



Department
for Education

Families First for Children Pathfinder: Wave 2

Application guide

October 2023

Contents

Executive summary	4
Support with making your application	5
What is the Families First for Children Pathfinder?	6
Background	6
Our vision for the FFC Pathfinder	7
Reform strands	8
Expectations and support for Pathfinder areas	9
Role and expectations of local authorities	9
Role and expectations of statutory safeguarding partners	9
Day-to-day working with DfE	9
Resources to support Pathfinder areas	10
Evaluation	10
Eligibility and funding	13
Who can submit an application?	13
Available funding	13
How funding for individual Pathfinders and the number of participating LAs will be determined	14
How can the funding be used?	15
Funding assurances and conditions assurances	15
Application process	17
How to apply	17
Completing your application	17
Submitting your application	18
Deadline	18
Assessment of applications	19
Allocation of places	19
The assessment panel	20
Scoring criteria	20
Stage 1 – Mandatory criteria	20
Stage 2 – Assessment criteria	21
Scoring methodology	21

Next steps	23
What happens if your application is successful?	23
Clarification questions	23
Annex A – Grant funding bands	24
Annex B – Local authorities mapped to government regions	28

Executive summary

1. The purpose of this document is to provide leaders in local authorities, police and health with guidance to apply to become one of the local areas in wave 2 of the Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFC Pathfinder).
2. The FFC Pathfinder is the delivery mechanism for testing implementation of some of the most significant reforms to how children and families are supported and protected. The FFC Pathfinder provides local areas with the opportunity to be at the heart of work to transform family help and children's social care, working together with central government to influence future reforms in safeguarding partners, family help, child protection, and family networks.
3. Over £45 million of funding has been made available for the FFC Pathfinder to design and test reforms set out in [Stable Homes, Built on Love](#).
4. The programme's wave 1 areas (Dorset, Lincolnshire and Wolverhampton) were announced in July 2023, and will run until March 2025. We are now inviting local authorities to apply to join wave 2 of the Pathfinder, which will run from April 2024 to March 2025.
5. The application period will open from Friday 6 October 2023 and will close at 11:59pm on Monday 6 November 2023. Applications must be made by local authorities and countersigned by the local statutory safeguarding partners (police force and Integrated Care Board).
6. Key dates and deadlines for the application process are set out in table 1 below.

Table 1: Application milestones

Milestones	Dates (subject to change)
Bid round opens	Friday 6 October 2023
Deadline for submitting clarification questions	11.59pm Monday 30 October 2023
Bid round closes	11.59pm Monday 6 November 2023
Assessment of applications	November – December 2023
Bidders informed of decisions	January 2024

7. Estimated high level delivery milestones are set out in table 2 below:

Table 2: Delivery milestones

High level delivery milestones	Dates (subject to change)
Areas announced	January 2024
Pre-implementation preparation	January – April 2024
Funded FFC Pathfinder delivery	April 2024 – March 2025

Support with making your application

8. This is one of four documents published to support applicants. The documents for applicants are:

- **The application guide** – this document setting out the FFC Pathfinder and the application process for wave 2, including details of the background, aims and objectives, funding and eligibility criteria.
- **The design specification** – a document that sets out the requirements that successful applicants will need to implement in their local areas.
- **The application form** – a document which must be completed and submitted within the application window for an application to be considered.
- **The costed plan template** – a document to be completed and submitted alongside the application form, within the application window.

Please read these documents carefully before completing the application form.

What is the Families First for Children Pathfinder?

Background

9. In May 2022, the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (Care Review) published its [final report](#), calling for bold reforms across the whole of the children's social care system. In the same month, The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel) published [Child Protection in England](#) - a national review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson. The Care Review made radical recommendations on how we improve support for children and their families throughout the early help system and children's social care, including kinship care. Both the Care Review and the Panel also made major recommendations for child protection and safeguarding partners.
10. The Government published [Stable Homes, Built on Love](#) in February 2023 - an implementation strategy and consultation to respond to the national reviews. In this we set out our plans to transform early help and children's social care (also described here as 'family support and protection'). The FFC Pathfinder is a core commitment made in the strategy.
11. The Pathfinder is our delivery mechanism for testing the implementation of some of the most significant reforms to family support and protection: safeguarding partners, family help, child protection, and family networks. Our wave 1 areas (Dorset, Lincolnshire and Wolverhampton) were announced in July 2023. We will work with these three areas in wave 1 and additional areas in wave 2 to test end-to-end system reform.
12. The main aims of the first two waves of the FFC Pathfinder are to:
 - Inform key policy decisions, at a national level including potential revisions of statutory guidance and potential legislation.
 - Answer challenging questions about how to operationalise, integrate and embed reforms in local areas.
 - Develop and test evidence about specific new ways of working in a limited number of areas to inform decisions about the next stage of delivery – including where there are risks and how to mitigate these.
 - Provide evaluation evidence on implementation, delivery and any emerging impacts, including any barriers, facilitators, and unintended consequences.
 - Bring the key partners in local areas on the reform journey, creating sector champions.
13. Whilst our proposals are ambitious and focused on transforming the system, they will not develop in isolation from wider, existing work. They will be informed by existing programmes and guidance (for example the Supporting Families Programme, [Family Hubs](#) with its [Supporting Families: Early Help System Guide and the Family Hubs Programme](#)), as well as the wider reforms in Stable Homes, Built on Love (such as the new [Children's Social Care National Framework](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) to create a system of seamless support for families.

