



Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs

Application Guide

December 2025

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Summary

This government is committed to breaking the link between background and success, ensuring that whoever you are and wherever you're from you have the opportunities that set you up to achieve your ambitions in life. As part of this, the government has made commitments to raising the healthiest generation of children ever and making sure that every child has the best start in life.

The purpose of this document is to provide leaders in Early Years settings with guidance to apply to become an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub (EYSPH), which will play a crucial role in delivery of the '[Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life](#)', the Government's early years strategy.

To support the early years sector delivering high-quality, evidence-informed practice, the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs programme was launched in November 2022. The programme has been delivered in partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), as the evidence partner, and the National Children's Bureau (NCB), as the current delivery partner.

The [Best Start in Life](#) strategy provides a commitment that '*We will double the number of Stronger Practice Hubs, securing their future for a further three years*'. This application process is to support this expansion of the Early Years Stronger Practice Hub network.

All applications will be considered against the criteria as described in this application guide, however, to maximise the benefits of the programme proposed new hub areas will also need to be considered carefully alongside locations of existing Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs and their areas of engagement.

The expectation is that, in most regions, this expansion process will result in four (rather than the current two) Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs per region. To maximise the impact of the programme, the Department may decide to take a different approach to distribution of the hubs based on the content and quality of the applications we receive.

If it is not possible to double the number of hubs through this recruitment exercise (for example due to low numbers of applications, insufficient high-scoring applications, limited geographic spread), the Department may consider conducting a further phase of recruitment in early 2026.

The application period is planned to open from 1 December 2025 and close at 11:59pm on 16 January 2026.

Key dates and deadlines for the application process are set out in table 1 below.

Table 1: application milestones

Milestone	Dates (subject to change)
Bid round opens	1 December 2025
Deadline for submitting clarification questions	9 January 2026
Bid round closes	16 January 2026
Assessment of applications	January 2026
Bidders informed of decisions	March 2026

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

Table 2: delivery milestones

High level delivery milestone	Dates (subject to change)
Hubs announced	March 2026
Pre-implementation preparation	March - April 2026
Grant funding period commences	1 April 2026
Early operationalising (new hubs)	April-August 2026
Hubs fully operational	September 2026

Who this publication is for

This guidance is for early years settings and childminders who are interested in applying to be part of an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub.

Support with making your application

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

- **the application guide** – this document setting out the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs programme and the application process, including details of the background, aims and objectives, funding and eligibility criteria.
- **the application form** – a document which must be completed and submitted within the application window for the application to be considered.

Please read these documents carefully before completing the application form.

Section One: What is the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs programme?

Background

The earliest years of a child's life are a critical period for development, laying the foundation for future learning, health, and well-being. High-quality early education is proven to have a significant impact on children's outcomes, particularly in supporting their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Evidence shows that the quality of education and care in early years settings is one of the most important factors influencing these outcomes.

To support the early years sector in delivering high-quality, evidence-informed practice, the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs programme was launched in November 2022. The programme has been delivered in partnership with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), as the evidence partner, and our delivery partner.

There are currently 18 Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs, with two Hubs operating in each of the nine regions across England. Each Hub is led by a group-based early years provider, whether school-based, private, voluntary, or independent, and plays a central role in supporting local early years settings.

Each Hub plans its delivery in partnership with the DfE and the delivery partner to ensure it meets the needs of children under five in the local area. The Hubs also focus their work on key areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), particularly those identified as local priorities, which may include:

- Communication and Language
- Early Literacy and Maths
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Together, the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs represent a vital effort to drive continuous improvement in early years education, ensuring that all children, regardless of background, have access to high-quality early learning experiences that support their development and long-term success.

Independent evaluation¹ findings show that Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs have established themselves as a key central support function for the early years sector, and there is demand for this support to continue. The existing 18 Hubs cover a wide

¹ DfE (2025): [Early years stronger practice hubs programme evaluation - GOV.UK](#)

geographical area; therefore our ambition is now to increase the number of Hubs to build further capacity in the system and reach a greater number of settings and childminders.

Further information about the current network of 18 Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs can be found at www.strongerpracticehubs.org.uk . A map of the existing Hub locations is provided as Annex A.

