



Department
for Education

Early Outcomes Fund

Guidance

November 2018

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1. Background

Social Mobility Action Plan

In July 2017, the Rt. Hon Damian Hinds, Secretary of State for Education, set an ambition to halve the proportion of children who do not achieve at least expected levels across all goals in the ‘communication and language’ and ‘literacy’ areas of learning at the end of reception year by 2028¹. This ambition built on the work announced in [Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential: a plan for improving social mobility through education](#), published in December 2017, which set out plans to close the word gap in the early years.

Children with strong foundations will start school in a position to progress, but too many children still fall behind early, and it is hard to close the gaps that emerge. We need to tackle these development gaps at the earliest opportunity, particularly focussing on early language and literacy skills, so that all children can begin school ready to thrive.

The drivers of outcomes at age five are broad, and supporting children’s development involves a range of local services that go beyond early education and childcare; for example, early help, family support, public health and primary care. Local authorities sit at the heart of what a locality offers disadvantaged families and have an important role to play in coordinating the efforts of different support partners, such as public health, the NHS (including Clinical Commissioning Groups) and voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. High quality services are essential if we are going to make a positive impact for those children and families most in need of support. They are also an important component of prevention and managing demand for specialist and high threshold services.

Early Years Social Mobility Peer Review Programme

In April 2018, the DfE announced that it would be partnering with the Local Government Association (LGA) to design and deliver the [Early Years Social Mobility Peer Review programme](#), building on existing peer review models such as the Corporate Peer Challenge Programme. The programme was piloted successfully over the summer, and the full programme will start rolling out in December 2018.

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) have worked with the LGA to develop the [EIF maturity matrix: Speech, language and communication in the early years](#). The matrix

¹ Link to Damian Hinds speech of 31 July setting out his vision for boosting social mobility, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-sets-vision-for-boosting-social-mobility>

provides a framework for the reviews, including what good practice looks like. It has been co-produced and validated with local authorities and their delivery partners, and will continue to be developed over the life of the programme, as practice develops and further evidence of good practice emerges.

The 'Maturity Matrix' is a self assessment tool and guide to planning to make local early years systems more effective. It is based on other EIF Maturity Matrices, which have been developed for different domains (e.g. 0-19 services, early years, reducing parental conflict). The Speech, language and communication in the early years matrix allows an authority to assess how mature they are in creating a local system which identifies children at risk of delay, and supports them to thrive, with a particular focus on speech, language and communication skills.

DfE and Public Health England (PHE) early language partnership work

This work complements the wider work DfE and PHE are jointly leading to improve early identification and support for speech, language and communication needs in the early years, which has two main components. Firstly, a programme of work to maximise the opportunity presented by the universal 0-5 Healthy Child Programme to identify and support children at risk of language delay. This includes training and guidance for health visitors, targeted to areas of greatest need, and developing an 'early language assessment tool' to help health visitors identify children at risk of language delay so that the right support can be put in place. Secondly, PHE will publish guidance by March 2019 on how local areas can put in place an effective integrated speech language and communication pathway to encourage joined-up working of local services. This will draw on existing best practice and sector expertise, and sits alongside our wider work to improve local systems as part of the social mobility peer review programme, maturity matrix, and the early outcomes fund.

2. The Early Outcomes Fund

The DfE has established an Early Outcomes Fund worth approx. £6.5m. The overall ambition of the fund is to increase the number of local authorities starting a transformation journey to improve – and to build our knowledge of how to improve – the collective operation of local services in securing good early language outcomes for children.

The fund aims to achieve three key things:

- To increase leadership focus at local authority level on the key issue of early language.
- To enable LAs to undertake work to improve their services and how they are delivered.
- To resource evaluation and partnership working amongst LAs that will spread innovations around the wider system.

To do this, the fund will support activity which will help more local authorities to either:

- a) kick-off and/or progress system change that addresses leadership, funding, commissioning, workforces, data, accountability and/or evaluation, with the ultimate aim of improving good early language outcomes in a local area; or
- b) assess and codify existing approaches to improvement which are thought to be effective and might be shared more widely.

Strategic level transformation is likely to be limited where only a single type of activity or approach is employed. Those local areas that are successfully transforming their services are using a variety of complementary approaches all working together to achieve a collective aim. Therefore, we would expect bids, particularly larger bids, to the fund to include multiple approaches working together. The types of approaches that we might expect to see employed, include, but are not limited to:

- strengthening the local population needs assessment on speech, language and communication needs and developing a deeper analysis of current and future demographics to inform funding and delivery.
- development of an early language pathway (a map of services and how they interact) across partners;
- cross-workforce training and culture change programmes;
- work to improve data sharing across organisations.

Further detail on the types of activity we might expect are in section 3. The list in section 3 is not exhaustive but is designed to help local authorities understand the types of activity which this fund is intended to support.

We do not propose to fund local authorities to implement discrete interventions on a short term basis, e.g. a home learning intervention, a one-off training package for EYs providers, through the fund. If local authorities wish to include any work of this type in their bids, it must be an integral part of a wider strategic level programme of transformation work, as set out above. At a high-level, to understand whether your idea is a good fit for the fund, it might be helpful to apply the following questions. If the answer to each is yes, it is likely that the core of your idea fits the fund:

- Is my idea ultimately focused on securing improved early language outcomes for 0-5s?
- Will my idea require engagement from more than one 'discipline' or workforce within my local area? (e.g. health, education, early help, family support, social work etc)
- Is my idea broader than a single intervention/type of intervention?
- Does my idea explore changing cultures, i.e. 'how' we do things, and how we think about them, in order to achieve improved outcomes, as well as 'what' we do, i.e. processes?

The DfE is making the Early Outcomes Fund available to LAs via a bid round. The following definitions will be used throughout this guidance:

- **Bid round** - This is the process through which LAs can bid for the Early Outcomes Fund.
- **Application form** – LAs can submit bids through the application form published alongside this guidance document.

We would like to encourage LAs to submit joint-bids working in partnership with each other. This will allow strong ideas to benefit multiple LAs and support innovation and the spread of learning and best practice. See section 3 for further details of partnership bids.

LAs are strongly advised to work closely with their local delivery partners, e.g. health, Troubled Families, and across disciplines with their authority to develop an understanding of the challenges in their local systems before submitting an application form. We will also advise LAs to consider the type of governance structure they would need to put in place to oversee the project ensure that any changes to local systems are sustainable over the longer term. We would encourage LAs to develop high quality application forms, which provide succinct and relevant evidence that they meet the priorities outlined in this guidance. For links to important underpinning evidence that we would encourage you to make use of, see the [EIF Maturity Matrix](#).

We would expect all LAs applying to the fund to have already carried out their own analysis of their strengths, weaknesses and challenges in their early years systems. We expect LAs to demonstrate how this analysis has informed their application. If the LA has taken part in a peer review, the outcomes of this process could be used as a basis. In deciding whether to apply to the fund, LAs should play close attention to the areas of

focus and examples of eligible projects outlined in section 3 of this guidance. Application forms will be assessed by a panel and they reserve the right to not allocate funding to LAs in their sole and absolute discretion.

3. Funding and Eligibility

Available funding

The Early Outcomes Fund is worth around £6.5m. We expect that this funding will be distributed between five and 10 grants, but the exact number of projects will depend on the bids that we receive. We expect grants to be in the range of £500k to £1.5m for a partnership bid and £500k to £1m for single LAs bids.

The level of funding that is provided to LAs will be scalable depending on their individual proposals. This means that different size grants may be provided to different LAs. We expect an LA to clearly demonstrate in its application form why it needs the amount that it has requested and how the project will provide value for money. We reserve the right to work with LAs to refine their bids following the application process. We also reserve the right not to issue the full funding pot.

Eligibility

Although we will accept bids from individual LAs (single LA bids) our preference is for joint-bids. To facilitate joint-bids, we ask that a single LA be nominated as the lead authority and submit the proposed project of behalf of the group in their application form.

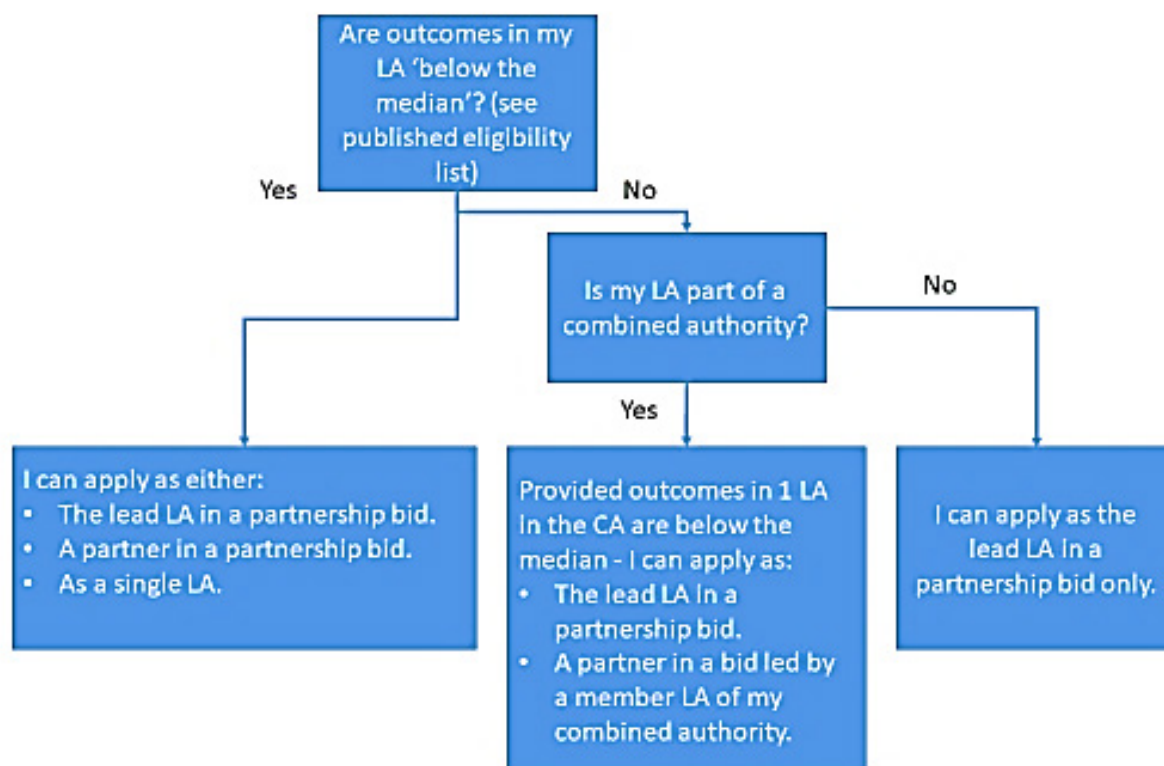
We do not expect LAs to form 'new relationships' for joint-bids. Instead we would encourage LAs to come together who are already part of combined authorities (CA), or have strong relationships as part of Regional Improvement Alliances or other existing co-operative structures or joint-work.

Joint-bids can either be from LAs who are already part of CAs or from those who have created informal partnerships. Bids from CAs may include all or some of the authorities within the CA, with one authority acting as the bid lead (provided outcomes in at least one of the authorities within the CA 'are below the median'). Bids from informal partnerships should consist of a lead LA and 2-3 partner LAs. Any LA is eligible to be a lead LA in a joint-bid. However, all of the partner LAs in bids from informal partnerships must be LAs where outcomes are 'below the median'. **Below the median** in this context is defined as below the median on the following measure: *The proportion of children achieving the expected level or above on the Communication and Language, and Literacy, areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.*

Single LA bids must be from LAs with outcomes that are below the median (as defined above). We would expect, but not limit, them to the range of £500k to £1m.

All bids should prioritise disadvantaged children in their actions, either by a clear focus on deprivation within the LA or because the LA as a whole has significant disadvantage.

To help you decide, an eligibility checklist is set out in the diagram below.



We will accept bids for **two types of project**:

Priority A: Projects that implement a new approach by kicking-off and/or progressing system change that addresses leadership, funding, commissioning, workforces, data, accountability and/or evaluation, with the ultimate aim of improving good early language outcomes in a local area; or

Priority B: Projects that assess and codify existing approaches to improvement currently being undertaken within the LA which are thought to be effective and might be shared more widely.

Assess in this context is defined as: *Working to evaluate or otherwise measure the impact of an approach to understand and agree what has or is likely to have worked.*

Codify in this context is defined as: *Creating sufficiently detailed guidance setting out what has happened, why and how, what impact it has had, and positioning it in the wider context so as to give other LAs the tools and theoretical and practical grounding needed to implement a similar approach.*

We would be open to joint-bids which included a mixture of priority A and B projects. For example, a lead LA could apply to assess and codify an existing approach (B) and to implement it in partner LAs (A).

LAs must also provide a breakdown of the cost for each project. We will only provide funding for the proposals that the assessment panel decides will provide value for money. Each project will be considered, and we reserve the right not to fund all of the projects. Further details of assessment criteria are set out in section 5.

We expect all funding to be spent by LAs by 31st March 2020.

Potential Areas of Focus

Working with the EIF and mapped against the [EIF maturity matrix: Speech, language and communication in the early years](#), we have identified the following mechanisms as potential areas of focus for early outcomes projects. We would expect LAs to include more than one of the mechanisms detailed below in their bids, rather than just one:

Potential Transformation Mechanisms	Examples (<u>non-exhaustive</u>)
a) Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic review of how existing funding streams can be used most effectively to improve early language outcomes, informed by evidence and best practice in service design. • Strengthening the local population needs assessment on speech, language and communication needs and developing a deeper analysis of current and future demographics and needs relating to vulnerable communities and localities. • Developing a comprehensive map of current assessment points/practices and of existing interventions delivered by local agencies and services • Developing a Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) pathway that engages education, health and other partners to set out a blueprint for how assessment and intervention services work coherently together for children and families with different types of needs. Where possible, this should draw on the pathway guidance which will be published by PHE by March 2019.

Potential Transformation Mechanisms	Examples (<u>non-exhaustive</u>)
b) Commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing a market analysis and plan for development which spans all the key commissioned services which impact on speech, language and communication needs, included early years providers and health services. • Work to move to joint-commissioning of speech, language and communication services across education, health (inc. Clinical Commissioning Groups) and public health. • Producing an analysis of resources for maternity and early years services, including childcare places and community assets.
c) Workforce Planning and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing an analysis of workforce needs or skills audit across the different workforces which deliver maternity and early years services, and developing a strategy for building the capacity and capability of the maternity and early years workforce. • Delivering a programme of work (e.g. training and engagement) to deliver culture change across different EYs workforces and/or to improve capacity and capability.
d) Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training members of the key strategic partnership group with responsibility for closing the word gap to understand and oversee the system for improving speech, language and communication in the early years. • Staff capacity for internal/external partnership building and advocacy.
e) Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure staff capacity to lead system transformation, driving delivery of the local strategy for closing the gap on speech, language and communication needs, and supporting the key strategic partnership group, and overseeing the arrangements for measuring results.

Potential Transformation Mechanisms	Examples (<u>non-exhaustive</u>)
f) Community Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in community capability to be active partners in the co-design of strategy, in commissioning and procurement processes, and in governance structures where decisions about early years priorities are made; and in the capacity for community peer support. • Securing community resources (e.g. volunteers) and harnessing the potential of peer support. • Working with the community to develop a strategy for communicating key messages about early language development to families
g) Services & Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing independent expert capacity to review service design and remodel delivery. • Review the delivery fidelity, reach and effectiveness of manualised programmes, and identify options to strengthen the use of evidence-based programmes
h) Information & Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review or establish strategic and operational information sharing agreements and underpinning infrastructure/training. • Review how families experience access to information about services and use this to drive improvements.
i) Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the local early years outcomes framework to secure explicit reference to key speech, language and communication indicators. • Conduct pathway analysis to better understand how families experience the relationship between different services, and how multi-agency approaches respond to this (i.e. user experience).

Potential Transformation Mechanisms	Examples (<u>non-exhaustive</u>)
j) Using & Generating Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with an independent academic partner, to establish a robust evaluation process for an individual intervention or systemic approach; or to establish a wider common evaluation framework. • Identifying and deploying specific validated measurement tools for consistent use across early years services.

Examples

Many LAs are already taking forward exciting work that covers some of the areas set out above. Some illustrative examples are set out below:

Greater Manchester The Greater Manchester Early Years New Delivery Model was undertaken as a new approach to improve the outcomes of the bottom 20% of children in performance for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. After reviewing the evidence, taking a Cost Benefit Analysis of interventions and taking a whole family (and whole system) approach, the Early Years New Delivery Model was developed to ultimately increase the effectiveness of universal early years services. There are eight key elements of the model:

1. A shared outcomes framework of population indicators and individual child measures.
2. A whole-family, eight-stage common assessment pathway (from pre-birth to the last term before the child's fifth birthday).
3. Evidence-based assessment tools to identify families reaching threshold for interventions.
4. Evidence-based interventions – interventions with the strongest evidence base to improve school readiness have been identified. Service specifications which detail the standards across GM are being developed.
5. Better use of day care – a specification is being developed to guide providers in helping drive parent engagement in education, employment, training and volunteering.
6. A new workforce approach enabling frontline professionals to work in a more integrated way.
7. Better data systems to allow professionals access to the relevant data.
8. Long-term evaluation to ensure families' needs continue to be addressed.

The model has support from various bodies including the Greater Manchester Health & Wellbeing Board and NHS England. Greater Manchester have established multi-agency implementation groups in each of the ten localities.

Launched in 2014, **Devon's Let's Talk More (LTM)** Speech Language and Communication Pathway is a structured pathway comprising a screening tool and support package for children aged 2 to 2.11 months with speech and language difficulties. The pathway intends to promote early identification of speech, language and communication needs and provide the support required. It also aims to reduce the need for referrals to specialist services and allow Speech and Language therapists (SLT) to support those with more complex difficulties more efficiently. Children receive an initial screen to identify the appropriate pathway to meet their needs through a menu of group-, home-, and setting-based interventions/support or referral to SLT. All children identified with a language delay are rescreened after 12 weeks – to see if early language skills have improved or if there is a need for specialist support.

A major factor in the successful development of the Let's Talk More strategy was a shared vision at a strategic level from; Speech & Language Therapy Managers; Public Health Nursing Leads, Children's Centre Local Authority Commissioner and Leads and the Babcock LDP Early Years Team Leads, which was fully supported by the Local Authority Early Years and Childcare Service. This has been instrumental in embedding the programme at an operation level with key workforces. A focus on outcomes in commissioning and delivery has created the basis for common interest across different partner organisations; and been supported by autonomy to design programmes collectively to meet those outcomes most effectively.

Small successes in the early stages ensured commitment of the multi-agency steering group and helped to drive change. The pathway is having an impact – data indicates improved accuracy of early identification, more appropriate referrals to Speech and Language therapy services and improved early language outcomes, narrowing disadvantage gaps. The data shows that the early language skills of on average 75% of the children who have received support for a communication and language delay through the pathway have improved on rescreening. Next steps include further developing data collection systems and reporting arrangements, improving the pathway for children with additional needs beyond language delay, and developing the role of early years settings in the pathway.