Our vision for the FFC Pathfinder

14. Using a ‘test and learn’ approach, local areas will deliver reforms to multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements, family help, child protection and engaging and supporting family networks as part of a single system, underpinned by the practice principles, outcomes and enablers set out in the Children’s Social Care National Framework and Early Help System Guide; and expectations as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (‘Working Together’).
15. These reforms learn from the best existing practice, and will entail a significant, long-term shift in culture, language and ways of working across the entire family support and protection system. This system needs to offer expertise which encompasses and addresses the diverse needs of all children, families and communities that come into contact with it.
16. Our ambition is to ensure that children, families and communities:
 - Are given the opportunity to co-design and co-produce the reformed system.
 - Can access one system and work with one lead practitioner, who coordinates one bespoke team around the family and co-creates one plan to support them.
 - Only need to tell their story once and experience the system as welcoming, supportive, fair, and focused on their strengths.
 - Can access strong, decisive multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to protect children and young people from harm.

In May 2022, we published the [Children’s Social Care National Framework](#) and launched a consultation on the document. Its purpose is to set a greater national direction for children’s social care. It describes the purpose of local authority children’s social care, the principles by which children, young people and families should be supported, and the outcomes that should be achieved so that children and young people can grow up to thrive. We intend to make this statutory guidance by the end of 2023.

We have also consulted on and will be updating Working Together, which will include Multi-Agency Child Protection standards, again by the end of 2023. We expect the response to these consultations to be published in December 2023. When delivering the FFC Pathfinder, we expect local areas to do so in line with the draft principles, outcomes and enablers set out in the National Framework and any updates to Working Together (except where we provide any specific exemptions to do so).

Table 3: Children’s Social Care National Framework

Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children’s welfare is paramount, and their wishes and feelings are sought, heard, and responded to.• Children are raised by their families, in family networks or in family environments wherever possible and safe to do so.• Practice engages partner agencies at every stage of support to identify and meet the needs of children, young people, and families.• Practice and services are demonstrably poverty-aware and anti-discriminatory.
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Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, young people and families stay together (where possible) and get the help they need. • Children and young people are supported by their family network. • Children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes. • Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes.
Enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workforce is equipped and effective. • Leaders drive conditions for effective practice.

Reform strands

17. There are four key reform strands to the FFC Pathfinder that will be tested and delivered as a whole system transformation:

- **Safeguarding Partners.** Local statutory safeguarding partners will need to be fully bought into the FFC Pathfinder to lead and deliver these reforms, with clear roles and responsibilities at both strategic and operational levels; and an increased - and possibly statutory - role for education.
- **Family Help.** We want to establish locally-based, multi-disciplinary family help teams that work collaboratively with partners to provide welcoming, intensive and effective support that is tailored to the needs of children and families. This will bring together support currently referred to as Targeted Early Help, and provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 into a single category of support.
- **Child Protection.** We want dedicated and skilled multi-agency child protection teams comprising practitioners from a range of disciplines, including social workers with greater child protection expertise and experience.
- **Family Networks.** We want participating local areas to make greater use of family networks, with earlier use of family group decision-making throughout family help and child protection systems. We also want to provide targeted funding in Family Network Support Packages (FNSPs) to enable more children to live at home or support a transition into kinship care.

Expectations and support for Pathfinder areas

Role and expectations of local authorities

18. Local authorities will enter into a grant funding agreement with DfE and will work closely with other statutory partners to implement the reforms.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Leading on and submitting the application to DfE
- Ensuring the testing and delivery of reforms as per the design specification
- Leading on the local area's relationship with DfE
- Acting as the recipient of grant funding and distributing this in a transparent manner to local partners
- Working closely with partners at a national level. These partners have been appointed to provide a service to local partners and DfE, and to facilitate the wider sharing of learning and impact across government and relevant sectors.
- Meeting the expectations regarding reporting and evaluation to provide the necessary information and data to monitor and evaluate delivery progress against the aims and outcomes of the FFC Pathfinder.
- Championing these reforms across other local areas and the wider sector
- Actively participating in events to share learning across the sector.

