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Research report

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Executive summary

Introduction and background

The contract for the current study was awarded in June 2023 in collaboration with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This was part of a machinery of government change whereby the ownership of the Supporting Families programme was transferred from MHCLG to Department for Education (DfE). The concept of the study was developed by MHCLG, alongside the Systemic Practice Pilot Trial (see [Systemic practice pilot trial - GOV.UK](#) for the published trial protocols), to build out the evidence base on the functioning of the programme and targeted interventions for families supported by it.

The Supporting Families programme (formerly Troubled Families programme) ran between 2013 and 2025. The programme funded whole family, multi-agency, and early support for families. It received an additional £200 million in funding for programme delivery until March 2025 taking overall funding to £696 million.

In April 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned IFF Research to conduct an evaluation of Supporting Families spend, including the uplift in funding which occurred in April 2022.

The research aimed to assess the feasibility of measuring Early Help spend, understand spending differences among local authorities, and explore early impacts of the uplift in funding. However, a full impact evaluation was deemed unfeasible as local authorities do not collect spending data in a format that will allow us to isolate the spending from the additional funding.

The evaluation followed a mixed-method approach in four phases: feasibility assessment, process evaluation, impact evaluation, and reporting. Phase 1 involved assessing data and developing a spend mapping tool. Phase 2 focused on case studies and surveys to identify spending patterns. Phase 3 was due to consist of the impact assessment, however, this was deemed unfeasible. The planned local authority survey was therefore repurposed to test out the spend mapping tool in more detail and identify patterns in Early Help spending. Phase 4 involved reporting findings.

Feasibility assessment findings

The feasibility assessment aimed to understand how local authorities recorded Early Help support spend, focusing on whether Supporting Families spend could be isolated and consistently recorded. Interviews with stakeholders from ten local authorities

examined spend data collection methods and formats, influencing the development of a spend mapping tool.

Variation in spending - local authorities varied significantly in terms of the types of staff they employed, and the types of training, service procurement/specialist workers and infrastructure that they used for the delivery of the Early Help and Supporting Families related services. In addition, the extent to which each of these types of training were offered by local authorities varied considerably. Safeguarding, child development, parenting techniques, and parental conflict were the ones most likely to be provided.

Variation in tracking of spending - They also varied in their ability to identify which spend categories were funded by Supporting Families funding and/or wider Early Help funding. In part this was because categories such as training and infrastructure were typically funded by a wider internal local authority budget. However, in most cases, for staff costs, it was possible to distinguish Supporting Families funding as a proportion of wider Early Help funding.

Aggregation of funding - local authorities flagged that there would be multiple challenges associated with accurately identifying Supporting Families funding spend across each of the spend categories, particularly where Supporting Families funding was not distinct from Early Help or wider local authority spending, though often estimates would be possible.

Hard to identify additional investment - Some local authorities had received additional funding as part of the Supporting Families uplift. However, only a minority reported that they would be able to identify exactly which spend categories the uplift has been allocated to.

Spend mapping tool

The evaluation developed a spend mapping tool to identify how Early Help and Supporting Families funding was spent at a local level. Local authorities provided annual returns on Supporting Families spend and related outcomes, but there was no standardised monitoring tool to identify spend by category. The purpose of the spend mapping tool was to provide a useful understanding of how Local authorities track funding and spend funding in different ways.

Categories of spend identified - A draft version of the tool was shared with the ten local authorities that had participated in the feasibility interviews. In total, 9 local authorities provided feedback. This exercise highlighted that relatively few adaptations were needed to the draft version of the tool, most relating to clarity of specific terms and phrases. The spend mapping tool included the following four categories of spend:

- staff
- training
- infrastructure
- services beyond Supporting Families and Early Help.

Spend survey

The spend survey was developed using insights from a feasibility assessment and the spend mapping tool. It focused on several areas, including how much funding was allocated to staff, training, infrastructure, and services beyond Supporting Families and Early Help.

Additionally, the survey included scenarios involving vulnerable families, asking respondents to estimate costs and support types over a six-week period, based on spending in the 2024/2025 financial year¹. This survey was distributed to local authorities. It found that:

The majority of expenditure was on staff - For many local authorities, their biggest single expenditure category for Early Help and/or Supporting Families funding was staff costs. Around seven-in-ten (71%) reported that they spent more than one million pounds on staff salaries. Of those who provided an exact figure, this ranged from c.£300,000 to c.£4,100,000, with an average spend of £2,038,293. Primarily, this funding was spent on salaries for frontline workers, administrative and/or data staff, managers/supervisors and Supporting Families coordinators. Among the 25 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on staff salaries, on average, local authorities spent 51% of their total spend on Early Help, on staff salaries.

More than half procured specialist support such as parenting programmes - Almost six-in-ten (58%) local authorities used procured services / specialists to deliver the Supporting Families programme, most commonly to support with parenting techniques (13 out of 19 local authorities). Of those who provided an exact figure, the average amount spent on service procurement/specialist workers funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding was £176,207. This ranged from c.£25,000 to £450,000. Among the 11 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on procured services and specialist workers, on average, local authorities spent 8% of their total spend on Early Help, on procured services and specialist workers.

Most areas invest in training - Another significant expenditure was on training and upskilling. The majority (82%) of local authorities reported that they used Early Help and/or Supporting Families funding in this way. Most often this funding went on training relating to parents/parenting. Seven out of 24 local authorities spent less than £10,000 on

¹ Please note, data on spend and staff numbers have had outliers removed.

training and upskilling for salaried staff. Of those who gave an exact figure, spend on training and upskilling ranged from c.£3,538 to c.£49,557, with an average spend of £19,216. Among the 10 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on training and upskilling, on average, local authorities spent 0.5% of their total spend on Early Help, on training and upskilling.

Areas invest in Infrastructure such as data and case management systems - Two-thirds (67%) of local authorities used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on infrastructure, most commonly on data / case management. Of those who gave an exact figure, spend on infrastructure ranged from c.£15,000 to c.£196,946, with an average spend of £84,474. Among the 10 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on infrastructure, on average, local authorities spent 2% of their total spend on Early Help, on infrastructure.

It is difficult to estimate costs for different scenarios of need - Local authorities were able to note which staff would be involved in each of the family scenarios provided. Most commonly these were frontline workers, managers/supervisors, and social workers. All local authorities reported challenges in identifying what associated costs would be in each scenario.

Case study findings

The case study findings were collected from ten local authorities, which were selected to provide variation by region, urban vs. rural locations, funding model (Payment by Results and Earned Autonomy) and data maturity.

Significant variation in delivery of services - Most often, the operational structure of the teams used to deliver and monitor the Supporting Families programme included heads of Early Help/Children's Services, Supporting Families Coordinators who managed delivery and outcomes, as well as a team of data analysts/engineers, and key workers. The way in which teams were arranged varied across local authorities.

Extensive partnership working - Partnerships with organisations like schools, police, and health services were crucial for programme delivery. Some local authorities relied on partners like Barnardo's for direct family support.

Importance of data - Successes included improved data maturity, allowing efficient data use for decision-making, and enhanced partnership working, leading to better-targeted support.

Challenges around payment by results - Challenges included achieving Payment by Results targets, short-term funding affecting staff recruitment and morale, and rural local authorities facing logistical issues in service delivery.

1. Introduction

Background and context

The Supporting Families programme was launched in March 2021 and ended in March 2025. It built on the previous Troubled Families Programme, launched in 2011.

The Supporting Families programme was built around four principles: early intervention; whole family working; multi-agency working; and measuring outcomes and data. The programme supported families experiencing multiple challenges including unemployment, poor mental or physical health, involvement in crime, poor school attendance, and children in need. Evidence from the early phases of the Supporting Families programme showed that the programme delivered positive impacts for the families involved, including reductions in the proportion of children looked after and the proportions of adults and children receiving custodial sentences.

Prompted by the positive evidence and following reported increases in families in need of support following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Supporting Families programme received an additional £200 million in funding for programme delivery until March 2025. This equated to a 40% uplift in funding, taking overall funding to £696 million. Funding was allocated to individual local authorities based on an updated estimate of the level of need. In April 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) commissioned IFF Research to conduct an evaluation of Supporting Families spend, including the £200 million uplift. The aims of the evaluation were:

- To assess the feasibility of consistently and accurately measuring Early Help² spend, including spend funded by the Supporting Families programme (feasibility assessment). This focused on building understanding of the methods and systems used in different local authorities to record Early Help support spend. One of the key objectives was to understand if Supporting Families spend could be isolated from Early Help spend, as well as whether it could be recorded consistently.
- To understand how local authorities were spending Early Help funding, including Supporting Families funding, and how and why this may differ between local authorities (process evaluation). This element aimed to record and describe the ways in which local authorities spent Early Help funding; the ways in which the uplift in funding changed Early Help spending; and the barriers and facilitators to effective spending.
- To explore early impacts of Early Help spend pre- and post-Supporting Families funding uplift on local authority outputs and outcomes for children and families,

² Early help services support families with problems below statutory thresholds for social care intervention.

and whether this differed between local authorities (early outcomes and impact evaluation). This element was dependent on the outcome of the feasibility assessment and whether or not consistent data was available or could be collected. The feasibility assessment found that a full impact evaluation was not possible (see chapter 2).

