

# Designated Family Judge Trailblazer pilot 2024-2025: application form for Local Authorities

This form should be used by Local Authorities (LAs) to apply for grant funding to participate in the Designated Family Judge (DFJ) Trailblazer pilot to test solutions to tackling delays in public law proceedings in the family court. The pilot has the key aim to reduce delay in the number of hearings per case, as well as divert more cases from court; therefore, reducing costs across the FJ system and improving children’s outcomes.

You must submit your application by midday on 1st December 2023 using this form. Please email a completed version to [familyjustice.team@education.gov.uk](mailto:familyjustice.team@education.gov.uk) with your ‘lead LA’ name, followed by ‘DFJ Trailblazer Pilot application’ in the subject field. If you require any additional materials to support your application, you can also request this through the above mailbox.

Please note that the deadline to submit your application has been extended from midday on 17th November to midday on 1st December.

The form is made up of the following sections:

Section 1 – how your application will be assessed.

*Please note: a maximum of one application form per LA consortium can be submitted.*

Section 2 – contact details and contextual information, including an indication of what the key drivers of delay are in your area, possible solutions to those causes of delay and indicative costs. Please note this section will not be assessed.

Section 3 – requires details about your delivery capabilities including your ability to work with the Delivery Partner, your governance and leadership arrangements, resource and capacity and financial monitoring arrangements. Please note that this section will be assessed.

Section 4– declaration.

Please do not exceed the word limit for each question, as your response beyond the word limit will be redacted and will not be considered. Please include the total number of words for each section at the bottom of each text box.

You may embed diagrams/charts to support your response. Please note any additional text in diagrams/charts will be included in the word count for that question.

All sections must be completed for your application to be accepted.

## Section 1 – How your application will be assessed

There are 5 questions that will be assessed. The questions focus on:

1. How your LA/consortia will ensure that recommended solutions are delivered successfully within the required timescales, drawing on the consultancy support of the Delivery Partner to do so;
2. How your LA/consortia will engage with stakeholders and local partners to enable delivery of the solutions recommended by the Delivery Partner;
3. How your LA/consortia will secure senior support for the pilot and ensure that there are leadership and governance structures in place to enable strategic oversight, scrutiny and support for delivery of the pilot;
4. How your LA/consortia propose to secure and utilise appropriate resource, capacity and expertise to deliver this pilot;
5. How your LA/consortia will ensure that there is effective monitoring of delivery and assurance around how grant funding is being used towards the recommended solutions.

Applications will be assessed using a five-point scale for each relevant question.

* Score of 0: Does not meet the requirement –Does not comply and/or insufficient information provided to demonstrate that the Bidder has the understanding and skills required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.
* Score of 1: Major reservations – Considerable reservations of the Bidder’s understanding and skills/capability required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.
* Score of 2: Minor reservations– Some minor reservations of the Bidder's understanding and skills/capability required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.
* Score of 3: Satisfies the requirement– Demonstration in the Bid of the understanding and skills/capability required to provide the services, with evidence to support the response.
* Score of 4: Satisfies the requirement with minor additional benefits –Above average demonstration in the Bid of the understanding and skills/capability required to provide the services. Response identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with evidence to support the response.
* Score of 5: Exceeds the requirement –Exceptional demonstration in the proposal of the understanding and skills/capability required to provide the services. Response identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with evidence to support the response.

Bids that score less than 3 on any single question will automatically be deemed unsuccessful.

## Section 2 – Contact details, contextual information, number of LAs within your DFJ area to be supported (this section is not assessed)

### Part A – Contact details for lead LA

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| --- | --- |
| **Name of lead Local Authority (LA)** |  |
| **Name of Bidding Officer at lead LA** |  |
| **Role of Bidding Officer** |  |
| **Bidding Officer contact email** |  |
| **Your Designated Family Judge (DFJ) area** |  |

### Part B – If applicable, contact details for other LAs within your consortia (this application must be supported by all LAs within your DFJ area. Please see Annex A to the application guidance for details)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
| **Nominated Officer contact email** |  |

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| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
| **Nominated Officer contact email** |  |

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| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
| **Nominated Officer contact email** |  |

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| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
| **Nominated Officer contact email** |  |

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| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
| **Nominated Officer contact email** |  |

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| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
| **Nominated Officer contact email** |  |

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| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
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| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
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| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
| **Nominated Officer contact email** |  |

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| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
| **Nominated Officer contact email** |  |

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| **Name of LA** |  |
| **Nominated Officer at this LA** |  |
| **Role of Nominated Officer** |  |
| **Nominated Officer contact email** |  |

### Part C – Contextual information

Please provide contextual information about what the key drivers of delay are in your DFJ area and possible solutions to those causes of delay. This should include information about any specific demands on the family justice system in your area, the number of live public law cases in your area, the number and size of LAs in your area, and the needs of children and families in your area.

This section will not be assessed. If information is relevant to any other assessed question, please also include that information in the appropriate section.

Please note: solutions proposed in your answer below may differ from those subsequently recommended by the Delivery Partner, following their deep-dive analysis. However, the Delivery Partner will build on your answer in this section to undertake the deep-dive/solutions setting work so a more detailed answer will assist the Delivery Partner to better tailor solutions to your local area.