Role and expectations of statutory safeguarding partners

19. The successful delivery of the FFC Pathfinder will require strong multi-agency commitment and working. Statutory safeguarding partners (local police force and Integrated Care Board) will be active participants in the programme and must counter-sign the application form to confirm they have reviewed and are content with the proposals.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Counter-signing the application form – this can be done by the individual from each organisation that sits on the local safeguarding partnership
- Supporting the delivery of reforms as per the design specification
- Responding to assurance requests from the local authority
- Engaging in cross-programme activity, including evaluation, workshops and key meetings

Day-to-day working with DfE

20. DfE has a Families First for Children Pathfinder team, which is responsible for the delivery of the programme. The team will work with participating local areas and will be responsible for working with DfE policy, funding and analytical teams to design and deliver the programme.

21. The Pathfinder area will be assigned a “DfE Account Manager” to be your point of contact for the FFC Pathfinder. This will be an official from the DfE Families First for Children Pathfinder team, who will work closely with you over the course of the programme. We ask that you assign:

- **A “Pathfinder Lead”** from your children’s services team to act as the lead point of contact for the DfE and the delivery partner for duration of the FFC Pathfinder.
- **An “Evaluation Coordinator”** to be the lead point of contact to the DfE and independent evaluator for the FFC Pathfinder evaluation.

22. Ahead of announcing local area participation, the local statutory safeguarding partners, DfE and other relevant government departments will sign an MOU which sets out the responsibilities and activities expected of local authorities and partners to undertake in return for the funding.

Resources to support Pathfinder areas

23. A consortium of Mutual Ventures with Innovation Unit will work alongside local areas to support local delivery and collect and share learning as it emerges from the programme. The consortium has a strong track record in leading significant culture and practice change in children’s social care settings and working with multi-agency partners at a strategic level, to deliver shared outcomes for children and families.

24. The Delivery Partner will support local areas in the following ways:

- **Project design** – facilitating collaboration between DfE/other government departments and Pathfinder local areas to agree model design, which meets national minimum expectations for the FFC Pathfinders and addresses local need.
- **Project implementation and change management** – working directly with local areas to operationalise the reforms, by applying knowledge of effective project implementation, change management and culture change.
- **Project monitoring and sustainability** – providing DfE with regular, timely and accurate external insights into the progress of the areas and identifying barriers to delivery.
- **Capturing and sharing learning across the sector** – supporting Pathfinder areas to draw on existing best practice and forming peer learning opportunities between Pathfinder areas; co-creating a high-quality live learning strategy with DfE and local areas to share emerging learning from the programme with government departments, participating local areas, and to areas outside the programmes.

Evaluation

25. We are undertaking a robust, independent evaluation of the FFC Pathfinder to inform key policy and future funding decisions. The evaluation aims to understand how the FFC Pathfinder has been implemented and delivered, whether it has an impact on its intended outcomes, and whether it provides value for money.

26. A supplier has been commissioned to undertake an independent evaluation of the FFC Pathfinder, which will be announced in the autumn.
27. Agreement to participate in the FFC Pathfinder also requires agreement to participate in the evaluation, working with the DfE and our independent evaluator. Each participating local authority plays a crucial role in supporting the DfE to generate evidence to inform policy development and to support any further investment in the FFC Pathfinder, or reforms more widely, to His Majesty's Treasury.
28. Each participating local authority will need to identify an evaluation coordinator to ensure the evaluation runs smoothly. The evaluation coordinator will be the main local authority contact for the evaluation.
29. Specific evaluation activities will be finalised with the independent evaluator, but may include:
 - a. Logic model participatory workshops
 - b. In-depth longitudinal case study research with local authorities, which may involve the below activities. These case study activities are likely to occur at two time points between April 2024 and March 2025 – baseline and follow-up. If funding for the FFC Pathfinder is continued beyond March 2025, these activities may also occur annually between April 2025 and March 2028. The longitudinal nature of the case study approach will allow us to capture evidence on how the FFC Pathfinder evolves and changes over time, as delivery matures.
 - i. An assessment of each local area's context and population needs.
 - ii. Interviews with senior leaders in each local authority and their partner agencies.
 - iii. Focus groups and observations with staff in each local authority and their partner agencies.
 - iv. Surveys with staff in each local authority and their partner agencies.
 - v. Research with children and families, such as depth interviews.
30. Wherever possible, the DfE and the evaluator will work with Pathfinder areas to utilise existing data collections and identify approaches which minimise burden on local authorities.
31. We have developed a theory of change to show how we envisage the key reform strands will lead to positive impacts. This will be updated throughout the programme as part of the co-design period and ongoing test and learn approach. Current short, medium, and long-term anticipated outcomes may include (but are not limited to):
 - reduction in number of children looked after, children in need, length of time as children in need, child protection plans, length of child protection plans, inappropriate referrals.
 - improved staff knowledge and confidence – including in understanding of individual needs of children and families, and in identifying and managing risk – and workforce retention and job satisfaction

- improved decision making and case management
- staff meeting the diverse needs of children and families
- improved experiences of children and families.