From April 2025, the Families First Partnership programme was launched. This builds on the Supporting Families programme. It is backed by more than £500m funding per year for preventative services. The findings in this report will be relevant for these services.

Methodology

The evaluation adopted a mixed-method, theory-based approach. The original evaluation plan was in four phases:

- Phase 1: Project set up and feasibility. The feasibility stage was critical in assessing the existing data and informing the impact evaluation approach for Phase 3. This included:
 - an inception meeting to discuss the background to the programme and funding uplift
 - scoping interviews with key research and policy team members at DfE and MHCLG and with national stakeholders
 - a review of background materials
 - reviewing quality and relevance of programme management information and secondary data for the evaluation
 - the development of a Theory of Change (ToC)
 - developing and agreeing a sampling frame to recruit ten local authorities to take part in the Feasibility Assessment, and 10 to take part in the case studies.
 - interviews with data and policy leads at ten local authorities to identify if a full impact assessment was feasible
 - development, testing and validation of an Early Help spend mapping tool which could be used by local authorities to design and monitor spending against programme and wider objectives. A draft spend mapping tool was shared with the ten local authorities that had participated in the feasibility interviews to gather feedback. In total, 9 local authorities provided feedback, and 3 completed the tool.
 - a detailed feasibility report/options paper, setting out options for the outcomes and impact evaluation design.

- Phase 2: Process evaluation, which included:
 - in depth case studies with ten local authorities to identify: different implementation models for the Supporting Families programme; approaches to spending any uplift in funding; and how Early Help programmes were being delivered more widely.
 - an online local authority survey, using an expanded spend mapping tool, to identify patterns of spending
- Phase 3: Impact evaluation, assessing the impact on local authority and family level outcomes
- Phase 4: Reporting: sharing and disseminating findings.

Phase 1, the feasibility stage, found that Phase 3 would not be possible as local authorities do not collect spending data in a format that will allow us to isolate the spending from the additional funding. The planned local authority survey was therefore repurposed to test out the spend mapping tool in more detail and identify patterns in Early Help spending, as described in Phase 2 above.

Report structure

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2: Feasibility assessment: approach taken and key findings from local authority interviews.
- Chapter 3: Spend mapping tool: development, testing and feedback from local authorities, feasibility and limitations.
- Chapter 4: Spend survey: survey development, delivery and key findings.
- Chapter 5: Case study findings, including operational structures, differing delivery models, and successes and challenges to delivering the Supporting Families programme.
- Chapter 6: Conclusions

2. Feasibility assessment findings

Key findings

- Local authorities varied significantly in terms of the types of staff they employed, and the types of training, service procurement/specialist workers and infrastructure that they used for the delivery of the Early Help and Supporting Families related services.
- They also varied in their ability to identify which spend categories were funded by Supporting Families funding and/or wider Early Help funding. In part this was because categories such as training and infrastructure were typically funded by a wider internal local authority budget. However, in most cases, for staff costs, it was possible to distinguish Supporting Families funding as a proportion of wider Early Help funding.
- Local authorities flagged that there would be multiple challenges associated with accurately identifying Supporting Families funding spend across each of the spend categories, particularly where Supporting Families funding was not distinct from Early Help or wider local authority spending, though often estimates would be possible.
- Some local authorities had received additional funding as part of the Supporting Families uplift. However, only a minority reported that they would be able to identify exactly which spend categories the uplift has been allocated to.

Methodology

The feasibility assessment strand of the evaluation focused on building understanding of the methods and systems used in different local authorities to record Early Help support spend. One of the key objectives was to understand if Supporting Families spend can be isolated from Early Help spend, as well as whether it could be recorded consistently. It included an assessment of what data was available to enable understanding of the impacts, including data quality and accessibility. This assessment was used to design the approach to the remainder of the research.

The feasibility assessment included interviews with key stakeholders within ten local authorities. The discussions covered what spend data was being collected by local authorities, in what format, and whether Supporting Families spend could be isolated from wider Early Help funding. The findings from these interviews were then used to inform the development of an Early Help and Supporting Families spend mapping tool and to ensure the tool was designed in a way that reflected the capabilities of local authorities.

The ten local authorities were selected to ensure that there was variation by region, rural vs. urban classifications, Payment by Results vs. Earned Autonomy funding models, Index of Multiple Deprivation average scores, and levels of data maturity (low, medium and high classifications).

Between 2-6 stakeholders were interviewed in each LA. These included stakeholders who had an oversight of the Supporting Families programme as a whole, such as strategic managers and directors of children and family services, as well as those responsible for finances, including data analysts and finance managers. Interviews took place in October and November 2023.

This chapter first examines how local authorities collected data on spend and outcomes, including identifying additional Supporting Families funding, before then examining spend data collection against five key categories:

- Staff costs/salary spend data collection
- Service procurement/specialist worker spend data collection
- Training and upskilling spend data collection
- Infrastructure spend data collection
- Services beyond Early Help/Supporting Families spend data collection.

Examples of the types of expenditure falling within each of these five categories are presented in turn. The definitions / examples were shared with local authorities in advance of the interviews in order to ensure they had an opportunity to reflect on the categories and consider if and how they collected spend data on each. This allowed for an informed and in-depth discussion of each category during the interview.

How local authorities collect data on spend and outcomes

Stakeholders were asked to give an overview of the systems and measures their local authority has in place to record Supporting Families funding spend. Stakeholders reported using a range of software to record Supporting Families spend, including E5, Hyperion, Oracle, B4B, Delta, and Civica. Spend was generally recorded against a range of different categories (such as salaries, training costs, and infrastructure), though there was significant variation across local authorities in terms of the categories used to record funding spend.

Across the ten local authorities interviewed, there was also variation in terms of whether they were able to distinguish Supporting Families funding spend from wider Early Help spend, and their ability to do so also varied across different spend categories. Three of the ten local authorities interviewed were able to identify what Supporting Families

funding was spent on as they used separate cost codes for Supporting Families spend, two reported that they would be unable to distinguish Supporting Families spend from the other types of funding as this all goes into one pot, and five would be able to estimate Supporting Families funding spend as a percentage of wider Early Help spend.

Stakeholders were asked whether they had received any additional Supporting Families funding compared to the previous financial year. A few reported that their funding had increased (for PbR local authorities this was often in terms of ‘potential’ funding associated with their targets and was seen as a minimal difference to their core funding), while others did not think they had received an increase or were uncertain. Among those reporting an increase, most felt that they would not be able to distinguish this increase from the overall pot of funding they had received, both in terms of how this was spent and its impact. This may be because the Supporting Families uplift was usually a relatively small proportion of total Early Help spend.

In terms of measuring outcomes, local authorities used a range of methods, including the ten outcomes in the Supporting Families Outcomes Framework, internal KPIs (including those relating to outreach and family outcomes) and outcomes measurement software. Most local authorities said that they could report outcomes both at an individual and family level, could link members of staff to families they had worked with, and that school data could be added to the outcomes data via a child’s UPN.

Staff costs / salaries spend data collection

The following categories and explanations were used when discussing staff costs and salary data collection with stakeholders. The spend categories used for the interviews included salaries, plus employer National Insurance contributions and pension contributions for new staff, or pay increases for existing staff, as well as the cost of hiring agency staff.

Table 2.1 Staff costs/core salaries spend categories

Staff costs/core salaries spend categories	
Supporting Families Coordinator (SFC)	Including spend on salary for a Supporting Families Coordinator, who is employed or nominated by the local authority to provide operational leadership for the programme across the partnership. Role involves evaluating user experience and feedback, coordinating with other relevant government programmes, and managing data reporting.
Front door/triaging services	Including spend on a range of professionals who operate the ‘front door’ – that is, a single access point

Staff costs/core salaries spend categories	
	to universal and Early Help services for families with children of all ages, with a Start for Life offer at their core.
Key workers	Including spend on staff who lead work with individual families to overcome their problems. Keyworkers work with the whole family, agree a single improvement plan and coordinate other services to support the family.
Family help workers	Including spend on family help workers, also known as Family Support Workers, who help families with long- or short-term problems.
Social workers	Including spend on social workers, who provide whole family, sometimes intensive, support for families often in their home, being proactive to reach out to families where needed. They are experts in processes to support families with multiple needs and help families, other professionals, commissioned organisations and voluntary and community groups to understand those needs, advocating where necessary. These practitioners may support others with the lead practitioner role.
Early Help advisor/consultant	Including spend on staff who support lead practitioners and those in the Early Help system to understand and feel confident in their role in the Early Help System. Also known as Link workers.
Administrative staff	Including spend on administrative assistants or support staff responsible for fulfilling or supporting on administrative tasks.
Data resource	Including spend on staff members working within a data team aligned to the Supporting Families programme to facilitate data development, data sharing and to progress against data maturity milestones. This might include a data lead, data analysts, data architects, developers, or data support workers.

Overall, local authorities generally recognised and were broadly comfortable with the definitions used to describe each job role and already were assigning or could assign spend data to these sub-categories, most often per individual or as a proportion of a role. That said, some sub-categories were not widely used or were less clear. In other cases, interviewees reported that different or additional example job titles would be useful, and

some stakeholders also mentioned other job roles not included in the original list. For example:

- The 'Early Help advisers/consultants' role was generally not recognised by local authorities; stakeholders said they would require more information on this role before providing further feedback on whether they would be able to identify if it existed in their local authority, and if so, how it is funded.
- The definitions / examples used for the 'Key Workers', 'Family Support Workers' and 'Social Workers' categories were sometimes disputed. However, 'Key Workers' and 'Family Support Workers' in particular, were seen as fitting under the term 'Frontline Workers' and it was considered appropriate to use this single category for those responsible for delivering the Supporting Families programme on the ground. 'Lead Professionals' and 'Early Help Practitioners' were also defined in the same way as 'Frontline Workers' by some local authorities.
- Some local authorities did not use the term 'Supporting Families Coordinator' and instead used 'Early Help Coordinators' or 'Family in Focus Coordinators'.
- Some local authorities reported that they would consider staff in administrative and data resource roles as one category and would struggle to differentiate spending between the two.
- Job roles included in staff costs that were not included in the example list presented to respondents included: parenting posts/teams, health navigators, SEND family support workers, and employment advisers.

Stakeholders indicated that the records for the different spend categories would include National Insurance contributions and pension contributions, as well as, in some cases, travel costs.

Although some local authorities would be able to identify Supporting Families funding spend in each or most sub-categories, most local authorities indicated that they would not be able to distinguish Supporting Families from wider Early Help funding, though they would be able to estimate Supporting Families spend as a proportion of wider Early Help spend if they were required to do so. Identifying Supporting Families funding spend was considered easiest for the Supporting Families Coordinator category, as this was usually funded exclusively through their Supporting Families funding. In comparison, there were more mixed views on whether for Key Workers, Family Support Workers and Social Workers it would be possible to isolate Supporting Families funding spend from wider Early Help funding spend (though as mentioned earlier, it would be possible to estimate this as a proportion). Local authorities tended to report that it would be challenging to distinguish Supporting Families and/or wider Early Help spend on Front Door / Triaging roles, given these staff have a range of responsibilities across the LA.

In addition to the staff categories listed above, managerial roles were also discussed with stakeholders. Local authorities were able to distinguish staff spend on managerial roles (and flagged that these roles could also encompass 'District Practice Leads', 'Heads of Service', and 'Directors') but varied in their self-reported ability to distinguish Supporting Families from wider Early Help funding for managerial salaries. Part of the challenge here is the number of managerial positions within local authorities, and how these vary in the extent to which they cover specifically Supporting Families activity.

Service procurement / specialist workers spend data collection

When discussing service procurement and specialist workers spend data collection with stakeholders, the following categories and definitions / examples were used.

Table 2.2 Service procurement/specialist workers spend categories

Service procurement / specialist spend categories	-
Parenting techniques	Including spend on programmes such as Triple P, Non-Violent Resistance, Parenting Together, Incredible Years, Parents Plus, The Solihull approach, Mellow Mums, Parenting Children with ASD/ADHD.
Family Group Decision Making Services	Including spend on organisations that deliver Family Group Decision Making services, which might include Family Group Conferences (such as Daybreak for Family Group Conferences).
Domestic abuse	Including spend on specialist domestic abuse advisors, as well as spend on programmes such as Freedom Project, Free Your Mind, Phoenix Project, Empowerment Programme, Sisters in Strength, and any other domestic violence programme funded by the LA.
Mental health	Including spend on specialist mental health advisors, as well as spend on Families Learning About Self Harm, Jigsaw Project (bereavement support), Rapid Access to Psychological Services (RAPT), referrals into Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Service procurement / specialist spend categories	-
Substance abuse or alcohol dependency	Including spend on specialist substance abuse advisors as well as spend on referring to rehabilitation programmes such as SHARPS.
Youth crime	Including spend on Youth Justice Teams.

Stakeholders generally recognised the terms and definitions described above. However, the procurement services and specialist workers used by local authorities varied widely. Local authorities were most likely to have procured services / staff from within the parenting techniques, mental health, substance abuse and domestic abuse categories. Other types of services mentioned which were not included in the original list were: outreach services, volunteer services, fire and rescue, financial advisers, and therapy services. A number of local authorities also noted that they did not procure any services or specialists as part of their Early Help provision.

In terms of spend data, most stakeholders suggested that it would be hard to determine precisely how each of these spend categories were funded, particularly in terms of how much Supporting Families funding was spent on each. However, some of the ten local authorities covered in the research indicated that it would be possible. More than half of local authorities reported that at least one or more of these categories was funded by wider Early Help funding or both Supporting Families and wider Early Help funding. Other sources of funding included a wider 'overall pot of local authority funding'.

One important point for consideration is that some stakeholders noted that specialist workers were considered as part of their staff and agency costs, rather than as a separate category. This may mean that such workers are less visible in Supporting Families/Early Help spend records.

Training and upskilling spend data collection

In discussing training and spend data collection, stakeholders were asked to consider the following categories and definitions / examples.

Table 2.3 Training cost spend categories

Training cost spend categories	-
Safeguarding	Involving spend on training and upskilling core staff in safeguarding.

Training cost spend categories	-
Child development	Involving spend on training and upskilling core staff in child development.
Parenting techniques	Including spend on training and upskilling core staff in parenting techniques.
Social learning theory	Involving spend on training and upskilling core staff in social learning theory.
Motivational interviewing techniques	Involving spend on training and upskilling core staff in motivational interviewing techniques.
Family Group Conferencing	Including spend on training and upskilling core staff in Family Group Conferencing.
Domestic abuse	Including spend on training and upskilling core staff in domestic abuse training, as well as spend on specialist advisors.
Parental conflict	Including spend on parental conflict training.
Mental health	Including spend on training and upskilling core staff in mental health.
Team around the Family	Including spend on training and upskilling core staff in Team around the Family training.
Data training	Including spend on training core staff to use case management systems.
Other training	Including spend on training and upskilling staff in other areas such as equality, diversity and inclusion, cultural competence, etc.

Most stakeholders recognised or understood these terms and definitions. However, the extent to which each of these types of training were offered by local authorities varied considerably. Safeguarding, child development, parenting techniques, and parental conflict were the ones most likely to be provided.

Other types of training mentioned included: multi-systemic therapy training, Equality Diversity and Inclusion training, management training and models of Early Help delivery training.

Most local authorities indicated that it would be challenging to pinpoint precise funding sources for each type of training and to identify whether recipients of each type of training had any involvement in the Supporting Families programme. In addition, most local authorities flagged that each type of training was funded by internal local authority budgets rather than via Supporting Families or wider Early Help funding specifically. The

exception was parental conflict training and parenting technique training, which were more likely to be funded by Early Help funding.

Further challenges with distinguishing training spend data included instances where staff, whose salaries are funded by Supporting Families funding, deliver the training, resulting in a risk of double counting. Also, some stakeholders noted that the types of training offered can vary depending on time of year and need, and that this lack of consistency creates further challenges with recording spend.

Infrastructure spend data collection

In discussing infrastructure spend data collection, stakeholders were asked to consider the following categories of spend.

Table 2.4 Infrastructure spend categories

Infrastructure spend categories	-
Case management system	Including spend to run and improve case management systems which might involve paying for licenses and subscriptions for case management platforms, such as Liquidlogic.
Data system	Including spend on improving or investing in data systems such as paying for hardware and software e.g. fees for Database Managements Systems.
Family feedback and experience	Including spend on improving and investing in systems for family feedback and experience such as paying for online platforms, surveys etc to capture family voice and experience for service design.
Premises	Including spend on investing in new premises, utility costs, insurance, etc. Also includes spend on repair and maintenance of premises including pay of staff involved e.g. cleaning staff.
Networking and catering	Including spend on venue rental hire and refreshments.

In general, stakeholders recognised and used these terms and definitions for the different types of infrastructure spend in their LA. However, such infrastructure spending was generally shared across the local authority and was not specific to the Supporting Families funding. While some local authorities reported that infrastructure spend was funded by Supporting Families and wider Early Help funding, others reported that each of

the infrastructure spend categories above were funded by core, internal LA budgets. Case management systems, premises, and networking and catering were the most likely categories to have been recorded by local authorities as funded (at least in part) by Supporting Families. However, they considered it to be a significant challenge to disentangle the amount of Supporting Families or wider Early Help funding that was used for each of these types of infrastructure spend.

Services beyond Early Help/Supporting Families spend data collection

Respondents were asked about the use and recording of the following services under Early Help or Supporting Families funding.

Table 2.5 Services beyond Supporting Families / Early Help spend categories

Services beyond Supporting Families / Early Help spend categories	
Children's social care: Sure Start children's centres, Family Hubs, and early years	Including spend on Sure Start centres and Early years entitlements that doesn't come from their respective dedicated funding streams.
Children's social care - Children Looked After	Including spend on residential care, fostering services.
Children's social care - Asylum Seekers	Including spend on accommodation, support staff etc.
Adult social care	Including substance misuse and mental health support.
Public health	Including services such as preventing, reducing and treating drug misuse in adults.
Direct financial support and in-kind transfers to families	Including statutory and non-statutory financial support and allowances for families and carers e.g. allowances to informal kinship carers.

There was variation across local authorities in terms of which services beyond Supporting Families and wider Early Help were used. Most often, Supporting Families and wider Early Help funding was not used to fund these services, with two exceptions:

- Direct cash transfers or kinship/in-kind transfers to families e.g. emergency cash payments for items such as beds and white goods or payment for school / college equipment.

- To support funding for Family Hubs, including for staff and case management systems.

In these cases, local authorities reported that they would be able to identify how much Supporting Families and wider Early Help funding was used to fund these services.

The feasibility of conducting an impact evaluation

Following these findings from the feasibility assessment, it was determined that it was not feasible to assess the impact of the additional funding as local authorities do not collect spending data in a format that will allow us to isolate the spending from the additional funding. Local authorities also commented that the additional funding they received in 2022/2023 was not significant enough proportion of the overall Supporting Families and wider early help funding available to them. The uplift was spread across multiple years and revisions to the funding formulas are likely to have impacted on local authority's ability to pinpoint additional funding as a result of the uplift in 2022/2023.

3. Spend mapping tool

One of the primary goals of the evaluation was to identify how Early Help and Supporting Families funding is spent at a local level. Local authorities provide annual returns on Supporting Families spend and related outcomes, but there is currently no standardised monitoring tool to identify spend by category. The spend mapping tool provides a useful understanding of how local authorities track funding and spend funding in different ways.

Aims of the spend mapping tool

The key aim of the spend mapping tool was to capture detailed information on Early Help and Supporting Families spending.

Other aims of the spend mapping tool were to isolate the Supporting Families funding from Early Help funding and to assess the impact of the £200 million uplift. However, it became evident at the feasibility stage that most local authorities are not able to differentiate Supporting Families from the wider Early Help support. In addition, evidence from the feasibility stage indicated that it was unlikely that local authorities would be able to differentiate funding provided to them as part of the uplift from their original funding allocation.

Development of the spend mapping tool

The key takeaways from the feasibility interviews and corresponding implications for the spend tool design are presented in the Table 3.1. below.

Table 3.1. Key feasibility interview findings and implications for the spend mapping tool design

Feasibility interview finding	Implications for the spend mapping tool design
Local authorities varied in terms of the sub-categories they fund. For example, there was variation in the types of staff employed, and the types of training, service procurement/specialist worker and infrastructure used.	To build a tool that was relevant for all local authorities, as well as easy and quick to complete, the focus has been on collecting spend information on the five overarching categories rather than on each sub-category. The same overarching spend categories identified for the feasibility interviews were used again for the spend mapping tool: Early Help staff costs; service procurement and / or specialist workers; training and upskilling; infrastructure; and services beyond Supporting Families and/or Early Help. For each spend category, the tool aims to understand whether local

Feasibility interview finding	Implications for the spend mapping tool design
	<p>authorities allocate any Early Help and Supporting Families funding at the overall level. If so, the tool then asks local authorities for the total amount spent within each spend category. To gain further insights on 'where' the spending goes, the tool asks local authorities to select the relevant sub-categories.</p>
<p>Local authorities varied in their ability to identify which spend categories were funded by Supporting Families funding and/or wider Early Help funding. Feedback indicated that most spend categories were funded by a wider budget within local authorities, particularly in terms of training and infrastructure. There would be multiple challenges associated with isolating Supporting Families funding spend across each of the spend categories. This was most possible, however, for staff costs. In particular, all local authorities recognised the specific role of Supporting Families coordinator.</p>	<p>Local authorities are asked to estimate what proportion of the total spend within the overarching spend categories was funded specifically by Supporting Families funding. Local authorities are therefore given the opportunity to skip this question if they do not differentiate funding in this way. If local authorities indicate that they used Early Help and/or Supporting Families funding for Supporting Families coordinators, they provide the total spend on staff salaries for those in these roles, and what proportion of the funding came specifically from Supporting Families funding.</p>
<p>Evidence from the feasibility interviews indicated that it was unlikely that local authorities would be able to differentiate any funding given to them as part of the uplift from their original funding allocation. A minority of local authorities indicated that their funding had increased, whilst others had not received an increase in funding or were</p>	<p>The tool includes a general section at the end which explains that the £200 million uplift came into effect at the beginning of the financial year 2022/23. It then asks whether local authorities have noticed an increase in the funding they received in 2022/23. If they have noticed an increase, the tool then asks where this additional funding has been directed.</p>

Feasibility interview finding	Implications for the spend mapping tool design
uncertain. Of those who had received an increase, most reported that they would not be able to distinguish this increase from the overall pot of funding they had received, both in terms of how this was spent and the impact it had, if at all.	

Feedback from local authorities on the draft version of the tool

To support with the development of the spend mapping tool, a draft version of the tool was shared with the ten local authorities that had participated in the feasibility interviews. In total, 9 local authorities provided feedback. This exercise highlighted that relatively few adaptations were needed to the draft version of the tool, most relating to clarity of specific terms and phrases. The key feedback from local authorities and corresponding actions for the spend mapping tool design are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Feedback from local authorities and actions to make the spend mapping tool clearer and easier to complete

Feedback	Action
The phrase ‘wider Early Help funding’ required further explanation. One local authority indicated that this implied a single funding stream for Early Help provision, which was not the case.	To improve clarity, a detailed explanation of ‘wider Early Help funding’ was added to the accompanying glossary.
The tool needed to specify the difference between ‘frontline workers’ and ‘social workers’: <i>“Frontline workers can be seen often as social workers so [you should] be more specific and identify Early Help practitioners.”</i>	To improve clarity, the tool makes clear that ‘frontline workers’ could include Early Help practitioners, whereas ‘social workers’ were a separate category.

