established a new Maternity and Neonatal Safety Innovation Fund to support and promote the adoption of innovation and the spread of best practice across the NHS. The fund will enable NHS maternity and neonatal services to develop insights and capability around the adoption and diffusion of innovative approaches that deliver significant improvements in quality, access, efficiency and reductions in harm. Applicants can use the fund to work through models of service user pull, behaviour change, and system enablers. This approach would highlight different models of adoption/diffusion across the country which will generate powerful national insights into what works.

This guidance has been prepared to support maternity and neonatal services in NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts to apply for funding.

2. The Funding & Eligibility

Available funding

A total of £250,000 is available. The minimum award will be £1,000. There is no upper limit but we do not expect to fund awards of more than £10,000. The aim is to benefit the greatest possible number of projects, therefore large awards are unlikely.

Applications should be succinct and based on providing the following information:

- Project summary
- Value of the bid
- What need does the innovation address?
- What is the proposed approach/delivery plan?
- Description of the criteria for success
- Who are the partnership and delivery team?
- What is the strategy for sustainability and potential to scale?
- Confirmation that the funding will be spent before the end of the current financial year.
- Name and contact details of the lead applicant and a secondary contact.

Eligibility Criteria

All NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts in England that have maternity services are eligible to apply for funding. Collaborative working with partners including providers, local government, third sector bodies, private healthcare and industry is encouraged. Please note, however, that all applications must be led by an NHS organisation.

Any NHS Trust or Foundation Trust who wishes to apply should show they are committed to improving safety in maternity services by:

- Considering in full the actions outlined in '[Safer Maternity Care - next steps towards the national ambition](#)' and implementing change where required.
- Ensuring they have or are developing a maternity specific improvement plan as part of their [Sign up to Safety, Safety Improvement Plan](#).
- Be willing to share learning for the Department of Health's annual progress report on the national ambition.
- Taking account of the model of maternity services set out in '[Better Births](#)', the report of the National Maternity Review, when designing their local service offer.

Eligible Projects

The aim of the funding programme is to support maternity and neonatal services to carry-out projects that will enable them to explore and adopt innovative ideas for improving outcomes.

We encourage applicants to develop a project plan that will allow them to identify important evidence and new approaches to care which will help deliver safer maternity and neonatal care and contribute towards achieving the national safety ambition. Ideas should be original and different to the current ways of working. The funding is to kick-start innovative work with the aim of quickly gaining learning. Initial results should be reported within six months of the start date so both positive and negative learning can be extracted. Examples of the types of projects that would be considered include:

- Digital tools to support women and their partners to make choices about their care
- New approaches to antenatal clinics - e.g. for women with diabetes
- New approaches to multi-disciplinary training or networking across providers and regions

The funding could be used for new IT projects or applications or to fund a dedicated time to manage the project (e.g. a specialist midwife for X days per week).

What is not eligible?

Proposals which are not eligible include:

- Activities which the applicant is not legally permitted to undertake.
- Capital funding (i.e. the purchase of equipment).
- Routine building maintenance and statutory compliance upgrades which fall into planned maintenance schedules. Safety compliance or enforcement issues which should be part of the organisations budgeted costs for delivering care.
- Prototyping of a new product or solution is excluded as this constitutes pre-commercial product development.
- Pure academic research, for example to scope out a new idea / solution is excluded. However, research activity to evaluate the application is permitted.
- Recently completed projects for which additional funding is being sought, but no new works are being planned.
- Subsidising core activities such as:
 - Delivery of an existing service that is the responsibility of local commissioners to fund;
 - Proposals that duplicate existing initiatives or activities;
 - Routine costs of website maintenance / telephone helplines;
 - Party political activities;
 - Fundraising activities.

3. The Application Process

How to apply

We would only expect one application per NHS Trust or Foundation Trust. It is essential that if a joint proposal is submitted the lead Trust and the other organisations are all clearly identified.

Applications can be made on the online form available along with this guidance.