Eligibility and funding

Who can submit an application?

32. Applications must be made by local authorities and countersigned by local statutory safeguarding partners (local police force and Integrated Care Board). To be eligible to apply, LAs must meet the criteria set out in table 4 below.

Table 4: Mandatory criteria

Criterion	Further detail
1. Upper tier LA	LAs need to be one of the top 153 upper tier LAs
2. Ofsted rating – RI or above	LAs must have an Ofsted rating of 'Requires Improvement' or above on the last day of the application window.
3. Section 114 notice	LAs that are subject to section 114 notice spending controls on the last day of the application window cannot apply
4. Non-participation in the Family Network Pilot	LAs already participating in the Family Network Pilot cannot apply for wave 2 of the FFCP Pathfinder to retain the validity of the Family Network Pilot impact evaluation.
5. Multi-agency sign-up	Applications must be countersigned by local statutory safeguarding partners (local police force and Integrated Care Board).
6. Value for Money Section	Each local authority has been assigned to one of five grant funding bands, based on their CIN data. Applications that exceed the upper limit of an area's grant funding band will automatically be assessed as unacceptable and will not be considered for FFC Pathfinder grant funding.

Available funding

33. Over £45 million of funding has been made available for the [FFC Pathfinder and Family Network Pilot programmes](#) to design and test reforms set out in [Stable Homes, Built on Love](#). Around £19.5 million funding is available for wave 2 of the FFC Pathfinder in financial year 24-25.

34. The cost of implementing a Pathfinder locally will be based on a number of factors such as the population in that area and the level of transformation required to services. **Our central assumption is that the available funding is likely to reach 6 local areas**, but could reach up to 9 areas, depending on size and other demographic factors.
35. Paragraph 37 and table 5 outline the maximum amount of grant funding each applicant can bid for.

How funding for individual Pathfinders and the number of participating LAs will be determined

36. We have used publicly available LA child in need (CIN) population data (data set from year ending 31 March 2022) to divide local authorities into five grant funding bands – table 5 provides the CIN data range for each band. [Annex A](#) provides a complete list of LAs and their corresponding grant band.
37. Table 5 below sets out the maximum amount of grant funding an LA can bid to receive via their application (Q5 of the application form). There is no lower limit. **If an LA produces a bid that exceeds the upper limit of their grant funding band, the application will be judged as unacceptable and will not be eligible for wave 2 funding** – see Assessment Criteria.

Table 5: Grant funding bands

CIN threshold	Grant funding band	£ boundary
813	1	Up to and including £1m
814 - 1,626	2	Up to and including £2m
1,627 - 2,439	3	Up to and including £3m
2,440 - 3,252	4	Up to and including £4m
3,253 - 4,066	5	Up to and including £5m

38. **The maximum grant funding available for a band 5 LA, and therefore the maximum funding available to any wave 2 applicant, is £5 million.** In recognition of the scale of funding required to deliver the FFC Pathfinder across large LAs with high CIN populations, we will consider partial-geography bids from LAs that fall into grant funding band 5, as well as proposals for LA-wide implementation. In this scenario, band 5 applicants are permitted to recalculate their CIN population, based on the size of the geographical area they propose to implement their model. This adjustment may mean the applicant moves to a lower grant funding band and the cost of the bid must reflect the funding available within that band. The recalculated CIN population must be provided in the value for money narrative (Q5 of the application form) along with a rationale for the smaller-scale approach.
39. The final number of successful areas will be determined by what is affordable within the funding available for wave 2. Where the number of successful applications exceeds the total amount of funding available:
- i. Funding will be prioritised to the highest scoring bidders within each lot (see tables 7 and 8).

- ii. The amount awarded to a bidding local authority may be less than the total value applied for. DfE reserves the right to negotiate the final grant amount awarded to the 6 highest scoring applicants from across all lots, to ensure the minimum of 6 wave 2 areas is met. If, based on the outcome of negotiation, an area does not wish to be appointed as a wave 2 pathfinder, DfE will offer grant funding to the next highest scoring applicant within the lot.

How can the funding be used?

- 40. The Secretary of State will provide the funding for the programme to the recipient (LA) in accordance with the Grant Determination Letters.
- 41. The funding will be used to provide local areas to cover transformation costs, additional costs for services and/or workforce arising from the programme.
- 42. The funding available for this wave will be paid in two grant payments in the financial year 2024-25. LAs will have an onboarding phase ahead of this between Jan-March 2024.
- 43. We would anticipate that between 20-25% of the overall FFC Pathfinder grant is allocated to delivering the Family Network strand of the programme, with much of the funding for the Family Network strand spent directly on additional support/funding to families (anticipated 75% of the Family Network pot), through Family Network Support Packages.
- 44. It is at the discretion of the recipient to distribute grant funding in a transparent manner to local partners, where this has been agreed between parties, to cover programme expenditure incurred; however, FFC Pathfinder programme funding arrangements are made between DfE and the recipient only, therefore the recipient remains accountable for all grant funding and spend.
- 45. Funding provided by DfE cannot be used for any capital expenditure. Applications that include capital funding in their costed plan will be rejected. We advise that if you are unsure if any of the costs in your project would be badged as capital for DfE purposes, please contact FFC.PATHFINDER@education.gov.uk.

Funding assurances and conditions assurances

- 46. Funding will be provided to participating LAs via unringfenced s.31 grants paid on a 6 monthly basis. Local authorities will be responsible for financial reporting and assurance processes. The funding will be based on the costed plan submitted in the application.
- 47. Evaluation and delivery requirements will be set out in the MOU.
- 48. There will be ongoing engagement between DfE and local areas throughout the delivery phase of the programme. This includes ongoing engagement with the delivery partner which will help with the early identification and management of any delivery challenges. DfE will monitor delivery through quarterly performance delivery reports, completed by local areas, supplemented by a more detailed qualitative annual performance report.

This will be supplemented by ongoing engagement such as regular conversations and visits.

49. Participating LAs will provide complete financial reporting including an annual certificate of expenditure (signed off by s151 officers) and an interim statement of grant usage at mid-year.
50. Funding for the FFC Pathfinder is currently confirmed until the end of financial year 2024/25, as future funding for all programmes will be confirmed at the next Spending Review.

Application process

How to apply

51. The application period will open from **Friday 6 October 2023** and will close at **11:59pm on Monday 6 November 2023**. Applications must be made by LAs and countersigned by local statutory safeguarding partners (police force and Integrated Care Board).

52. Key dates and deadlines for the application process are set out in the table below.

Table 6: Application milestones

Milestones	Dates (subject to change)
Bid round opens	Friday 6 October 2023
Deadline for submitting clarification questions	11.59pm Monday 30 October 2023
Bid round closes	11.59pm Monday 6 November 2023
Assessment of applications	November – December 2023
Bidders informed of decisions	January 2024

Completing your application

53. **To be eligible to apply, LAs must meet the six mandatory criteria as listed in table 4.**

54. Please complete the accompanying application form to the best of your ability. Information on what is expected in each section has been provided within the application form to support you in completing it. Please make sure you refer to these prompts, as well as the application guide and design specification, throughout to ensure you have addressed the questions fully.

55. The questions are weighted as shown in table 10. A limit on the number of words is stated for each section. Any text that exceeds the stated limit will not be assessed. Please include the total number of words for each section at the bottom of each text box.

56. All sections are mandatory and must be completed for your application to be accepted.

57. A maximum of one application form per LA can be submitted, and joint LA applications will not be accepted.

Submitting your application

58. Please email a **Word copy** of your completed application form and an **Excel copy** of your costed plan to FFC.PATHFINDER@education.gov.uk. In the email subject field, please include your '**LA name**' followed by '**wave 2 application**' when submitting your application.
59. When you have sent the department your application form, you will receive an email response letting you know that your application has been received.

Deadline

60. The DfE must receive all completed applications by email by 11:59pm on Monday 6 November 2023. No changes can be made to the application form beyond the deadline.
61. The Department will not be able to consider applications that miss this deadline as to do so would be to unfairly discriminate against those applicants who submitted their application within the allowed timescale.

Assessment of applications

Allocation of places

62. To achieve a range of local areas across the 9 government regions (shown in [Annex B](#)) and Ofsted performance, applications from LAs will be assessed within lots formed from groups of government regions as shown in the table below.

Table 7: Application lot areas by region

Lot	Region
North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North East • North West • Yorkshire and The Humber
Midlands/West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Midlands • West Midlands • East of England • South West
South East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South East • Inner London • Outer London

63. Allocation of places will follow table 8 below. We are seeking to appoint six areas.

64. If FFC Pathfinder funding is still available, after the highest scoring applicant has been identified in each of the six lots, the department will confirm at a later stage how any further funding may be allocated.

Table 8: Application lots by region and Ofsted judgement

<u>North</u>	<u>Midlands/ West</u>	<u>South East</u>
Lot 1a Highest scoring Outstanding or Good applicant	Lot 2a Highest scoring Outstanding or Good applicant	Lot 3a Highest scoring Outstanding or Good applicant
Lot 1b Highest scoring RI applicant	Lot 2b Highest scoring RI applicant	Lot 3c Highest scoring RI applicant

The assessment panel

65. All eligible applications will be assessed and scored by a cross government panel against certain criteria and then the recommendations put to Ministers for review and approval.

Scoring criteria

66. The following factors will be used when considering applications:

Stage 1 – Mandatory criteria

67. Applications must be made by local authorities and countersigned by local statutory safeguarding partners (local police force and Integrated Care Board). To be eligible to apply, LAs must meet the criteria set out in table 9 below.

Table 9: Mandatory criteria

Criterion	Further detail
7. Upper tier LA	LAs need to be one of the top 153 upper tier LAs
8. Ofsted rating – RI or above	LAs must have an Ofsted rating of 'Requires Improvement' or above on the last day of the application window.
9. Section 114 notice	LAs that are subject to section 114 notice spending controls on the last day of the application window cannot apply
10. Non-participation in the Family Network Pilot	LAs already participating in the Family Network Pilot cannot apply for wave 2 of the FFCP Pathfinder to retain the validity of the Family Network Pilot impact evaluation.
11. Multi-agency sign-up	Applications must be countersigned by local statutory safeguarding partners (local police force and Integrated Care Board).
12. Value for Money Section	Each local authority has been assigned to one of five grant funding bands, based on their CIN data. Applications that exceed the upper limit of an area's grant funding band will automatically be assessed as unacceptable and will not be considered for FFC Pathfinder grant funding.

Stage 2 – Assessment criteria

68. Table 10 below sets out the 5 areas that will be assessed via the application form and costed plan attachment. Please refer to the application form for further details.

Table 10: Assessment questions

Assessment criterion	Assessment approach
1. Proposed model of reforms (30% weighting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With reference to the Families First for Children Design Specification, how will you reform your early help and children’s services to deliver the minimum expectations for the FFC Pathfinder?
2. Multi-agency commitment and capacity (20% weighting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will you build on strong multi-agency working to deliver system change?
3. Capacity to deliver at pace (20% weighting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will you build on existing capacity to deliver your proposed model at pace, to meet the high level milestones set out in the application guide (paragraph 7)?
4. Leadership capacity and capability (15% weighting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will you build on existing leadership capacity and engagement to deliver your proposed model of reforms?
5. Value for money (15% weighting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high-level costed plan (attachment), which sets out how much funding is required to deliver the FFC Pathfinder across the LA, against key expenditure streams. A supporting narrative that provides rationale for anticipated expenditure set out in the costed plan and explains the distribution of investment across the different areas of the programme.

Scoring methodology

69. A cross-government assessment panel will examine eligible applications with consideration to the assessment criteria set out in the application form.

70. The following table sets out what scores will be awarded for each demonstration of the weighted criteria.

71. Each criterion will be scored between 0-5 using the scoring methodology set out in table 11 below. Applications must gain an acceptable score of 3 or above on each criterion to be eligible for funding, and those scoring a 2 or below on any requirement will be judged as unacceptable and will not be eligible for funding.

72. In Q5 *Value for Money* the applicant will be awarded '0' (does not meet the requirement) if the overall cost of the proposal exceeds the maximum funding available in their assigned grand funding band.

73. If there is no single highest scoring applicant within the lot, due to two or more applicants receiving equal scores by the assessment panel, we will award to the applicant within the lot that has the highest 0-5 score on Q1, as it has the highest weighting. If this does not determine a successful applicant, we will then award to the applicant within the lot that has the highest 0-5 score on Q2. We will continue this approach until we have compared unweighted scores for each of the 5 questions.

Table 11: Scoring methodology

Assessment	Score	Interpretation
Excellent	5	Exceptional demonstration in the Bid of the understanding and skills required to provide the services. Response identifies factors that will offer potential tangible/measurable added value, with evidence to support the response.
Good	4	Satisfies the requirement with minor additional benefits. Above average demonstration in the Bid of the understanding and skills required to provide the services. Response identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with evidence to support the response.
Acceptable	3	Satisfies the requirement. Demonstration in the Bid of the understanding and skills required to provide the services, with evidence to support the response.
Minor reservations	2	Some minor reservations of the Bidder's understanding and skills required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.
Considerable reservations	1	Considerable reservations of the Bidder's understanding and skills required to provide the services, with little or no evidence to support the response.
Does not meet the requirement	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.

Next steps

What happens if your application is successful?

74. We will inform you via email if your application is successful or not. We expect this to be by January 2024. If your application is successful, an award letter will be sent directly to the bidding officer and Director of Children's Services, together with an acceptance form. At this time, we will also send a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) setting out the expectations for spending the funding. The acceptance form and the GFA must be signed by the DCS. This will demonstrate that they agree to the requirements of the funding.

Clarification questions

75. Any questions regarding the application process should be emailed to FFC.PATHFINDER@education.gov.uk. Responses to these questions will be emailed out twice a week from this mailbox to the mailing list of DCSs used for the Families First for Children Pathfinder Wave 2 Information Session on 3 October. If you would like an email added to this contact list, please email the inbox. The deadline for questions is 11.59pm on Monday 30 October.

Annex A – Grant funding bands

76. Local authorities listed are not automatically eligible to apply for the funding available via their corresponding grant funding band; they must first meet all eligibility criteria, set out in paragraph 32 and table 4.

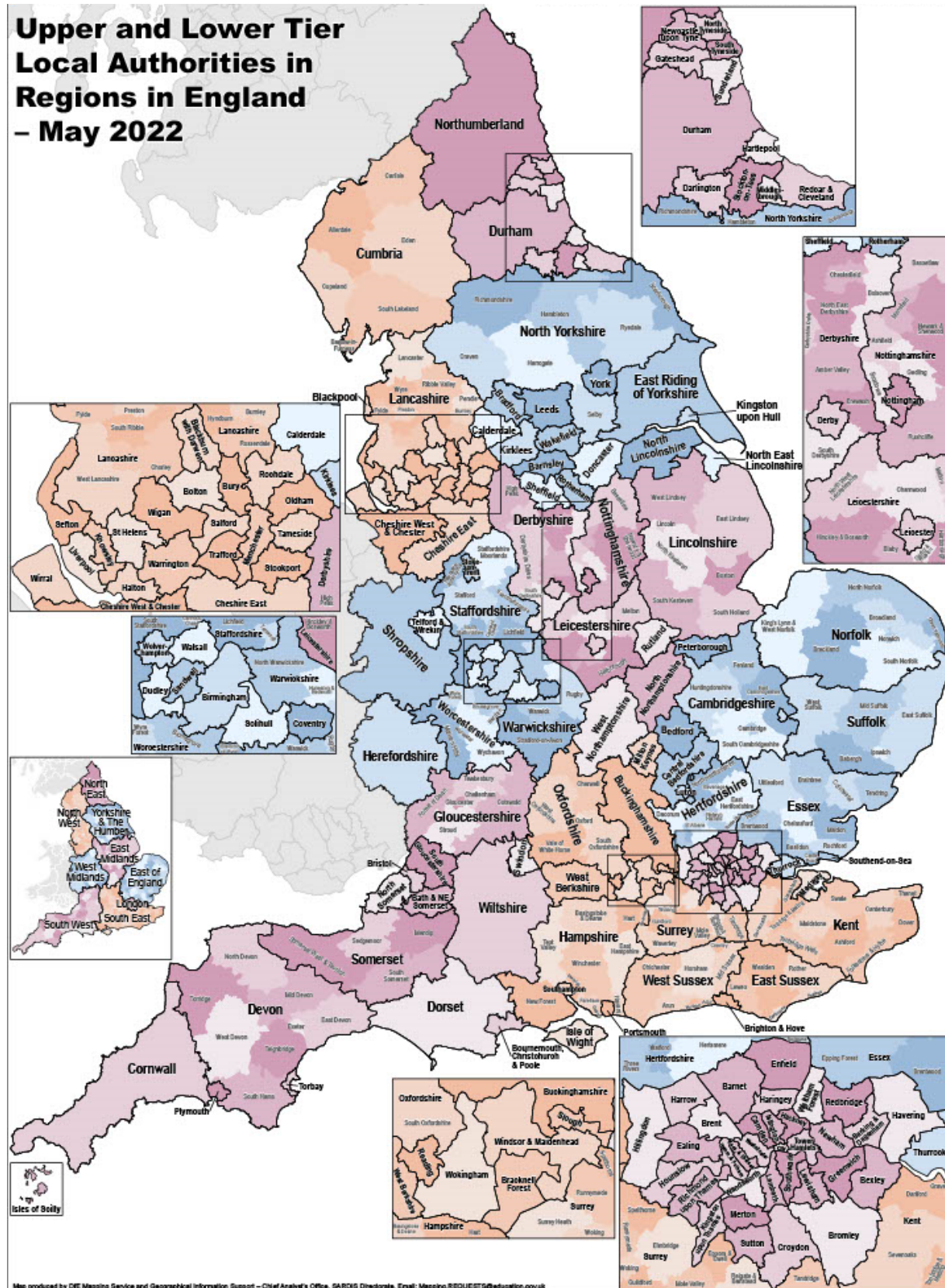
LA Name	Grant funding band
Barking and Dagenham	Band 5
Barnet	Band 3
Barnsley	Band 3
Bath and North East Somerset	Band 2
Bedford	Band 2
Bexley	Band 3
Birmingham	Band 5
Blackburn with Darwen	Band 2
Blackpool	Band 3
Bolton	Band 3
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Band 4
Bracknell Forest	Band 2
Bradford	Band 5
Brent	Band 4
Brighton and Hove	Family networks pilot area
Bristol, City of	Band 3
Bromley	Band 4
Buckinghamshire	Band 5
Bury	Band 3
Calderdale	Band 2
Cambridgeshire	Band 4
Camden	Band 2
Central Bedfordshire	Band 2
Cheshire East	Band 3
Cheshire West and Chester	Band 3
City of London	Band 1
Cornwall	Band 4
County Durham	Band 5
Coventry	Band 5
Croydon	Band 5
Cumberland	Band 2
Darlington	Band 2
Derby	Band 4
Derbyshire	Band 5
Devon	Band 5
Doncaster	Band 3

