



Department
of Health

Preventing avoidable harm in maternity care: Department of Health capital fund 2015-16

Information and criteria



Department
of Health

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What is the maternity capital programme?

On 13th November 2015, the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, announced new ambitions to reduce the rate of stillbirths, neonatal, maternal deaths and intrapartum brain injuries in babies in England by 20% by 2020 and by 50% by 2030 to ensure England is one of the safest places in the world to have a baby.

This is part of our drive for world-class maternity care, and our wider commitment to ensure the NHS provides the safest, highest quality care all patients expect.

Only safe healthcare services are truly efficient, effective and able to offer the best experience. Sign up to Safety is a national patient safety campaign helping the NHS in England to make improvements and create a supportive, open and transparent environment for patients and staff.

In 2014, the Secretary of State for Health set out the ambition of halving avoidable harm in the NHS over the next three years, and saving 6,000 lives as a result. This is supported by the Sign up to Safety campaign that aims to listen to patients, carers and staff, learn from what they say when things go wrong and take action to improve patient's safety helping to create lasting change where patients and those who care for them are free from avoidable harm.

As part of the ambition to halve maternal and perinatal mortality and intrapartum brain injuries, the Department of Health has identified a £2.24 million funding programme for NHS maternity trusts to purchase equipment that will support the workforce when providing care across the maternity pathway to minimise risks associated with these adverse outcomes. Funding will be through the allocation of Public Dividend Capital (PDC).

At the end of the capital funding programme, maternity services should be able to point to tangible equipment in their maternity care settings (antenatal, birthing and/or postnatal) and show how these contribute to improved safety of care for women, their partners and their babies.

Applicants may wish to consider the Royal College of Midwives guidance on [Better Births](#).

Available funding

Total available funding is £2.24 million. The minimum award will be £5,000. There is no upper limit but we do not expect to fund awards of more than £30,000. The aim is to benefit the greatest possible number of people, therefore large awards are unlikely.

In order to meet the selection criteria, applications must:

- demonstrate that the equipment will be used to improve patient safety during the antenatal, birthing and/or postnatal periods within the trust and/or community settings and that its use is evidence based;
- demonstrate that learning from past harm including any NHS maternity litigation claims, complaints, patient safety incidents and serious incident investigations against the trust has informed the application;
- consider of the findings of the annual MMBRACE maternal and neonatal death reports;

- consider learning from the findings and recommendations on service and quality improvement from Invited Reviews by the RCOG
<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/about-us/invited-review-policy/> and RCPCCH
<http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/invitedreviews;>
- demonstrate that the views of women and their families locally, including feedback and complaints, have informed the application;
- meet the criteria set out in the Space for Health Maternity care facilities: Planning and design manual, Version 0.8:Engalnd (2011);
- not currently or for a period of at least 24 months after the drawing down of funds, be under consideration for service reconfiguration;
- demonstrate that due regard has been given to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- represent good value for money.

Eligibility criteria

All NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts in England, who have maternity specific improvement projects as part of their Sign up to Safety, Safety Improvement Plan, are eligible to apply for the new capital funding.

NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts in England not currently members of Sign up to Safety campaign and those trusts who are members but who do not have maternity specific improvement projects included in their Safety Improvement Plan are eligible to apply, subject to committing to joining the Sign up to Safety campaign, with specific maternity improvement plans, within a reasonable time frame.

Where NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts in England have been awarded capital funding by the NHS Litigation Authority under the Sign up to Safety incentive scheme for specific maternity projects relating to reducing clinical negligence claims, these maternity projects (or elements of the project awarded funding) will not be eligible for funding under this programme.

Further information on how to sign up is available [here](#)

Capital

For the purpose of this programme capital is classified as *work that generates a physical asset*, with an expected life of more than one year. Department of Health capital resources may only be used to finance the delivery of what, under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), are regarded as non-current assets (tangible, intangible or investments).

A key requirement of non-current assets is that there is a reasonable probability that they will deliver future economic benefit (i.e. valuable service) over more than one year (in most cases many years). A non-current asset can be bought or enhanced (e.g. by building an extension to a

house) with capital funds. Expenditure to maintain an asset at its current state (e.g. repainting the walls in a house) is not normally regarded as capital expenditure and cannot be funded with Department of Health capital.

A threshold value of £5,000 per item inclusive of VAT must generally be reached before expenditure can be funded with capital. Exceptions may be allowed, where the assets form part of a group of assets that aggregates to more than £5,000. To qualify as a group, the assets must meet all of the following criteria:

- Functionally interdependent (e.g. an equipment network)
- Acquired at about same date and likely to be disposed of at about the same date
- Under single managerial control
- Each component asset of the group must cost £250 or more

Only costs that are directly attributable to bringing a non-current asset into being and into appropriate condition for their intended use can be capitalised and funded with Department of Health capital. For example, professional fees associated with acquiring the asset, delivery costs, installation costs, site clearance and stamp duty are capital expenditure. In-house costs, e.g. staff time that is directly identifiable to bringing a fixed asset into being, may be capitalised but not general administration and wasted costs.

Eligible projects

The aim of the funding programme is to support trusts to buy equipment to improve safety in maternity services. We encourage applicants to be innovative in their approach. Examples of the kind of equipment that could be supported by the programme are listed below:

- education and training resources e.g. high fidelity simulators;
- fetal surveillance;
- hand held technology;
- equipment related to creating 'complex needs suites';
- equipment to improve positions in labour;
- bariatric equipment;
- other resources that contribute to maternal and perinatal mortality and intrapartum brain injuries.

Please note these examples are for guidance only.

What is not eligible

Proposals which are not eligible include:

- Refurbishment of staff rest rooms;
- Staff training or any other revenue funded activity;

- 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;
- The VAT on professional fees such as architects and externally appointed project managers, although the fee itself is an eligible budget cost. Other non-recoverable VAT on project costs can be included in the budget;
- Recently completed project for which additional funding is being sought, but no new works are being planned.

How to apply

We would only expect one application per NHS service provider. However, where one NHS organisation operates services through multiple sites the application must state this and identify the proposals for each site.

Applications can be made on the online form available on the [Gov.uk – add link]

Please address completed application forms and supporting documentation to:

Alison Beedie

Maternity and Children's Health, Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS

Tel: 020 7210 5576

Email: Maternitycapital@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Applications must be clearly marked: Preventing avoidable harm in Maternity Care - Capital Fund 2015 - 16

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

When you are filling in your application form, please give concise answers as some questions have a limit on the number of words you can write (additional information may be provided on a separate sheet if necessary). If you are successful we will ask you to report back periodically by referring to the answers you provide.

Deadlines

The deadline for applications is Noon, Tuesday, 19th January 2016.

You should expect to hear a decision on your application in the week commencing 25 January 2016. If successful, you should be ready to purchase the equipment immediately. Purchases are expected to be completed and the money drawn down by Monday 14 March 2016.

Assessment process

The Department of Health will approve applicants based upon the recommendation of review panels convened for this purpose by the seven Local Supervising Authority Midwifery Officers (LSAMOs) in England. Each panel will include at least one midwife and obstetrician in its membership. Following receipt of applications, this group will select those organisations judged most appropriate for capital allocations.

It is expected that these organisations will be selected having regard to:

- The proposed purchase of equipment and how this will improve avoidable harm in maternity care;
- Any specific cultural and diversity issues identified in the application;
- Proven affordability of any and all current and future revenue consequences (note the Department cannot provide revenue funding for these projects);
- Demonstration that due regard has been given to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

Governance and Approvals

By the LSAMO review panels

- Checking that the application meets the basic eligibility criteria;
- If further information is required at this stage, a member of the LSAMO team will be in contact to request it;
- All applications will be considered by the LSAMO review panel, who will provide a list of recommended applications to the Department of Health.

Please note that if we receive more applications than the amount of funding available, the panel may choose to recommend part funding or supporting specific elements of the project. The application will therefore ask you to breakdown your capital bid and highlight the order of priority.

By the Department of Health

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 Public Health England to consider the recommendations from the LSAMO panels 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 in addition to the information provided on the capital application form:

- The extent to which the need for the equipment 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 LSAMO panels will particularly look at:

- How the proposed equipment 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 Finance Director, outlining the terms and conditions of the funding, together with an acceptance form.

The acceptance form must be signed by the Finance Director or equivalent of the organisation, agreeing to the conditions of the funding. We also ask you to confirm which dates the project will start and when you expect to complete it.

Drawing of funding

If your application is successful we will ask you for an indication when you would like payments to be made. Payments can be spread as and when required from February 2016, when purchase of equipment should begin, to March 2016.

All funding awards must be claimed by 14 March 2016.

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 on managing risk and improving safety in maternity care in England and are committed to sharing learning from the use of this funding through this programme with the Department of Health and any other interested parties. Therefore if successful you will be required to participate and contribute to this.

Activities may include:

- Hosting site visits by a member of the LSAMO to monitor progress and provide any support required; and
- On-going communication with the LSAMO to ensure that your project goes as smoothly as possible and to help solve any issues as they arise.

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

Please contact your LSAMO with any questions or if you need further information contact the Department of Health via Maternitycapital@dh.gsi.gov.uk or 020 7210 5576

Postal enquiries to: Alison Beedie, Department of Health, Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2NS