Please address completed application forms and supporting documentation to:

Karen Todd

Maternity Safety Programme Team, Department of Health, Richmond House - 311,
79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS

Tel: 020 7210 5211

Email: childrenfamiliesmaternity@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Applications must be clearly marked: The Maternity and Neonatal Safety Innovation Fund 2016-17

Emailed applications are preferred, but these must be confirmed by post in writing to the address above with an application form signed by the Head of Midwifery/Chief Nurse/Medical Director within five working days of their despatch. Applicants will be notified by email confirming receipt of application and supporting documentation.

Deadline

The deadline for applications is Noon, 18th November 2016.

You should expect to hear a decision on your application in the week commencing 12th December 2016. If successful, you should be ready to begin the project immediately. Trusts will be able to draw down the funding once a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been agreed and signed by the Department of Health and the lead applicant's organisation.

Assessment process

The Department of Health will convene a review panel comprising representatives from the Royal College of Midwives, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, NHS England and NHS Improvement to consider the applications and make the final decision on the awarding of the funding.

Please note that your application's success cannot be guaranteed and the Department of Health's decision is final.

Summary of Criteria Used to Assess the Applications

It is important that you address each criterion in your application. These are not listed in order of importance. Applications will be assessed and ranked against the following general criteria:

- The extent to which the need for the project is demonstrated;
- The direct benefits that will accrue to all service users;
- Evidence that due regard has been paid to the public sector Equality Duty in respect of people sharing protected characteristics. For information on the Equality Duty please refer to the Government Equalities Office link [here](#)

In considering the overall strength of your application, the panel will particularly look at:

- How the proposed project will make a difference to the outcomes and experience of care of all pregnant women, their partners and their babies;
- Why you think it will succeed in doing this.

What happens if successful

If your application is successful, an award letter will be sent to the Head of Midwifery/Chief Nurse/Medical Director, outlining the terms and conditions of the funding, together with an acceptance form. At this time, we will also send an MOU setting out the expectations for spending the funding.

The acceptance form and the MOU must be signed by the Head of Midwifery/Chief Nurse/Medical Director or equivalent of the organisation, agreeing to the conditions of the funding.

Drawing of funding

If your application is successful we will ask you for an indication when you would like payments to be made. We anticipate that payment will be made in full at the beginning of the project.

All funding awards must be claimed by 10 March 2017.

The Department of Health reserves the right to withdraw funding in the event that no evidence is shown of a service's commitment to delivering the project in line with the established timescales for the award, so it is important that you keep us up to date with the progress of your project.

Reporting on progress

We are keen to hear about progress and are committed to sharing learning from the use of this funding through this programme across the NHS. If successful you will be required to provide formal evaluation that will focus on providing the following information:

- Collection/use of baseline data
- Data collected
- How the data was analysed
- What the outcomes were and how they demonstrate the success of the project

- What you did in your project and why
- What your key recommendations are
- What lessons you have learned from the project and would be useful for others in a similar position to know
- Planned dissemination activities
- How the project will be sustained post-maternity and Neonatal Safety Programme Funding

We may also ask you to:

- Contribute a case study to the Department of Health's annual progress report on the national ambition
- Attend national learning events to share updates on the project
- Host visits from the national safety champions

Accounting for your fund award

All successful applicants are expected to maintain records which clearly show how the fund was used. This should include:

- Identifying the fund award separately in the audited annual accounts; and
- Submitting a certified statement of income and expenditure, signed by the trust's auditors, director of finance or similar, confirming that the funding was used in accordance with the application and the terms and conditions of the fund award letter.

Acknowledgments

The Department of Health's core aims are to:

- To support people to stay in good health and live independent lives;
- Lead the health and care system to raise standards in health and care and ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect; and
- Champion innovation and drive efficiency to meet the nation's current and future health challenges.

Its work includes setting national standards, shaping the direction of health and social care services and promoting healthier living.

Fund holders will be expected to acknowledge the Department of Health in any information that is circulated about the project. This could include advertisements, publications or other promotional materials.

Further Information

If you need further information please contact the Department of Health via childrenfamiliesmaternity@dh.gsi.gov.uk or 020 7210 5211

Postal enquiries to: Karen Todd, Department of Health, Richmond House - 311, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS