

# Families First for Children Pathfinder Wave 2: Application form

1. This document is for local authorities (LAs) to apply to become one of the local areas in wave 2 of the Families First for Children pathfinder (FFC Pathfinder).
2. This is one of four documents published to support applicants. The documents for applicants are:

* **The application form –** this 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 with the application window.
* **The application guide –** a 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.

**Please read these documents carefully before completing this application form**.

## Mandatory requirements

1. Applications must be made by local authorities and countersigned by local statutory safeguarding partners (police force and Integrated Care Board). Applications submitted without these signatures will be ineligible.
2. To be eligible to apply, LAs must meet the criteria set out in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Mandatory requirements**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Requirement** | **Further detail** |
| 1. Upper tier LA | LAs need to be one of the top 153 upper tier LAs |
| 1. Ofsted rating – RI or above | LAs must have an Ofsted rating of ‘Requires Improvement’ or above on the last day of the application window. |
| 1. Section 114 notice | LAs that are subject to section 114 notice spending controls on the last day of the application window cannot apply |
| 1. Non-participation in the [Family Network Pilot](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/families-first-for-children-ffc-pathfinder-programme/families-first-for-children-ffc-pathfinder-programme-and-family-networks-pilot-fnp#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. |
| 1. Multi-agency sign-up | Applications must be countersigned by local statutory safeguarding partners (local police force and Integrated Care Board). |
| 1. 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. |

## Application process

### How to apply

1. The application period will open on Friday 6 October 2023 and will close at 11:59pm on Monday 6 November. Applications must be made by LAs and countersigned by local statutory safeguarding partners (police force and Integrated Care Board).
2. Key dates and deadlines for the application process are set out in table 2 below.

**Table 2: 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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The questions are weighted and these weightings can be found in table 10 in the application guide.
4. All sections are mandatory and must be completed in order for your application to be accepted.
5. A maximum of one application form per LA can be submitted, and joint LA applications will not be accepted.

### Submitting your application

1. Please email a Word copy of your completed application form and an Excel copy of your costed plan to [FFC.PATHFINDER@education.gov.uk](mailto:FFC.PATHFINDER@education.gov.uk)FFC.PATHFINDER@education.gov.uk. In the email subject field, please include your **‘LA name’** followed by **‘wave 2 application’** when submitting your application.
2. 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

1. The DfE must receive all completed applications by email by **11:59pm on Monday 6 November**. No changes can be made to the application form beyond the deadline.
2. 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 timescale.

### Clarification questions

1. For more information, including funding and how applications will be assessed, please see the [application guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-become-a-families-first-for-children-pathfinder-area).
2. Any questions regarding the application process should be emailed to [FFC.PATHFINDER@education.gov.uk](mailto: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**.

## Application form – for completion

### Eligibility confirmation

1. To be eligible to apply, LAs must meet all the criteria below. Please cross each criterion to confirm that your LA meets them at the date of submission and that you understand that all criteria will need to be met on the last day of the application window for your application be valid. **If you do not meet all of the criteria below you are not eligible to apply.**

**Table 3: Eligibility ticklist**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion** | **Eligible?** | **Further detail** |
| 1. Upper tier LA |  | LAs need to be one of the top 153 upper tier LAs |
| 1. Ofsted rating – RI or above |  | LAs must have an Ofsted rating of ‘Requires Improvement’ or above on the last day of the application window. |
| 1. Section 114 notice |  | LAs that are subject to section 114 notice spending controls on the last day of the application window cannot apply |
| 1. Non-participation in the [Family Network Pilot](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/families-first-for-children-ffc-pathfinder-programme/families-first-for-children-ffc-pathfinder-programme-and-family-networks-pilot-fnp#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. |
| 1. Multi-agency sign-up |  | Applications must be countersigned by local statutory safeguarding partners (local police force and Integrated Care Board). |
| 1. 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. |

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### Applicant details

**Table 4: Applicant details to be completed**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Local Authority** |  |
| **Region** (please see table 7 of the application guide) |  |
| **Lot** (please see table 8 of the application guide) |  |
| **Name of Bidding Officer** |  |
| **Position** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Telephone** |  |
| **Address** |  |
| **Director of Children’s Services** | [name]  **I consent to and support this application**  [Signature] |
| **Email** |  |
| **Telephone** |  |
| **Address** |  |
| **Most recent Ofsted rating** |  |
| **Is your authority subject to any form of intervention, statutory or non-statutory, from HMG?** | No  Yes [please state below] |
| **Police Authority operating in your LA (add more rows if multiple apply)** |  |
| **[Local safeguarding partnership representative for police]** | [name]  **I support this application**  [Signature] |
| **Position** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Telephone** |  |
| **Address** |  |
| **Health Authority (add more rows if multiple apply)** |  |
| **[Local safeguarding partnership representative for ICB]** | [name]  **I support this application**  [Signature] |
| **Position** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Telephone** |  |
| **Address** |  |

### Assessment questions

#### Question 1 – (30% weighting)

**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?**

Stronger answers will:

* Demonstrate an ambitious vision for system reform locally.
* Align closely with the national vision for FFC Pathfinder, as described in the Design Specification.
* Set out proposed changes to current operating model(s) to deliver minimum expectations across the four reform strands (Family Help, child protection, safeguarding partners and family networks).
* Consider how the increased investment in Family Help Services will complement existing multi-agency services (such as children’s centres or family hubs), to a) create a seamless system of help and support and b) drive better outcomes for children and families.
* Describe where new roles will be created and how these will be filled (i.e. existing staff or new appointment and from which organisation).