Feedback	Action
<p>The tool needed to reflect the fact that some local authorities would be able to include additional employment costs when reporting staff salaries (such as employers' National Insurance or pension contributions), and some would not:</p> <p><i>"No because some staff have private pensions and some are not all council staff and there is GDPR issues here."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes - we also usually capture staff costs INCLUDING these costs. The total of these costs would be more representative of our spend using Supporting Families funding."</i></p> <p><i>"We would prefer to include all these costs as this is the cost to the grant".</i></p>	<p>To avoid confusion in what the employment costs include, there is a question aimed at understanding the total amount spent on basic annual salaries, followed up by a question to understand whether this figure included other costs related to staff members' employment.</p>
<p>The more general phrase 'practice frameworks' was a better option compared with 'social learning theory' and 'motivational interviewing techniques' as types of training and upskilling:</p> <p><i>"Suggest more general heading relating to 'practice frameworks' would be better to capture these. You currently list social learning theory and motivational interviewing but what about Trauma Informed, systemic, restorative etc.?"</i></p>	<p>The phrases 'social learning theory' and 'motivational interviewing techniques' have been replaced with 'practice frameworks'.</p>
<p>The phrase 'infrastructure' was unclear in whether it was asking about wider local authority infrastructure or if it was asking about infrastructure spending that was specific to Early Help services:</p> <p><i>"The question is too vague. Does it mean as a proportion of the infrastructure used by Early Help (mainly CYPS Infrastructure, e.g. spend on case management system LiquidLogic, Early Help laptops, cabling into buildings, and running costs etc.) or as a percentage of the whole council spend</i></p>	<p>To aid understanding among local authorities, references to 'infrastructure' in that section have been rewritten as 'Early Help infrastructure'.</p>

Feedback	Action
<p><i>on infrastructure. I think this needs further clarification in the guidance.”</i></p>	
<p>The prompted types of services beyond to be more specific and less overarching:</p> <p><i>“Yes although the definition of ‘Family Support Services’ is too general. ‘Targeted and universal family support’ could also apply to elements of Early Help and other work related to Supporting Families.”</i></p> <p><i>“No it’s too subjective. What is safeguarding children and young people? When does this start and end? Do you mean open to social care or Early Help support in schools? Or both? Services for young people – what’s the definition? What is a YP age range? Over 10yrs? Or teens? Do you mean youth services, schools, colleges or all of these?”</i></p>	<p>The section Supporting Families and/or Early Help needed was revised to make it clearer to local authorities what are the various types of spending beyond Early Help and/or Supporting Families.</p>

Further development, distribution and analysis

An updated version of the spend mapping tool and accompanying glossary, incorporating local authority feedback, was then shared with DfE. The final version was then agreed upon and distributed alongside the glossary and a data sharing agreement (DSA) to the 5 local authorities that had indicated at the feedback stage that they would (or might) be happy to complete a version of the spend mapping tool to aid in its development. This version of the spend mapping tool can be found in annex A. Other local authorities that provided feedback declined to complete the spend mapping tool due to resourcing issues attributed to increased administrative burden at the end of the financial year.

Once data on Early Help and Supporting Families spending had been provided by local authorities, it was anonymised and aggregated to understand how this funding was being spent at the overall level. Due to the very small number of local authorities participating in completing the spend mapping tool, it was not possible to analyse this data extensively. However, the information gathered was used to develop the spend survey, the findings from which are covered in chapter 4.

4. Spend survey

Key findings

- For many local authorities, their biggest single expenditure category for Early Help and/or Supporting Families funding was staff costs. Around seven-in-ten (71%) reported that they spent more than one million pounds on staff salaries. Of those who provided an exact figure, this ranged from c.£300,000 to c.£4,100,000, with an average spend of £2,038,293. Primarily, this funding was spent on salaries for frontline workers, administrative and/or data staff, managers/supervisors and Supporting Families coordinators. Among the 25 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on staff salaries, on average, local authorities spent 51% of their total spend on Early Help, on staff salaries.
- Almost six-in-ten (58%) local authorities used procured services / specialists to deliver the Supporting Families programme, most commonly to support with parenting techniques (13 out of 19 local authorities). Of those who provided an exact figure, the average amount spent on service procurement/specialist workers funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding was £176,207. This ranged from c.£25,000 to £450,000. Among the 11 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on procured services and specialist workers, on average, local authorities spent 8% of their total spend on Early Help, on procured services and specialist workers.
- Another significant expenditure was on training and upskilling. The majority (82%) of local authorities reported that they used Early Help and/or Supporting Families funding in this way. Most often this funding went on training relating to parents/parenting. Seven out of 24 local authorities spent less than £10,000 on training and upskilling for salaried staff. Of those who gave an exact figure, spend on training and upskilling ranged from c.£3,538 to c.£49,557, with an average spend of £19,216. Among the 10 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on training and upskilling, on average, local authorities spent 0.5% of their total spend on Early Help, on training and upskilling.
- Two-thirds (67%) of local authorities used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on infrastructure, most commonly on data / case management. Of those who gave an exact figure, spend on infrastructure ranged from c.£15,000 to c.£196,946, with an average spend of £84,474. Among the 10 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on infrastructure, on average, local authorities spent 2% of their total spend on Early Help, on infrastructure.

- Local authorities were able to note which staff would be involved in each of the family scenarios provided. Most commonly these were frontline workers, managers/supervisors and social workers. All local authorities reported challenges in identifying what associated costs would be in each scenario.

Methodology

The spend survey was designed using findings from the feasibility assessment and the spend mapping tool, outlined in chapter 3. The survey covered the following areas:

- An overview of Supporting Families and Early Help services and funding spend, including whether local authorities identified an increase in this funding in the 2023/2024 financial year
- How much Supporting Families and Early Help funding is spent on the following:
 - Staff
 - Training and upskilling
 - Infrastructure
 - Services beyond Supporting Families and Early Help
- Three scenarios describing vulnerable families with complex problems, followed by questions on how much it would cost to support these families over a six-week period, what type of support would be offered, and who would be involved

The survey asked respondents to answer the survey based on their spend during the 2023/2024 financial year. For the scenario questions respondents were asked to report what the costs would be based on spend in the 2024/2025 financial year. The full survey can be viewed in annex A.

The Department for Education (DfE) were able to provide contact details for Supporting Families leads for around half of all local authorities. These local authorities were sent a link to the survey via email. An 'open' link was also included in the Supporting Families newsletter, to reach local authorities for which direct contact details were not provided. Local authorities who clicked on the link were able to express an interest in taking part in the survey. These local authorities were then emailed a personalised link to the survey. Local authorities also had access to a webpage with an FAQs page and glossary, as well as contact details should they have had any questions.

Fieldwork took place from 21 November 2024 to 31 January 2025. Towards the end of fieldwork, local authorities were phoned to encourage responses and to provide support in completion should they need it. A total of 33 local authorities responded to the survey.

A breakdown of the characteristics of those who completed the survey can be found in annex A.

Findings from this survey are based on a small number of responses and should therefore be treated with caution. As a result, it has not been possible to identify sub-group differences. In instances where the base size is below 30, the data are reported as whole numbers, rather than percentages. Throughout this section of the report, data relating to spend, as well as staff numbers, have had all outliers removed.

As noted in chapter 2, there is extensive variability across local authorities in terms of how they record and measure spend. This, combined with the online nature of the survey, as well as topics and scenarios covered, means that local authorities may have interpreted questions differently. Comparisons between local authorities should therefore be made with caution.

Limitations of the spend survey

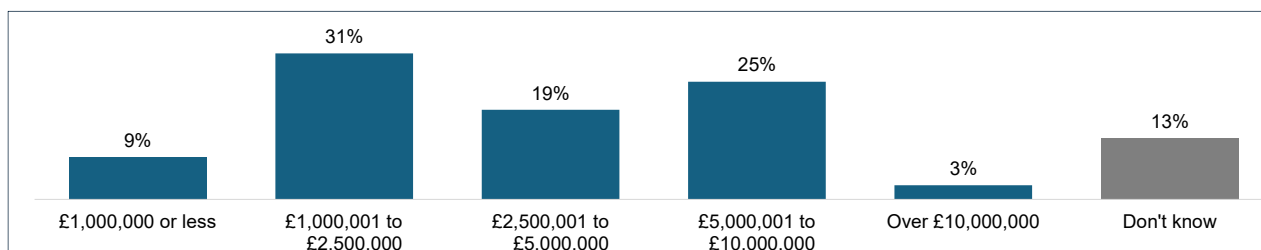
While the survey was developed in close collaboration with local authorities and DfE throughout the feasibility stage, the following points should be taken into account when interpreting findings derived from the data:

- The data provided by local authorities on spending using the Early Help and / or Supporting Families funding has not been independently validated or verified.
- local authorities who provided feedback on the tool during the feasibility stage were purposively selected, but their feedback may not be representative of all local authorities in England.
- Spend data is provided only for the 2023/24 financial year, so it is not currently possible to assess change in spending across years.

Funding spent on Early Help support

As shown in Figure 1, around three-in-ten (31%) reported that they spent between £1,000,001 and £2,500,000, followed by a quarter (25%) that spent £5,000,001 to £10,000,000 and 19% that spent £2,500,001 to £5,000,000 on Early Help. Local authorities were least likely to report spend at either end of the scale, with 9% spending £1,000,000 or less, and 3% spending over £10,000,000. Of those who provided a precise figure, the total range of the amount spent on Early Help was c.£800,000 to c.£12,000,000, and the average amount spent was £3,886,310.

Figure 1: Total amount spent on Early Help in the financial year 2023/24



Base: A1. What is the total amount that your LA spent on Early Help in the 2023/2024 financial year? All local authorities (n=32).

There was not a clear relationship between the size of the population with a local authority, nor the number of CIN and the total amount spent on Early Help.

Over eight-in-ten (82%) local authorities that responded to the survey reported that in the 2023/24 financial year, Supporting Families was supplemented by other types of funding. A minority of local authorities said it was not or did not know if it was (9% for both). Some of the types of funding used to supplement Early Help funding included council tax revenue, government funding for wider children's services, Vanguard funding, Children's Services and Public Health Grant, and the Family Hubs Transformation Grant.

Uplift in Supporting Families funding

In the 2021 Spending Review, it was announced that an additional £200 million would be invested in the Supporting Families programme across the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. When respondents were asked whether they had noticed an increase in Supporting Families funding for their local authority in the 2023/24 financial year, 67% noticed this increase.

Among the 22 local authorities who noticed an increase, a common use for this funding was for additional staff and salaries. Other uses included using the additional funding to support the rising costs of Early Help support, as well as investing in Early Help support services which reach those with more complex needs.

“The additional funding helped to absorb rising costs of the range of services & support offered across Early Help & Supporting Families.”
- *local authority*

This aligns with the findings from the case study interviews, whereby local authorities varied in terms of whether they recognised an uplift in the funding they received. There were some local authorities who reported that they received witnessed a noticeable uplift in the funding they received. One of these local authorities noted that they used the uplift to pay for specialist early help workers and for an upgrade to their case management

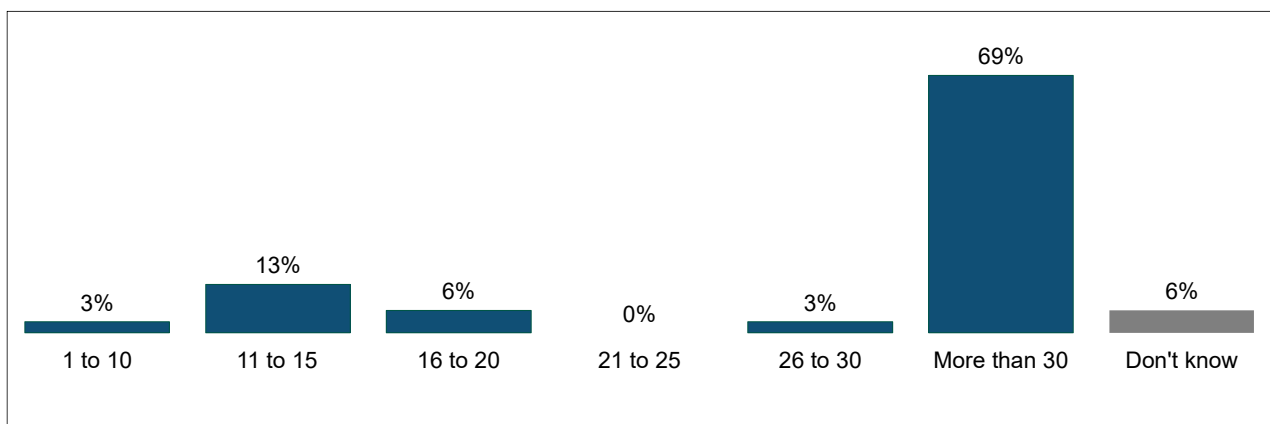
system, and another local authority used this funding to commission frontline workers from the voluntary and faith sector. A minority of local authorities noted receiving less funding. The funding formula includes deprivation, and these areas would have received less funding due to falling deprivation in their local authority.. Some areas did not recognise a change in their funding.

Early Help and Supporting Families funding spend

Staffing

All local authorities surveyed spent at least some of their Early Help and Supporting Families funding on staff salaries. Around seven-in-ten (69%) of local authorities reported that more than 30 staff roles were funded in this way, as shown in Figure 2. Of those who gave an exact figure this ranged from 8 to 160 members of staff, with an average of 58 members of staff.

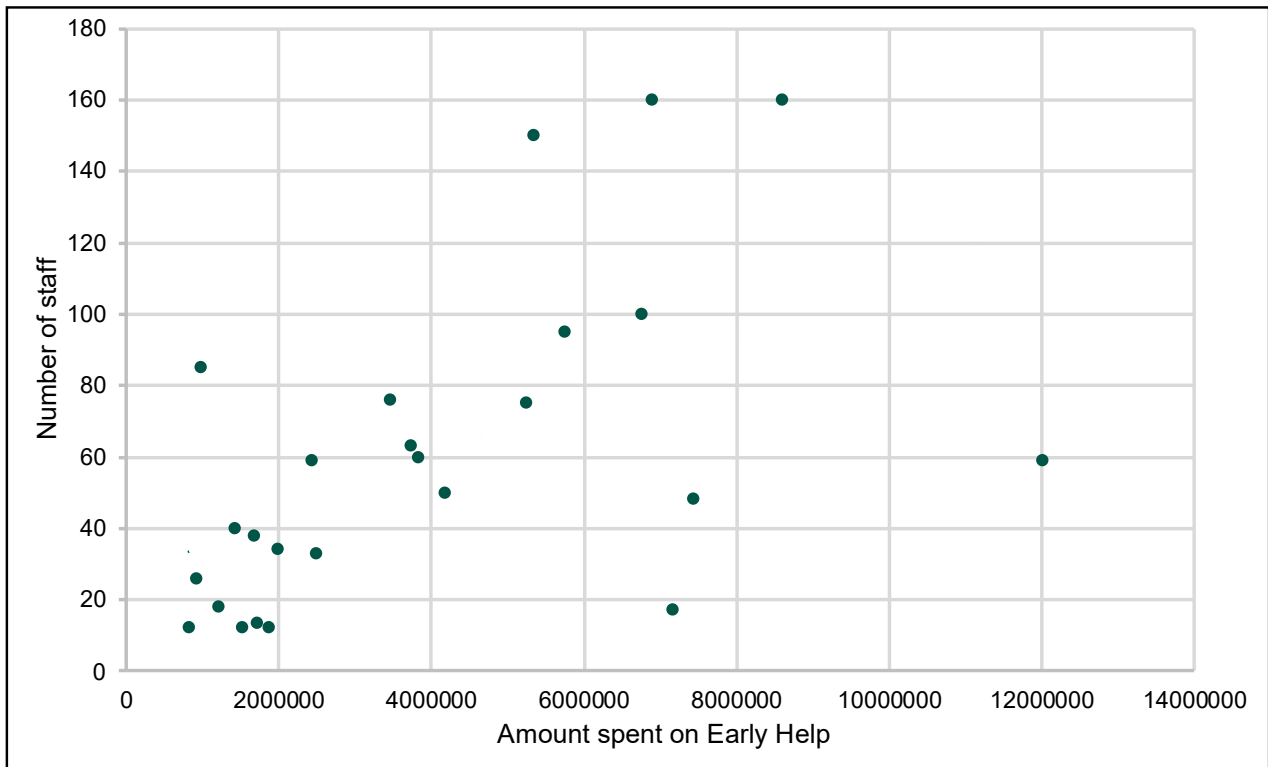
Figure 2: Number of FTE staff roles partially or fully funded by Early Help and Supporting Families spend



Base: B3. How many full-time equivalent (FTE) staff roles at your local authority were partially or fully funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/24? B4. Was it...? Please give your best estimate. All Local authorities who used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on staff salaries (n=32)

As demonstrated in Figure 3, there is indicative data which suggests that as the amount that local authorities have spent on Early Help increases, as does the number of staff who are partially or fully funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding. It is important to note, however, that this pattern is based on a small base size and therefore should be used with caution.