LA Name	Grant funding band
Dorset	Wave 1 FFC Pathfinder
Dudley	Band 4
Ealing	Band 3
East Riding of Yorkshire	Band 3
East Sussex	Band 5
Enfield	Band 4
Essex	Band 5
Gateshead	Family networks pilot area
Gloucestershire	Band 5
Greenwich	Band 3
Hackney	Band 4
Halton	Band 2
Hammersmith and Fulham	Family networks pilot area
Hampshire	Band 5
Haringey	Band 3
Harrow	Band 3
Hartlepool	Family networks pilot area
Havering	Band 2
Herefordshire, County of	Band 3
Hertfordshire	Band 5
Hillingdon	Band 4
Hounslow	Band 3
Isle of Wight	Band 2
Isles of Scilly	Band 1
Islington	Band 3
Kensington and Chelsea	Band 1
Kent	Band 5
Kingston upon Hull, City of	Band 5
Kingston upon Thames	Band 2
Kirklees	Band 3
Knowsley	Band 2
Lambeth	Band 4
Lancashire	Band 5
Leeds	Band 5
Leicester	Band 3
Leicestershire	Band 4
Lewisham	Band 4
Lincolnshire	Wave 1 FFC Pathfinder
Liverpool	Band 5
Luton	Band 3
Manchester	Band 5
Medway	Band 3
Merton	Band 2

LA Name	Grant funding band
Middlesbrough	Band 4
Milton Keynes	Band 4
Newcastle upon Tyne	Band 4
Newham	Band 4
Norfolk	Band 5
North East Lincolnshire	Band 3
North Lincolnshire	Band 2
North Northamptonshire	Band 3
North Somerset	Band 2
North Tyneside	Band 3
North Yorkshire	Band 4
Northumberland	Band 3
Nottingham	Band 5
Nottinghamshire	Band 5
Oldham	Band 4
Oxfordshire	Band 5
Peterborough	Band 2
Plymouth	Band 3
Portsmouth	Band 3
Reading	Band 2
Redbridge	Band 3
Redcar and Cleveland	Band 2
Richmond upon Thames	Band 2
Rochdale	Band 4
Rotherham	Band 3
Rutland	Band 1
Salford	Band 3
Sandwell	Band 4
Sefton	Band 4
Sheffield	Band 5
Shropshire	Band 3
Slough	Band 3
Solihull	Band 3
Somerset	Band 4
South Gloucestershire	Band 3
South Tyneside	Band 3
Southampton	Band 4
Southend-on-Sea	Band 2
Southwark	Band 4
St. Helens	Band 3
Staffordshire	Family networks pilot area
Stockport	Band 3
Stockton-on-Tees	Band 3

LA Name	Grant funding band
Stoke-on-Trent	Band 5
Suffolk	Band 5
Sunderland	Family networks pilot area
Surrey	Band 5
Sutton	Band 3
Swindon	Band 3
Tameside	Band 4
Telford and Wrekin	Family networks pilot area
Thurrock	Band 2
Torbay	Band 2
Tower Hamlets	Band 4
Trafford	Band 2
Wakefield	Band 4
Walsall	Band 3
Waltham Forest	Band 3
Wandsworth	Band 3
Warrington	Band 2
Warwickshire	Band 5
West Berkshire	Band 2
West Northamptonshire	Band 4
West Sussex	Band 5
Westminster	Band 2
Westmorland and Furness	Band 2
Wigan	Band 4
Wiltshire	Band 4
Windsor and Maidenhead	Band 2
Wirral	Band 4
Wokingham	Band 2
Wolverhampton	Wave 1 FFC Pathfinder
Worcestershire	Band 5
York	Band 2

Annex B – Local authorities mapped to government regions





Department
for Education

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