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| **Word limit: 1000 words (inclusive of any diagrams/charts used within your answer below). Any attachments for this answer will not be scored.** |
| [Answer]  **Word count:** |

#### Question 2 – (20% weighting)

**How will you build on strong multi-agency working to deliver system change?**

Stronger answers will:

* Demonstrate the shared vision and commitment of leaders across key organisations to work collaboratively to improve services for families and children, by driving changes to practice and culture.
* Articulate how existing multi-agency services for children and families, delivered by local authority, health and police, will provide a strong foundation for further reform (you should reference findings from single agency inspection, including recent ILACS and PEEL inspections, and JTAIs)
* Explain how you will build on existing strong relationships across safeguarding partners and with other strategic partners, including education, voluntary organisations and the wider community to deliver the minimum expectations of the FFC Pathfinder, with a particular focus on establishing multi-agency working arrangements (as described in the Design Specification).
* Articulate a shared approach to programme governance, which effectively monitors delivery and quickly responds to emerging risks/issues, in relation to the FFC Pathfinder, across all partner agencies.

|  |
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| **Word limit: 500 words (inclusive of any diagrams/charts used within your answer below). Any attachments for this answer will not be scored.** |
| [Answer]  **Word count:** |

#### Question 3 – (20% weighting)

**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)?**

Stronger answers will:

* Use supporting evidence from the Early Help System Guide to articulate how your LA’s Early Help provision will provide a strong foundation for further reform.
* Explain how proposed project management structures and mechanisms will robustly monitor the planning and implementation of FFC Pathfinder, to ensure milestones are met.
* Demonstrate the readiness of LA workforce to embed changes to practice and culture quickly and sustainably. Your answer should make reference to your social worker vacancy rate, use of social worker agency staff and social worker turnover rate from your [workforce data return](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-s-social-work-workforce/2022#dataBlock-c27989c3-a3ca-49ef-ed69-08db084e720d-charts).
* Use the parameters of the Supporting Families data maturity model and any supporting evidence you would like to present (we would suggest you could use your Supporting Families data survey response) to describe how your digital/data arrangements will facilitate the changes via the FFC Pathfinder.

|  |
| --- |
| **Word limit: 500 words (inclusive of any diagrams/charts used within your answer below). Any attachments for this answer will not be scored.** |
| [Answer]  **Word count:** |

#### Question 4 – (15% weighting)

**How will you build on existing leadership capacity and engagement to deliver your proposed model of reforms?**

Stronger answers will:

* Include evidence of stable leadership across the LA, including the CEO, DCS and children’s services leadership team and demonstrate how leaders will set the direction for FFC delivery.
* Demonstrate a credible leadership team with a track record of working with political leaders to implement large scale transformation of children’s services successfully.
* Explain how you will secure and utilise buy in at all levels of leadership across your LA to embed the aims of the FFC Pathfinder alongside existing priorities.

|  |
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| **Word limit: 250 words (inclusive of any diagrams/charts used within your answer below). Any attachments for this answer will not be scored.** |
| [Answer]  **Word count:** |

#### Question 5 – (15% weighting)

**Please note this section comprises the costed plan attachment for this grant funding, and the supporting narrative, which will be assessed together. There is no word limit the for costed plan. The word limit for the narrative is 500 words.**

**Please refer to Annex A of the application guide to identify your LA’s grant funding band before completing this section. If the applicant falls in to grant funding band 5 and is applying for a partial-geography bid, this must be clearly explained within the supporting narrative.**

The costed plan should:

* Allocate between 20-25% of the overall funding costs to Family Network reforms, of which approximately 75% should be ringfenced for Family Network Support Packages
* NOT exceed the upper limit of the LA’s grant funding band (Annex A of the application guide).
* NOT include capital costs

Within the supporting narrative, stronger answers will:

* Provide rationale for costs, showing consideration for CIN numbers (as per Annex A - grant funding band)
* Provide brief rationale for costs against each workstream, set out in costed plan attachment, which explains distribution of investment across:
  + Family Help reform
  + Multi-agency child protection reform and parental advocacy
  + Family Network reform and Family Network Support Packages (FNSP)
  + System enablers: leadership, governance and partnerships; data and information sharing
  + Any other significant costs
* Consider how changes could be funded after the lifetime of the FFC Pathfinder (end of March 2025) to ensure sustainability
* **Relevant to bids for partial geography funding exceptions only**: provide clear rationale to support your costed plan, where you fall into grant funding band 5 and are planning to implement your proposed model over a reduced geographical area, instead of the entire LA. Please indicate the number of children in need that are covered by the proposed geographical area.

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| **Word limit: 500 words (inclusive of any tables within your answer below). The only attachment that will be scored is the costed plan.** |
| [Answer]  **Word count:** |

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