Our vision for the future of the programme

Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs are central to delivering the Best Start in Life (BSiL) strategy. Building on their established infrastructure and positive evaluation findings, we aim to double the number of Hubs to extend reach and strengthen support for more settings. These Hubs will work in close partnership with local authorities and Best Start Family Hubs, creating a joined-up approach to local needs and collaborating on Best Start in Life Local plans that all local authorities are currently developing.

Hubs will support early years settings to create environments where every child can thrive—regardless of their background, starting point, or individual needs. They will achieve this by offering **accessible, high-quality professional development, providing expert advice** and sharing **evidence-informed resources**.

Through collaboration and shared learning, hubs will:

- **support pedagogy**, helping practitioners make informed decisions that support children’s development through their early education, ensuring decisions are based on evidence of ‘what works’ to positively impact educational outcomes.
- **promote training and tools** that reflect the latest evidence informed research and best practices in early childhood education, ensuring that staff feel confident and equipped to meet the diverse needs of children and families.
- **champion equity and inclusion**, helping settings to identify and address barriers to learning so that every child can flourish - particularly those facing additional barriers (including those with disabilities and emerging developmental needs) and those with socio-economic disadvantage.
- **foster a culture of continuous improvement**, where early years professionals are supported to reflect on their practice, share insights, and grow together as a community.

By investing in the development of educators and the quality of provision, Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs will, along with our wider programmes such as Best Start Family Hubs, play a vital role in improving outcomes for children and laying strong foundations for lifelong learning, ensuring every child gets the best start in life.

Programme objectives

The aim of the Hubs is to deliver this vision by bringing together and mobilising the early years sector, develop a deeper understanding of evidence informed practice, and develop/enhance evidence informed practices to improve the quality of teaching within

the early years. This support may also cover the reception year, if appropriate and within the hub's expertise.

Each Early Years Stronger Practice Hub supports settings to adopt evidence informed practice improvements. These should be in line with [EEF's Early Years Evidence Store](#), the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#), [Development Matters](#), the DfE's [Help for Early Years providers](#) website and [Early Years Leadership NPQ](#) framework.

Hubs will be provided with grant funding to the value of up to c.£240,000 per hub per financial year with further grant funding to support delivery of Objective 5 (Stronger Practice Advisers and Subject Leads). Grant funding will be subject to the DfE's monitoring and assurance processes and will be paid in arrears for the specific services provided by the Stronger Practice Hub.

Hubs are expected to use all reasonable endeavours to achieve the following core programme objectives during the lifetime of the grant. Hubs will be expected to report against key performance indicators (KPIs) to allow the DfE to measure performance against the objectives and monitor the impact and benefits of the programme.

Objective 1: Proactively share information and advice to early years settings and practitioners based on evidence informed approaches via high quality outputs throughout your Hub's area, such as newsletters, blogs, events, webinars and social media.

Objective 2: Maintain networks of cross-sector early years providers and organisations (including childminders) throughout agreed Hub areas to improve child outcomes, by championing evidence informed early years practice and knowledge sharing.

Objective 3: Act as a point of contact for bespoke advice and support early years educators to access professional development opportunities and evidence informed programmes. This will include signposting to approved professional development programmes and DfE funded support including other Hubs.

Objective 4: Operate as an effective Early Years Stronger Practice Hub by; maintaining adequate, skilled staff to run the hub, ensuring coverage across the LA areas within the hub's remit, working with the delivery partner and managing finances to ensure objectives can be met effectively across the life of the programme.

Objective 5: Support the delivery of commitments outlined in the Best Start in Life Strategy by;

- Appointing and managing Subject Leads
- Appointing and managing Stronger Practice Advisers to provide tailored post-inspection support to settings,

- Working in partnership with Local Authorities and Best Start Family Hubs, to ensure collaborative working towards improving child development outcomes in line with local Best Start in Life plans.

These objectives are subject to change at the department's discretion. Hubs may also be expected to work towards regional aims and objectives, supporting greater collaboration between Hubs and strengthening opportunities for impact.

Roles and Expectations of Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs

Hub infrastructure

Each Hub will be required to have the sufficient infrastructure in place to meet the objectives of the Hub programme, ensure continued strategic development of the Hub and the wider regional and national Hub network and to effectively manage the associated operational activities, including managing data, communications and finances.

As a minimum, all Hubs must continually have staff in place to cover these roles:

- Hub Lead (in the Lead Setting) - this person is the Grant Recipient.
- Administration and finance

Hubs are expected to have these roles in place throughout all months of the year and are expected to ensure that they are undertaken by individuals with the required expertise and experience.

Table 3: Minimal viable structure example (FY25-26)

Role	Days P/W	Max Rate	Total P/M
Hub lead	2	£600	£5,200
Finance officer	1	£200	£867
Admin	1	£120	£520
Total P/M			£6,587

(Source: FY25-26 SPH spending ratios & rate card guidance. See also Annex B)

To deliver the commitments outlined in the Best Start in Life Strategy, Hubs will also be required to secure additional staff/ staff time to support delivery of programmes that utilise the EYSPH network in their design. This will include:

- **Subject leads.** Co-ordinating the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs support offer for e.g. early maths and early language leads which could include giving on-the-job training to early years educators, facilitating access to evidence-based resources and training to help improve their practice. These may be employed directly by the hub or released from their current employer via a day rate payment.
- **Tailored support for settings after inspections.** Co-ordination and delivery of one-to-one coaching or expert guidance from an experienced early years

professional to settings or childminders that need to improve (expected to be known as 'Stronger Practice Advisors'). As these advisors need to be serving practitioners they would remain employed at their current setting and released via a day rate payment.

Lead Settings

The lead setting of each Hub receives the grant funding, and is responsible for strategic planning and maintaining and running the hub. The Lead Setting acts as the main point of contact for the DfE and other programme partners and is responsible for ensuring that the Hub delivers against the programme objectives.

Key administrative tasks, e.g. managing grant payments and reporting to DfE, are most likely to be situated within the Lead Setting, but this is for each Hub to determine.

Partner Settings

Partner settings are also expected to play a strategic role in planning and there should be a designated Partner Lead in each setting who will maintain regular close working with the Lead Setting. The level of involvement of Partner Leads may vary across a Hub but is likely to include; regular attendance at strategic and operational Hub meetings, participation in meetings and webinars with DfE and other partners, contribution to the wider work of the Hub including delivery of CPD and facilitation of training sessions and other external engagement activities.

Partner settings are also expected to support Hub activities and may play a generalist supportive role and/ or undertake specific administrative functions for the Hub. The hours associated with this activity are likely to be different in each Hub and partner.

Collaborative working

To support the vision for the future of the programme and to raise the status of all Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs, we encourage hubs to work together and share resources and processes where appropriate. Further guidance about this will be provided as part of the Hub onboarding and induction process.

Funding

The specific terms and conditions of the grant funding will be outlined in the Grant Offer Letter, issued before a Hub begins to operate. The Grant Offer Letter will also include the final detailed objectives and will confirm how these objectives will be measured (e.g. via monitoring of Key Performance Indicators). To ensure that the DfE achieves good value for money, all grant payments to Hubs will be made in arrears and on the basis of accurate, evidenced submission of claims.

Section Two: Eligibility

Stage 1: Mandatory criteria

Early Years Stronger Practice Hub applications must be made by a Lead Setting which is a group-based early years setting (school-based, private, voluntary, independent (PVI) or a maintained nursery school).

The application must also identify a minimum of two to a maximum of four Partner Settings. Partner Settings must be group-based early years settings or Childminders.

To be eligible to apply, applicants must meet all of the criteria set out in table 4 below.

Table 4: Mandatory criteria

Lead settings:

Criterion	Further detail
Setting type	The lead setting must be a group-based early years setting (this may be school-based, private, voluntary, independent (PVI) or a maintained nursery school). Setting type must be clearly identified in the application.
Ofsted judgements	<p>Eligibility is based on your last available Ofsted judgments prior to 10 November 2025².</p> <p>For schools, this would be 'good' or 'outstanding' grading for both your school's Leadership and Management and Early Years Provision sub-judgements. If a judgement for Early Years Provision is not available, the Quality of Education judgement will be used instead.</p> <p>For settings on the Early Years Register, this would be a good or outstanding overall effectiveness grade.</p>
Number of partners	The application must identify a minimum of two and a maximum of four partner settings. Further detail about the expectations of partner settings can be found in Section One.

² Please note Ofsted will begin inspections under its updated framework from 10 November 2025. However, changes introduced as part of the new framework will not be taken into account for this application round.

Partner settings:

Criterion	Further detail
Setting type	The partner settings may be group-based early years settings (this may be school-based, private, voluntary, independent (PVI) or a maintained nursery school) or Childminders. Setting types must be clearly identified in the application.
Ofsted judgements	<p>Eligibility is based on each partner's last available Ofsted judgments prior to 10 November 2025³.</p> <p>For schools, this would be 'good' or 'outstanding' grading for both your school's Leadership and Management and Early Years Provision sub-judgements. If a judgement for Early Years Provision is not available, the Quality of Education judgement will be used instead.</p> <p>For settings on the Early Years Register, this would be a good or outstanding overall effectiveness grade.</p>

Applications that meet the mandatory eligibility criteria in full will progress to **Stage 2** of the assessment process.

³ Please note Ofsted will begin inspections under its updated framework from 10 November 2025. However, changes introduced as part of the new framework will not be taken into account for this application round.

Stage 2: Suitability criteria

Table 5 below sets out the three areas that will be assessed via the application form to assess the applicant's suitability to become an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub. Please refer to the application form for further details.

Table 5: suitability criteria

Suitability criterion	Assessment approach
Use of evidence	<p>Applicants are asked to demonstrate, by providing examples, of their ability to understand and use evidence from research and exemplify evidence-informed practice.</p> <p><i>Things we are looking for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Understanding of how to use evidence to inform decision making</i> • <i>Knowledge and understanding of evidence-informed practices</i> • <i>Ability to use current research and evidence to inform practice and improve child outcomes in their setting, particularly for children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and those with emerging developmental needs.</i>
Networks and partnerships	<p>Applicants are asked to demonstrate a proven ability to build and maintain strong local networks.</p> <p><i>Things we are looking for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Knowledge of the differences and similarities of EY provider types and their needs including childminders, school based and PVI settings</i> • <i>Understanding of and engagement within current local networks, which may include existing hubs</i> • <i>Experience of working in partnership with others, for example Family Hubs and local authorities</i> • <i>Experience of using social media and a variety of communication tools to engage an external audience</i>

Capacity and capability	<p>Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have suitably qualified people and adequate systems in place to operate as a Hub, and the ability to adapt these to meet programme objectives.</p> <p><i>Things we are looking for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Capacity of existing staff to fulfil the role of a Hub/and or a plan of how to recruit staff to deliver the work of a Hub.</i> • <i>Financial expertise of managing a grant budget and submitting claims.</i> • <i>Ability to mobilise the Hub quickly and be ready to deliver.</i> • <i>Capacity and capability to adapt to changing priorities and opportunities.</i>
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Stage 2 scoring methodology

A DfE assessment panel will review and score eligible applications with consideration to the suitability criteria set out in the application form.

Table 6 below sets out what scores will be awarded for each demonstration of the suitability criteria. Each criterion will be scored between 0-5 using the scoring methodology set out in table. Applications must gain an acceptable score of 3 or above on each criterion to progress to Stage 3.

Table 6: scoring methodology for suitability criteria

Assessment	Score	Interpretation
Excellent	5	Excellent demonstration in the application form of the understanding and skills required to be a successful Hub. Response identifies factors that will offer tangible/ measurable added value, with evidence to support the response.

Good	4	Satisfies the requirement with minor additional benefits. Above average demonstration in the application of the understanding and skills required to be a successful Hub. Response identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with evidence to support the response.
Acceptable	3	Satisfies the requirement. Demonstration in the application of the understanding and skills required to be a successful Hub, with some evidence to support the response.
Minor reservations	2	Some minor reservations of the applicant's understanding and skills required to be a successful Hub, little or no evidence to support the response.
Considerable reservations	1	Considerable reservations of the applicant's understanding and skills required to be a successful Hub, 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 applicant has the understanding and skills required to be a successful Hub, with little or no evidence to support the response.

Stage 3: Location criteria

It is preferred that the lead setting of a Hub is located within an area of deprivation or is able to demonstrate extensive experience of working with socio-economically disadvantaged children.

The success of Hubs is reliant on the development of strong relationships with Local Authorities and settings. Applicants will be asked about any relationships that are already in place and to propose a geographical area of coverage. Preference will be given to applications that demonstrate strong Local Authority links, particularly where engagement with the existing Early Years Stronger Practice Hub network has been low.

Applications that progress to Stage 3 will be considered against the location criteria set out in table 7 below.

Table 7: Location criteria

Criterion	Further detail
Disadvantage focus	<p>Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have extensive experience of operating in areas of deprivation and/ or of working with socio-economically disadvantaged children and families.</p> <p><i>Things we are looking for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Understanding of the education impact of deprivation and socio-economic disadvantage</i> • <i>Understanding of local and regional context</i> • <i>Awareness of data sources e.g. Indices of deprivation, EYPP recipients.</i>
Local and Local Authority information	<p>Applications that demonstrate an ability to maintain strong links with Local Authorities and local settings will be prioritised. Preference will be given to applications that demonstrate Local Authority relationships in areas that are not covered by the existing Stronger Practice Hubs.</p> <p><i>Things we are looking for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whether there are already LA relationships in place</i> • <i>What the nature of your work with LAs is/ is likely to be</i> • <i>A reasoned approach to the hub's proposed area of coverage</i> • <i>How/ whether you are working with an existing Stronger Practice Hub</i>

Stage 3 scoring methodology

Table 8 below sets out what scores will be awarded for each demonstration of the location criteria. Each criterion will be scored between 0-5 using the scoring methodology set out in the table.

Table 8:scoring methodology for location criteria

Assessment	Score	Interpretation
Excellent	5	Excellent demonstration that the proposed hub will meet local/regional need, with strong consideration of local contextual factors e.g. LA links, ability to meet the needs of children with socio-economic disadvantage.
Good	4	Satisfies the requirement with some additional benefits. Above average understanding of local contextual factors and clear demonstration of the potential for positive impact.
Acceptable	3	Satisfies the requirement. Some evidence of understanding of local contextual factors.
Minor reservations	2	Some minor reservations. Application does not demonstrate a fully developed understanding of local contextual factors.
Considerable reservations	1	Considerable reservations, little or no evidence provided.
Does not meet requirement	0	Does not meet the requirement.

Stage 4: Presentation and Interview

All scores for criteria assessed via the application form (stages 2 and 3) will be weighted equally. The maximum score that an application can be awarded is 25.

Following scoring and moderation of applications against the location criteria and selection criteria, the highest scoring applicants will be invited to attend a short virtual interview (Stage 4).

Table 9 below sets out the criteria that will be assessed via the presentation and interview:

Table 9: presentation and interview criteria

Criterion	Further Detail
Implementing and sharing evidence-informed practice	<p>Applicants are asked to demonstrate excellent practice underpinned by the EYFS and an ability to support others to improve practice beyond their setting.</p> <p><i>Things we are looking for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Experience and recognition of being able to support other EY providers (including childminders) with understanding high quality approaches to practice.</i> • <i>Knowledge and understanding of effective support strategies such as coaching and mentoring to encourage others to reflect on their own practice.</i> • <i>Examples of sustained practice improvements either within your setting or because of support you have offered to other EY settings/practitioners</i>
Hub Context	<p>The location of the lead setting and the partner settings will be considered alongside information about location of existing SPHs and other relevant networks (for example, family hubs, English and maths hubs).</p> <p><i>Things we are looking for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consideration of how a new hub in the proposed location could meet particular local or regional needs</i> • <i>How you will use relationships with other networks to maximise your hub's reach and impact</i> • <i>Ability and willingness to work collaboratively to maximise the success of the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs programme.</i>

The format of the interview will be a 10-minute presentation by the lead setting on the following topic, based around the ‘implementing and sharing evidence-informed practice’ criterion:

Presentation topic

Please provide an example of when you have improved educator practice in a setting (either yours or one you have worked with)

You may wish to consider:

- *How you identified the practice to focus on*
- *How you designed the support for improvement*
- *How you know that practice changed and what impact this has had on children*
- *How you might apply the process of supporting change you used here with other settings or what you learned from this example that you might apply again.*

Slides or handouts to support the presentation are optional and do not need to be provided in advance.

Following the presentation, the remainder of the interview will be in the format of a short (c. 15 minutes) question and answer session focussed on the criteria ‘implementing and sharing best practice’ and ‘hub context’ (table 9 above).

Stage 4 scoring methodology

Table 10 below sets out what scores will be awarded for each demonstration of the presentation and interview criteria. Each criterion will be scored between 0-5 using the scoring methodology set out in the table.

Table 10: scoring methodology for presentation and interview criteria

Assessment	Score	Interpretation
Excellent	5	Excellent demonstration at interview stage of the understanding and skills required to be a successful Hub, and clear consideration of local networks and the role of SPH within that. Response identifies factors that will offer tangible/

		measurable added value, with evidence to support the response.
Good	4	Satisfies the requirement with minor additional benefits. Above average demonstration during interview stage of the understanding and skills required to be a successful Hub. Response identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with evidence to support the response.
Acceptable	3	Satisfies the requirement. Some evidence of understanding of skills required local contextual factors.
Minor reservations	2	Some minor reservations. Interview and presentation do not demonstrate a fully developed understanding of skills required or local contextual factors.
Considerable reservations	1	Considerable reservations, little or no evidence provided.
Does not meet requirement	0	Does not meet the requirement.

Applicants who have reached stage 4 must gain an acceptable score of 3 or above on each criterion to be considered for final selection.

The presentation and interview performance will be scored, moderated and added to the application scores to allow for final selection of the successful hub applications.

Final Selection

As part of our due diligence processes, we expect to visit potential hubs prior to confirmation of the grant award. The timing and detail of visits are to be determined, and further briefing will be provided to applicants who are successful in reaching this

stage. Visits are likely to be from a selection of delegates formed from DfE and existing hubs.

Following assessment of applications, interviews and due diligence visits, DfE will make the final selection of new hubs and successful applicants will be informed. Grant awards will then be confirmed following successful completion of other relevant due diligence processes.

Next Steps

What happens if your application is successful?

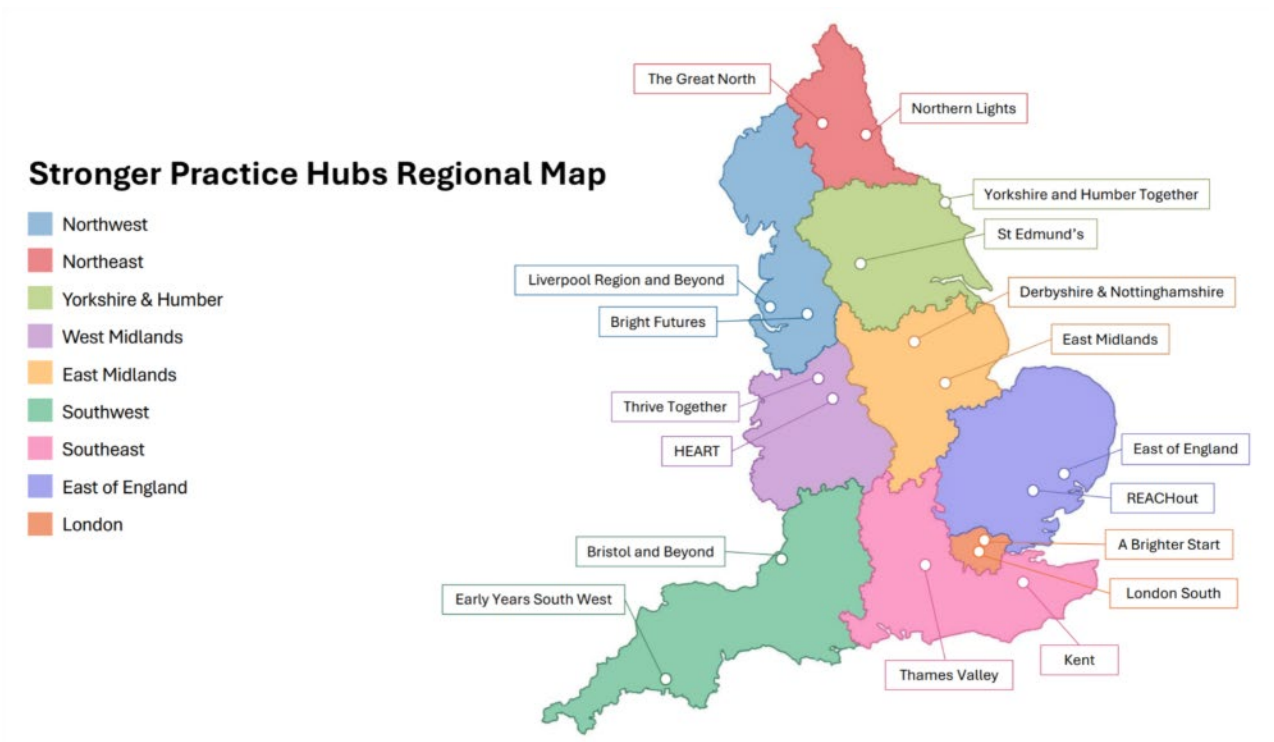
We will inform you via email if your application is successful or not. We expect this to be by early March 2026. If your application is successful, a grant offer letter will be sent directly to the Lead Setting contact who will be the grant recipient.

Clarification questions

Any questions regarding the application process should be emailed to ey sph.applications@education.gov.uk. Responses to these questions will be emailed twice a week to a mailing list of all known potential applicants. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please email the inbox. The deadline for questions is 09 January 2026.

Annex A

Map of existing Stronger Practice Hubs



Annex B

Extracts from Rate Card Guidance provided to SPHs FY25-26

This information is provided for illustrative purposes only and will be subject to review prior to FY26-27.

Staffing guidance

This section sets out the staffing expectations for Hubs going into FY25-26, as well as the minimum viable staffing structure and staffing role definitions.

As a **minimum**, all Hubs must have staff in place to cover these roles:

- Hub lead
- Administration and finance

Hubs are expected to have these roles in place throughout all months of the year and are expected to ensure that they are undertaken by individuals with the required expertise and experience.

Finance tasks are expected to be undertaken by administrative staff if a dedicated finance officer is not in place. In this situation, the finance officer rate card can be applied.

Minimum viable structure example

Role	Days P/W	Max Rate	Total P/M
Hub lead	2	£600	£5,200
Finance officer	1	£200	£867
Admin	1	£120	£520
Total P/M			£6,587

Staffing roles and rate cards

Below are the recommended daily rates for different types of Hub staffing roles. We have set out a lowest, expected and maximum figure. These have been calculated based on existing and historic staffing costs from Hubs.

We are conscious that some Hubs pay staff a percentage of their existing salary. In this case, we would ask that a daily rate estimation is calculated to determine that this does not exceed the rate card threshold. This can be estimated by dividing the person's full-time salary equivalent by the number of workdays in the year (around 260). If a person is paid hourly, this can be estimated by multiplying their hourly rate by 7.5 or 8 hours.

In cases where existing staff do not meet the threshold, Hubs should work towards restructuring to meet the expected daily rates throughout FY25-26.

Hubs are not necessarily expected to have all these roles employed or working within the Hub. You are only required to ensure that the minimum viable structure is in place, with the expectation that you may have staff performing additional roles as required.

In cases where **a person on a daily rate does not work a full 8-hour day**, we expect the daily rate to be paid on a **pro-rata basis**. For example, if a finance officer with a daily rate of £200 works for 2 hours, the payment should be £50 ($2 / 8 = 0.25$, $0.25 \times £200 = £50$).