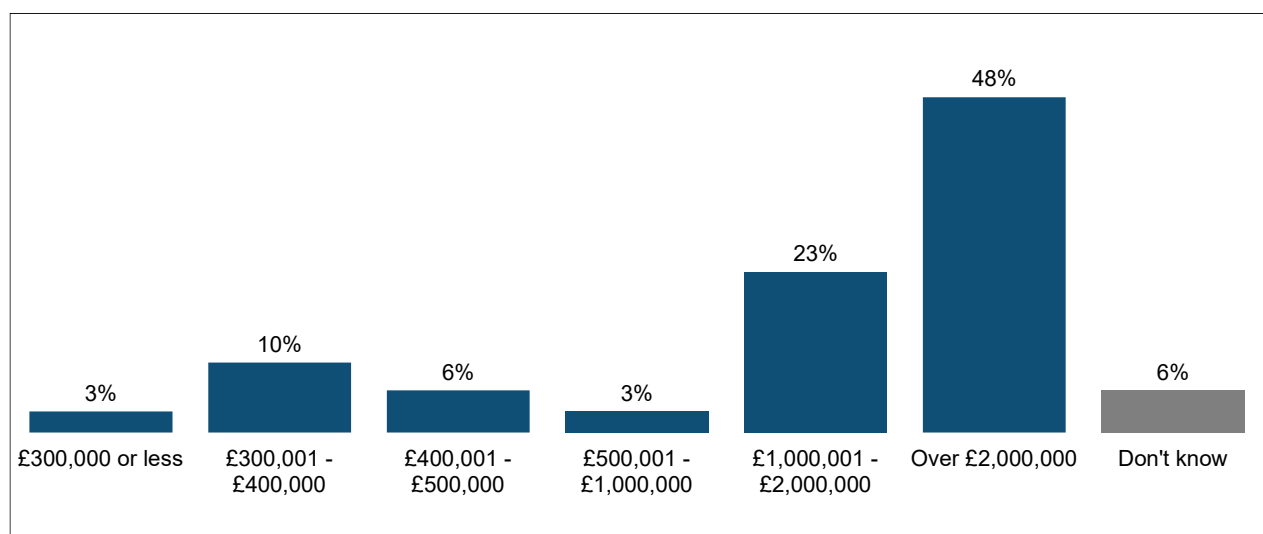
Figure 3: Number of FTE staff roles partially or fully funded by Early Help and Supporting Families spend by total amount spent on Early Help in the financial year 2023/24



Base: B3. How many full-time equivalent (FTE) staff roles at your local authority were partially or fully funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/24? A1. What is the total amount that your local authority spent on Early Help in the 2023/2024 financial year? All local authorities who used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on staff salaries and gave an exact figure in response to B3 and A1 (n=25)

When asked how much was spent on basic annual salaries for staff members, funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the 2023/24 financial year, around seven-in-ten (71%) reported that they spent more than one million pounds on staff salaries. Of those who provided an exact figure, this ranged from c.£300,000 to c.£4,100,000, with an average spend of £2,038,293. Among the 25 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on staff salaries, on average, local authorities spent 51% of their total spend on Early Help, on staff salaries. A full breakdown of this spend is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Total amount spent on annual salaries funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding

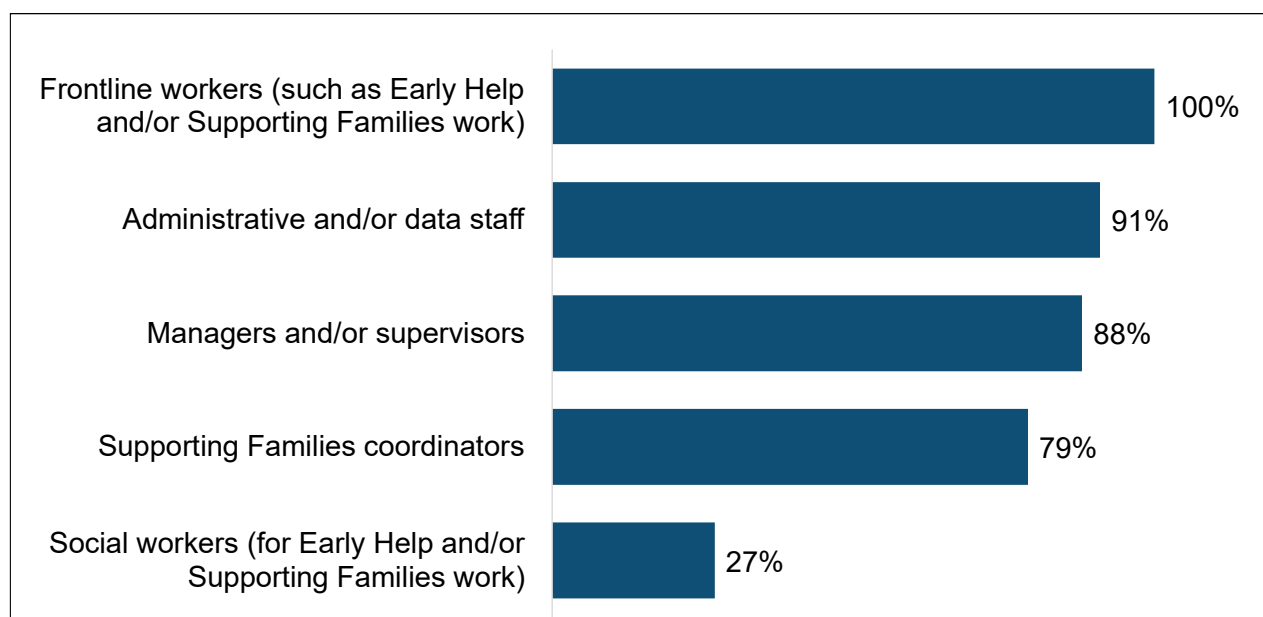


Base: B5 What was the total amount spent in your local authority on basic annual salaries for salaried staff members funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2023/24? B6. Was it...? Please give your best estimate. All local authorities who used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on staff salaries (n=31)

Three-quarters (74%) of local authorities confirmed that the amount they reported spending on staff salaries included employers' National Insurance and pension contributions, whilst 19% reported that it did not.

Local authorities were also asked what type of staff this funding was spent on. All (100%) used this funding to fund the salaries of frontline workers, such as Early Help practitioners. This was followed by administrative and/or data staff (91%), managers and/or supervisors (88%) and Supporting Families coordinators (79), as shown in Figure 5. Other types of staff whose salaries were (part-)funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding (but are not shown in Figure 5) included people working in commissioned services, those in healthcare roles, members of the police, project workers and officers, psychologists and substance abuse practitioners.

Figure 5: Types of staff members' salaries partially or fully funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding



Base: B2. Which types of staff members' salaries were partially or fully funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/2024? All Local authorities who used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on staff salaries (n=33). Responses below 10% have been excluded from the chart.

Local authorities were asked specifically about the amount spent on basic salaries for Supporting Families coordinators³, funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2023/24. Of these, nine reported that they spent between £40,001 to £60,000, followed by seven areas reporting that they spent £60,001 to £80,000. Of those who provided an exact figure for their Supporting Families coordinator salaries, the average salary was £63,486. Among the 17 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on Supporting Families coordinator salaries, on average, local authorities spent 2% of their total spend on Early Help, on Supporting Families coordinator salaries.

These findings align with the evidence from the case study interviews, whereby local authorities reported that most of their Supporting Families funding went on staff salaries. This included strategic and leadership roles, frontline key workers or lead professionals, as well as data analysts who were seen as being particularly expensive.

You know, we've got some data engineers and some data scientists who are really quite expensive. But actually, if you want to move forward and try and do less manual work, you need to get those

³ This was excluding National Insurance, pension contributions, or other costs related to staff member's employment.

resources in. And those analysts don't come cheap. – *Local authority staff member, Somerset*

Procured services and specialist workers

Local authorities were asked whether they had used procured services or specialist workers to support with the delivery of Supporting Families. This included any procurement costs for external specialist workers or for specialist support services at partner organisations and excluded those who are permanently employed on a salaried contract. Almost six-in-ten (58%) local authorities reported that they had used procured services or specialist workers.

Of these 19 local authorities, the most commonly cited services and specialists procured and funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the 2023/24 financial year related to parenting techniques (13 out of 19), domestic abuse (12 out of 19), mental health (eight out of 19), substance abuse or alcohol dependency (four out of 19).

There was some variation seen in the total amount local authorities reported that they spent on service procurement or specialist workers, with most (five out 19) reporting that they spent between £50,001 to £100,000 on this. Of those who provided an exact figure, the average amount spent on service procurement/specialist workers funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding was £176,207. This ranged from c.£25,000 to £450,000. Among the 11 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on procured services and specialist workers, on average, local authorities spent 8% of their total spend on Early Help, on procured services and specialist workers.

Training and upskilling

The majority (82%) of local authorities reported that their local authority used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on training and upskilling. Of these 27 local authorities, training and upskilling relating to parenting skills was most commonly mentioned. Parenting techniques were the most commonly cited type of training and upskilling funded in this way (21 out of 27), followed by parent conflict training (16 out of 27). Seven out of 27 Local authorities reported providing all types of training in Table 4.1. Types of training and upskilling funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Types of training and upskilling funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding

Total amount spent	Number of responses
Parenting techniques	21
Parental conflict training	16
Team around the family training	15
Domestic abuse training	13
Mental health training	12

Base. Which types of training and upskilling activities were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/24? All local authorities who said yes, they used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on training and upskilling (n=27). Responses below 12 out of 27 have been excluded from the table.