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| **Total word count: (Max 750 words)** |
| Submitted word count: |

### Part D – Indicative breakdown of costs

Please set out an indicative breakdown of costs for the possible solutions you have proposed above to the key drivers of delay within your DFJ area.

Indicative costs will not be scored. However, evaluators will use the breakdowns and information provided to consider whether the level of funding requested is suitable, bearing in mind the number and size of LAs within your DFJ area, the number of live public law cases in your area, the scope of the interventions proposed and the maximum budget available for all 5 DFJ areas is £2.5m. Bids that exceed the maximum budget available for all 5 DFJ areas will be deemed unsuccessful.

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| **Area of spend** | **Detail** | **2024-25** | **Total** |
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## Section 3 – Your DFJ area application (this section is assessed)

1. Please set out your how your LA/consortia will ensure that recommended solutions are delivered successfully within the required timescales, drawing on the consultancy support of the Delivery Partner to do so. Your answer should include:

* How your LA/consortia will put in place effective structures and systems (in the case of a consortia) within and between each LA to ensure that you are working collaboratively with the Delivery Partner to deliver the recommended solutions;
* How leaders within your LA/consortia will communicate change effectively across their organisations to mobilise changes and gain buy-in of managers and practitioners at all levels;
* How leaders within your LA/consortia will approach guiding their organisation through implementing, managing and maintaining momentum of change to deliver recommended solutions.

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| Submitted word count: |

1. Please set out how your LA/consortia will engage with stakeholders and local partners, such as Local Family Justice Boards (LFJBs), Cafcass and the local judiciary, to enable delivery of the solutions recommended by the Delivery Partner. Your answer should include:

* How you will engage and embed partnership working with stakeholders and local partners in your DFJ area to ensure their local knowledge and expertise is fed into delivery of the recommended solutions;
* How you will approach working collaboratively with the Evaluation Partner to support their objectives (see information about the Delivery and Evaluation Partners Roles in Annex B to the application guidance).

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| Submitted word count: |

1. Please set out how your LA/consortia will ensure that there are leadership and governance structures in place to enable strategic oversight, scrutiny and support for delivery of the pilot. Your answer should include:

* Confirmation that each Director of Children’s Services of LAs within your LA/the consortia are supportive of this application and how you will maintain senior support for this pilot;
* Details of leadership and governance structures that will be put in place to ensure that there is ongoing strategic oversight, scrutiny and support for the pilot within LAs and across your DFJ area.

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| **Total word count: (Max 700 words)** |
| Submitted word count: |

1. Please set out details how your LA/consortia propose to secure and utilise appropriate resource, capacity and expertise to deliver this pilot.

Please note: at the time of writing this application, your LA/consortia will not know the solutions recommended by the Delivery Partner to tackle delays in your DFJ area and therefore the resource, capacity and expertise required to deliver these solutions. Please therefore base your answer on how you would secure the appropriate resource, capacity and expertise to deliver the possible solutions you proposed to the drivers of delay in Part C.

Your answer should include:

* How you propose to manage and oversee operational delivery of the recommended solutions within LAs and across your DFJ area;
* How you propose to utilise technical expertise within your LAs, including legal, HR, governance and delivery expertise, to enable effective delivery of the pilot;
* How you will ensure that emerging learning and best practice shared by the Delivery Partner is shared with LA staff working to deliver this pilot to enable ongoing development of expertise.

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| **Total word count: (Max 700 words)** |
| Submitted word count: |

1. Please set out how your LA/consortia will ensure that there is effective monitoring and assurance around how grant funding is being used towards the recommended solutions. Your answer should include:

* How you will use finance expertise within the lead LA to ensure that there is effective financial monitoring and assurance of the funding to provide the Department with regular, timely and accurate reporting on use of funding, demonstrating its use towards the recommended solutions;
* How you will ensure effective monitoring of delivery of the pilot and ensure that regular, timely and accurate insights into the progress of delivery of the pilot are provided to the Delivery Partner.

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| **Total word count: (Max 700 words)** |
| Submitted word count: |

## Section 4 – Declaration

Please complete the below declaration, to be signed by both the lead LA’s bidding officer and the Director of Children’s Services (DCS). Please select each checkbox to confirm.

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| 5.1 Please confirm that should this application be deemed as successful against the criteria you will assume the responsibility as lead LA for the consortium, including responsibility for distributing grant funding to the consortium in accordance with approved allocations. |  |
| 5.2 Please confirm that should this application be deemed as successful against the criteria, as lead LA you will agree to report to DfE in accordance with your responsibilities as a recipient of Section 14 grant funding. |  |
| 5.3 Please confirm that you as the lead LA and all members of the consortium agree to comply with data protection law as part of your participation in the pilot. |  |

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| **DECLARATION (Please complete in block capitals)**  Signatures must be either submitted electronically or scanned in. |
| I confirm that the information given in this application is true and complete; and  that, if successful, the lead local authority will administer any grant in accordance with the letter supplied by the Department for Education. |

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| **Full name** |  |
| **Position (Job title)** |  |
| **Date** |  |
| **Contact details including email address** |  |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Countersigned (by the DCS)** |  |

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