Hub lead

This is a strategic role responsible for maintaining the running of the hub, planning, delivering against the programme objectives, and monitoring the impact of local support. This role should be dedicated to one person, typically belonging to the lead setting of the hub unless otherwise agreed with the delivery partner. We do not expect this role to include any administrative work – these types of tasks should be delegated to administrative staff within the Hub.

Hub lead rate daily card

Lowest	Expected	Maximum
£500	£600	£600

Hub partner lead

This is a strategic role to support the Hub lead in planning, delivering against the programme objectives and monitoring the impact of local support. Hub partner leads should be limited to one person per partnership.

Partner hours are not expected to be static, i.e. one partner lead may support the Hub more in one week, with another partner lead from a different partnership supporting the Hub another week.

Hub partner lead daily rate card

Lowest	Expected	Maximum
£500	£600	£600

Hub partner

This role is a generalist supportive role from staff at partnered settings. Hub partners are expected to support Hub activity, planning and delivering against the objectives. As with the partner lead, Hub partner hours are expected to vary.

Hub partner daily rate card

Lowest	Expected	Maximum
£200	£300	£400

Communications/marketing officer

This role develops and implements communication strategies to boost the Hub's profile and support with networking and co-ordination.

This role is expected to manage social media channels and the Hub's brand and identity, as well as support the Hub lead on communicating with local authorities and organisations for co-planning.

Communications/marketing officer daily rate card

Lowest	Expected	Maximum
£200	£250	£300

Finance manager/lead

This is a senior financial role that could be the chief financial officer of your organisation or a more experienced finance person.

Where possible, financial tasks should be delegated to a finance officer, but a finance manager may be required for more complex tasks or for additional assurance.

Finance manager/lead daily rate card

Lowest	Expected	Maximum
£200	£350	£400

Finance officer

This role is expected to carry out tasks on Annex C and claim evidence returns, collating of invoices, financial management and ongoing budgeting, and on the Annex G end of financial year requirements.

Upon completion of Annex Cs and Annex Gs, the person in this role should seek authorisation from the person responsible at the lead setting for managing finances and signing off finance documents.

Finance officer daily rate card

Lowest	Expected	Maximum
£150	£200	£250

Project manager

This role is a senior project management role, expected to lead on the planning, executing and monitoring of tasks and projects within the Hub to support successful delivery against objectives, KPIs and plans.

Project manager daily rate card

Lowest	Expected	Maximum
£200	£300	£400

Project officer

This is a supportive project role to assist with the planning, executing and monitoring of tasks and projects to support successful delivery against objectives, KPIs and plans.

Project officer daily rate card

Lowest	Expected	Maximum
£150	£200	£250

Administrative staff

Hubs should have administrative staff to carry out certain duties that include and are not limited to: finance management, grant admin, event planning, engagement support, communications and marketing support, data admin, and inbox monitoring.

If a Hub does not have a dedicated finance lead or officer, administrative staff would be expected to carry out financial tasks within the Hub. We would still recommend that Hubs look to appoint a dedicated finance officer.

Hub leads are expected to delegate tasks to administration to ensure value for money.

Administrative staff daily rate card

Lowest	Expected	Maximum
£110	£120	£200

Specialist

Specialist roles are for early years experts providing knowledge and expertise on various learning areas. This could include a speech and language therapist, a SEND specialist and so on.

Specialists are expected to be externally contracted and invoiced for their services and could be brought in to assist with professional development opportunities and/or events. If an external specialist's rate exceeds £600, Hubs should consult with the delivery partner during the QA approval process to negotiate and agree on the higher costs.

Specialist daily rate card

Lowest	Expected	Maximum
£400	£600	£600

Rate card summary

Staffing role	Lowest	Expected	Maximum
Hub lead	£500	£600	£600
Hub partner lead	£500	£600	£600
Hub partner	£200	£300	£400
Communications/marketing officer	£200	£250	£300
Finance manager/lead	£200	£350	£400
Finance officer	£150	£200	£250
Project manager	£200	£300	£400
Project officer	£150	£200	£250
Administrative staff	£110	£120	£200
Specialist	£500	£600	£600



UK Government

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