What type of work is not eligible?

We want to allocate funding to LAs that will have a positive impact on how they deliver their services over the longer term and which utilise one or more the mechanisms set out in section 3. The list of things that are not eligible for funding includes (but is not limited to):

- Short-term discrete interventions, e.g. HLE programmes, small group interventions in early years settings, specific staff training packages, that are not an integral component of a wider transformation approach.
- Capital projects. The Early Outcomes Fund will only supply revenue funding.
- Subsidising core activities such as:
 - Proposals that duplicate existing initiatives or activities
 - Party political activities

Reporting

All successful applicants will need to capture and share evidence of the impact of the funding, e.g. learning and evidence of cultural change, with DfE on request.

We will ask you to work with an independent evaluator(s) commissioned by the DfE to evaluate project outcomes

We are also likely to ask you to:

- Contribute case studies to the Department for Education
- Attend local and national learning events to share updates and best practice.

4. Application process

How to apply

The bid round will be open from Thursday 15th November 2018 and will close at 23:59pm on Friday, 18 January 2019. Key dates and deadlines for the application process are set out in the table below.

Milestones	Dates
Bid round for the Early Outcomes Fund opens	15 th November 2018
Bid round for the Early Outcomes Fund Delivery Support Fund closes	18 January 2019
Assessment of applications	January/February 2019
Decisions on applications announced	February 2019
Funding distributed to LAs	March 2019
Funding spent by LAs	By 31 March 2020

Queries

We will issue guidance directly to LAs alongside an FAQs document. If the FAQs document does not answer your query about your application form, please feel free to contact us at EarlyYears.SocialMobility@education.gov.uk.

We will endeavour to respond to all queries within 3 working days.

Submitting your application

Please email a single Word or PDF version of your completed application form to EarlyYears.SocialMobility@education.gov.uk by 23:59pm on 18 January 2019.

Your LA name and the words 'Early Outcomes Fund Bid' should be included in the email "subject" field when submitting your application.

Once submitted, you will receive an automatic email response informing you that your application has been received.

Application form

Application forms should be succinct and must be within the word limit provided for each section. You will be asked to provide the following information:

- Evidence from your self-assessment(s) and how this relates to the areas of focus covered in your bid (max 500 words per LA)
- Summary of your proposal (max 800 words per project)
- Delivery plan (max 800 words per project)
- Breakdown of costs and value for money rationale (max 400 words)
- Evaluation plan (max 1000 words)
- Additional information (max 250 words)

Note there will only be more than one project per proposal if you are submitting under Priority A and B.

5. Assessing the Application

How will we assess your application form?

Your application form must clearly demonstrate that all of the LAs involved in the bid have carried out self-assessments of the strengths, weaknesses and challenges in their local early years systems. See section 2 for a definition of what we mean by self-assessments.

It should clearly show the strengths, weaknesses, challenges that you have identified are linked to areas of focus set out in section 3 of this guidance, and make direct reference to the EIF maturity matrix.

It should be a costed and evidenced proposal with clear plans on how the grant funding will enable the LA/LAs to:

kick-off and/or progress system change that addresses leadership, funding, commissioning, workforces, data, accountability and/or evaluation, with the ultimate aim of improving good early language outcomes in a local area;

AND/OR

assess and codify existing approaches to improvement which are thought to be effective and might be shared more widely.

Your application must include a clear delivery plan on how you plan to put in place your proposals. The delivery plan should show the timings associated with your proposals and show how you plan to ensure your proposal is delivered successfully by March 2020. It must show the governance arrangements you will put in place to underpin successful delivery and sustainability.

Your application must include a clear evaluation plan to show how you plan to assess the impact of activity paid for by the Early Outcomes fund and capture learning so that it can be shared with a wider audience. For priority A projects this should include a high-level plan of how the LA would evaluate the project with support from an external evaluation partner, e.g. what types of methodology would be used, the type of research questions that would be asked, what learning from the project could be transferable/shared with other LAs. For priority B projects we would expect to see a more detailed evaluation plan showing a clear and robust methodology for how you propose to assess the impact of your approach and codify it so that it can be shared more widely.

The DfE intends to procure a central evaluation partner to work with LAs whose bids are successful. The role of the evaluation partner will include advising LAs on their evaluation plans, e.g. how to improve evaluation criteria and methodology. The evaluation partner may also wish to carry out its own qualitative research, e.g. interview people within the

local authority involved in delivery of the project. The exact role of the central evaluation partner will be finalised during the grant making process.

The assessment panel

Funding recommendations for the Early Outcomes Fund will be made by an assessment panel. The membership of the panel has not been finalised yet, but it will include: DfE policy officials, DfE finance officials and representatives from the EIF and LGA. The panel may also include representatives from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government and Public Health England. Final decisions will be taken by DfE Ministers.

All applications will be assessed alongside DfE's latest national and local data on early years outcomes and other intelligence from LAs engagement with DfE directly or through other agencies such as Ofsted or PHE.

Scoring criteria

We will consider the following areas when assessing your application:

Stage 1: Pass or Fail Qualifying Tests

- **Joint-bids:** outcomes in partner LAs are 'below the median' or LAs are part of CAs (and outcomes in at least one LA in the CA is 'below the median')
- **Single bids:** outcomes in bidding LA is 'below the median'

'Below the median' is defined as below the median on the following measure:

- The proportion of children achieving the expected level or above on the Communication and Language, and Literacy, areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP).

The department has published a list, available [\[here\]](#), of the LAs eligible under this definition using the latest (2017/18) EYFSP results.

Each bid will also need to provide a declaration where the bidding officer indicates that they have the consent of any partner LAs and any other agencies listed as key partners in the bid.

All bids must be signed-off by the Director of Children's Services (of the the lead LA in partnership bids).

Stage 2: Assessment Criteria

Bids that pass the 'pass/fail' qualifying tests will proceed to the assessment stage. Bids will be assessed against the following criteria.

Bids should identify which priority they are applying under, priority A (implementing a new approach), priority B (assessing and codifying an existing approach) or priority A and B (a mixture of both). LAs making a joint bid under priority A and B (for example, where one LA is assessing and codifying its existing approach while working to implement it in partner LAs) will need to ensure they address all of the relevant points under each criterion.

Assess in this context is defined as: *Working to evaluate or otherwise measure the impact of an approach to understand and agree what has or is likely to have worked.*

Codify in this context is defined as: *Creating sufficiently detailed guidance setting out what has happened, why and how, what impact it has had, and positioning it in the wider context so as to give other LAs the tools and theoretical and practical grounding needed to implement a similar approach.*

LA self-assessment

Priority A:

- The extent to which the LA (or LAs in a joint-bid) have set out a clear articulation (with direct reference to the EIF maturity matrix) of their current system's: context; maturity, including strengths and weaknesses; challenges and opportunities.

Priority B:

- The extent to which the LA (or LA in a joint-bid) have set out a clear articulation (with direct reference to the EIF maturity matrix) of their previous and current system's: context; maturity, including strengths and weaknesses; challenges and opportunities, and how and to what extent their approach has allowed them to make progress towards a more mature system.

Summary of the proposal, theory of change and underpinning evidence

Priority A:

- The extent to which the LA (or LAs in a joint-bid) has demonstrated how their proposed approach will meet priority A: to kick-off and/or progress a process of system change with the ultimate aim of improving good early language outcomes in the local area(s).

- The extent to which they have set out a clear theory of change for how they will make progress from their current system to a more mature system, and why the changes being made should deliver benefits to early language outcomes. This should make reference to the EIF maturity matrix.
- Where relevant, the extent to which they make reference to the evidence base for any specific interventions that are part of the proposed approach.
- The extent to which the approach will benefit disadvantaged children in particular, due to targeting of actions or high levels of disadvantage in the LA(s) as a whole.

