



Department for Education

May 2025

To Whom It May Concern

Our ref:

**Re: S31 Grant Determination Letter for Early Years, Childcare and Families -
Families First for Children Pathfinder Grant GD 31/7821**

This Determination is made between:

- (1) The Secretary of State for Education and
- (2) The local authorities listed at Annex A

Purpose of the Grant

The purpose of this grant is to provide support to participating local authorities (LA) in England (Dorset, Lewisham, Lincolnshire, Luton, Redbridge, Walsall, Warrington, Warwickshire, Wirral and Wolverhampton) towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them.

This grant is intended to support the projects these LAs have been requested to undertake, relating to the Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFC) programme. Through the FFC Pathfinder programme, the Department for Education (DfE) will continue to work with ten local areas to deliver end-to-end service reform, building on existing evidence to implement new Family Help services, child protection arrangements and support for family networks. This builds on the work that has taken place to date and the funding that has been provided in previous years.

This funding is to be used alongside the LA allocations from the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant 25-26 and the Children and Families Grant 25-26 which are paid via the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS). This investment is to enable direct investment into prevention activity for children and families through the implementation of

Family Help, Child Protection and Family Group Decision Making reforms. This reform will be delivered nationally through the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme.

The 2025-26 Families First for Children Pathfinder Grant is to be used, to i) ensure the 10 areas maintain delivery of their new local models, in line with their costed plans and ii) take on a regional and national role in supporting the wider rollout of reforms from April 2025.

Pathfinder delivery expectations

The FFC programme has been successful so far in proving deliverability, informing policy, and making the case for further investment. In 2025-26 the role of the pathfinders will be to:

- Continue with service delivery and transformation of agreed local models in line with costed plans. This is to include implementation of financial support through Family Network Support Packages. This includes maintaining direct engagement with DfE through the Partnership Lead relationship and ongoing engagement with the programme's national partners (external Delivery Partner and independent Evaluation Partner);
- Support evaluation and reliability of findings, both through the implementation and process evaluation (IPE); and the impact and economic evaluations; and increasing the likelihood of achieving the full range of benefits from improved services
- For pathfinder areas whose models do not align with the national guidance for the Families First Partnership programme, the DfE expect these areas to move towards the national design specification during the 25-26 year and will support areas in doing this.

Participation in national Families First Partnership programme

The FFC programme will be a core part of the rollout of the national FFP Programme and will continue to inform national rollout. DfE will want to extract learning to share nationally and support other areas who are not as far ahead on their reform journey.

Funding is being made available to ensure Pathfinder LAs can provide support to the national FFP programme. This will be through informing national documents and providing direct support to non-pathfinder areas to prepare for and begin implementing reforms.

This support may include:

- Attending and contributing to internal DfE meetings and reference groups to advise on national policy and delivery of reforms.
- Fulfilling a championing role on a local, regional and national level, and leading from the front as advocates for the reforms
- Sharing learning with the department and the sector and engaging with national stakeholders, for example police and health networks.

- Informing and commenting on documents developed by the department, or the delivery partner, that will support the delivery of the national reforms.
- Providing peer support and engaging with other local authorities on an individual, regional or small group basis.

Annex A provides details of the indicative grant payment being made, up to a maximum, to local authorities involved in the programme.

Signed by person authorised to sign on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education:



Name: Helen Waite

Role: Deputy Director

Date: 01/05/2025

Families First for Children Pathfinder programme GRANT DETERMINATION 2025-2026:

The Secretary of State for Education (“the Secretary of State”), in exercise of the powers conferred by section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, makes the following determination:

Citation

1) This determination may be cited as the Families First for Children Pathfinder programme Grant Determination 2025-2026.

Purpose of the grant

2) The purpose of the grant is to provide support to local authorities in England towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them.

Determination

3) The Secretary of State determines the authorities to which grant is to be paid and the amount of grant to be paid; these are set out in Annex A.

Treasury consent

4) Before making this determination in relation to local authorities in England, the Secretary of State obtained the consent of the Treasury.

Payment arrangements

5) The indicative grant to be paid to each authority, up to a maximum, is set out at Annex A. Final grant amounts may be lower than the maximum published figure and will be subject to ongoing pathfinder delivery and corresponding financial returns, submitted by Pathfinder areas. The grant will be paid in a maximum of two instalments and will be for the sum attributed to a proportion of the fixed costs to Families First for Children Pathfinder local authorities in the 2025-2026 financial year.

UK Government Branding

6) The Grant Recipient shall at all times during and following the end of the Funding Period:
6.1 comply with requirements of the Branding Manual in relation to the Funded Activities; and

6.2 cease use of the Funded by UK Government logo on demand if directed to do so by the Authority.

7) **Branding Manual** means the HM Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ‘Funded by UK Government branding manual’ first published by the Cabinet Office in November 2022 and is available at <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/marketing/branding-guidelines/> including any subsequent updates from time to time.

Annex A

Families First for Children Local Authority FFC DfE grant up to amount (£) 2025-2026

Dorset	£2,710,658
Lewisham	£2,119,967
Lincolnshire	£521,062
Luton	£1,902,005
Redbridge	£2,509,848
Walsall	£170,000
Warrington	£1,496,922
Warwickshire	£3,574,459
Wirral	£1,401,350
Wolverhampton	£739,966