Priority B:

- The extent to which the LA (or LAs in a joint-bid) has demonstrated how their proposed approach will address priority B: to assess and codify existing approaches to system change that have successfully improved early language outcomes, and which have wider applicability.
- The extent to which they have set out a clear theory of change for how their approach has allowed them to make progress from their previous system to a more mature system, and why the changes have/should deliver benefits to early language outcomes. This should make reference to the EIF maturity matrix.
- Evidence of how the approach has been delivered and any impact it has been seen to have in the LA (if relevant)
- The extent to which they articulate how their approach will align with the emerging model of best practice set out in the EIF maturity matrix, and how it will expand (i.e. fill a gap) in the emerging evidence base/best practice model.
- Where relevant, the extent to which, they make reference to the evidence base for any specific interventions that are part of the proposed approach.
- The extent to which the approach will benefit disadvantaged children in particular, due to targeting of actions or high levels of disadvantage in the LA(s) as a whole.

Delivery plan and governance

All proposals:

- How well the LA (or LAs in a joint-bid) has articulated their plans to achieve the steps set out in their proposal.
- The extent to which they have demonstrated that their proposed project is well costed, and that they will have the necessary skills and resources in place required to successfully deliver their proposals by March 2020.
- The extent to which they have demonstrated that they have, or will put in place, a strong governance structure capable of a) overseeing the project and implementing across local partners b) supporting sharing and learning and c) facilitating the sustainability of the changes to local systems. In joint bids, governance will need to span the partnership, and in all bids it should be proportionate and make use, where appropriate, of existing structures.

Value for Money

All proposals:

- Bids will be assessed on the degree to which they provide value for money. Value for money is the demonstration of an appropriately costed project to deliver project objectives, including:
 - details of the proposed staffing to deliver the outcomes including key roles identified to lead the activity as well as other roles to support delivery;
 - a clear breakdown of the costs LAs expect to incur in meeting their stated objectives.
 - expenditure that LAs expect to incur in relation to proposed activities; a clear rationale for how they have devised the costing and an explanation of the assumptions underpinning the costing and why they think these are realistic;
 - how LAs demonstrate their value for money case within the proposed costings (for example, have they benchmarked costs against similar activities; demonstrated how the project will contribute value in other ways).
 - That the costs of the activities proposed are proportionate to the expected benefits.

Evaluation plan

All proposals:

- The extent to which the LA (or LAs in a joint-bid) has set out a clear plan for how it will assess the impact of any activity funded by the early outcomes grant and capture learning that it can be shared with a wider audience, e.g. a high-level plan for how the LA would work with an external evaluation partner, potential methodology and research questions they would use and proposals for transferable learning that could be shared more widely.

Priority B only (in addition):

- The strength of the methodology the LA proposes to use to evaluate or otherwise measure the impact of an approach, e.g. standard measurements, experimental design, surveys of staff, families and others, validation by peers/experts or other methods.
- How the LA proposes to codify its approach in sufficient detail, e.g. guidance, case studies, toolkits, so as to give other LAs the theoretical and practical grounding needed to implement a similar approach. This could include dissemination/ learning events.

6. Next steps

What happens if your application is successful?

We will inform you via email if your application is successful or not after the assessment panel. We expect this to be done in January/February 2019.

If your application is successful an award letter will be sent directly to the LA, together with an acceptance form. At this time, we will also send a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) setting out the expectations for spending the funding.

The acceptance form and the MoU must be signed by the Director of Children's Services 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 31 grant.

All revenue grants will be subject to standard Section 31 Grant Determination Letters.

We expect funding decisions to be made by the assessment panel in January/February, with the first instalment of the grant distributed in February 2019. This is to enable local authorities to bring together different local agencies and set projects up quickly.

The first instalment of the grant must be distributed to LAs by 31st March 2019.



Department
for Education

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