This group of local authorities were also asked for the amount that they spent on training and upskilling that was funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding. Seven out of 27 reported spending less than £10,000, 12 spent between £10,001 to £50,000, and two spent over £50,000. A further three local authorities did not know how much of this funding was spent on training and upskilling. Of those who gave an exact figure, spend on training and upskilling ranged from c.£3,538 to c.£49,557, with an average spend of £19,216. Among the 10 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on training and upskilling, on average, local authorities spent 0.5% of their total spend on Early Help, on training and upskilling.

Infrastructure

Two-thirds (67%) of local authorities reported that they used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on infrastructure. Among these 22 local authorities, it was most often reported that this funding was spent on data systems (19 out of 22), and case management systems (nine out of 22), as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Types of infrastructure spend funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding

Types of infrastructure used	Number of responses
Data systems	19
Case management systems	9
Premises	7
Family feedback and experiences	7
Networking and catering	7

Base. C2. Which types of Early Help infrastructure were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/24? All local authorities who used funding in this way (n=22). A further 3 local authorities responded with 'Other'.

There was variation seen in the total amount local authorities reported that they spent on infrastructure using Early Help and Supporting Families funding. Six out of 20 local authorities reported spending £50,000 or less, eight out of 20 spent £50,001 to £100,000 and three spent more than 100,000. A further three did not know how much of this funding was spent on infrastructure. Of those who gave an exact figure, spend on infrastructure ranged from c.£15,000 to c.£196,946, with an average spend of £84,474. Among the 10 local authorities who provided an exact figure for the amount they spent on Early Help and on infrastructure, on average, local authorities spent 2% of their total spend on Early Help, on infrastructure.

Services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families

Almost six-in-ten (58%) local authorities reported that they used their Early Help and Supporting Families funding on services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families.

Of these 19 local authorities, the types of services funded included Family Hubs (12 out of 19), services for young people (13 out of 19), other family and children's services (nine out of 19) and family support services (five out of 19). When asked how much of this funding was spent on these services, six out of 16 spent less than £100,000 and five out of 16 spent more £101,000 or more. A further five did not know how much of this funding was spent on services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families.

A further 21% of local authorities interviewed reported that there were other areas within their local authority that were supported by Early Help and Supporting Families funding in the 2023/24 financial year. These other areas which this funding was used for included:

- Data consultants
- IT
- Provision for families with children under five.
- Youth Services
- Children’s Centres
- Commissioned services
- Adolescent and contextual safeguarding services
- Parenting coordinator
- Housing support

Scenarios presented on families with complex problems

Local authorities were presented with three hypothetical support scenarios and asked, based on the case lasting for six months, what types of support a family would be offered during each scenario, who would be involved and how much this support would cost.

Scenario one

Local authorities were presented with the following scenario, which was framed as sitting within ‘Early Help’ support.

A new mother is struggling with breastfeeding her baby (under the age of one year) and received early support provided via a Family Hub. Family life is chaotic, and the older child (aged four years), is showing signs of development delay and recurrent health issues.

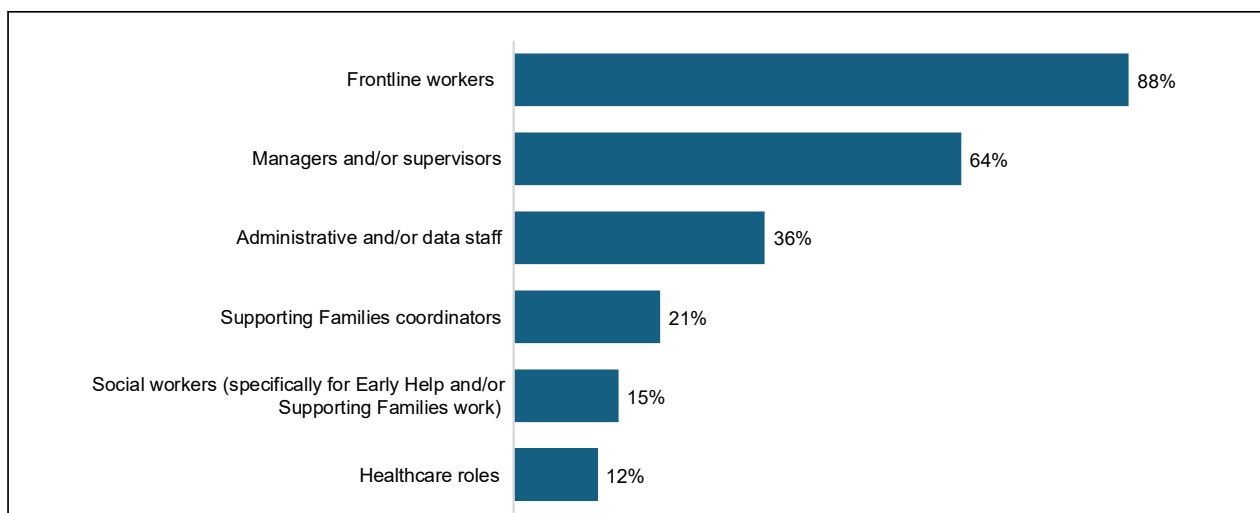
When Local authorities were asked what type of support would be offered to this family, they reported involving a range of services. The support included, but was not limited to the following:

- Team around the family assessment
- Early Help assessment and plan
- Targeted parenting specialist support
- A financial assessment

- Breastfeeding clinics and infant feeding advice
- Access to a Family Hub
- SEN and speech therapy groups

The majority of local authorities felt that frontline workers (88%), followed by managers and/or supervisors (64%) would be most likely to be involved in this scenario, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Types of staff involved in scenario one



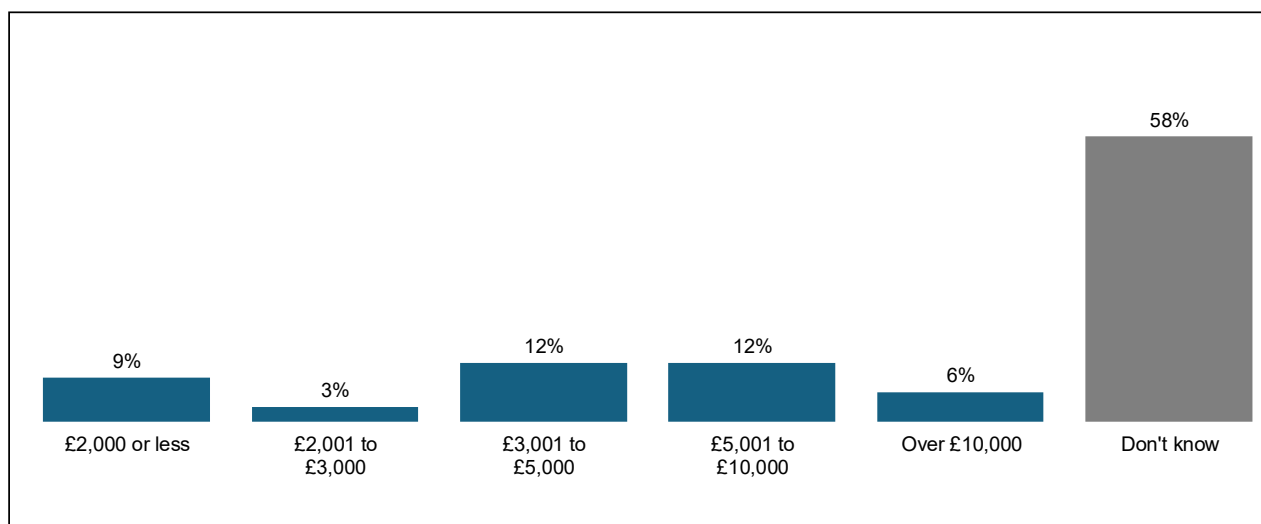
Base: H2. Who would be involved in this case? All local authorities (n=33). Responses below 9% have been excluded from this chart (apart from other: 9% and don't know: 9%)

Most local authorities (58%) were unsure how much the support would cost and felt this would be dependent on a number of factors.

Would very much depend on the detail of what is meant by "chaotic" home life. There could be a variety of different circumstances – *Local Authority*

Of those local authorities who were able to answer, support costs over a six-month period were most likely to be in the £3,001 to £5,000 or £5,001 to £10,000 categories (both selected by 12% of respondents), as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: How much the support would cost over a six-month period



Base: H3. Thinking about the types of the support that would be offered over this six-month period, how much would this cost? All local authorities (n=33)

Scenario two

Local authorities were presented with the following scenario, which was framed as sitting in 'Child in Need' support.

A woman is struggling and has a history of mental ill-health and domestic abuse. There is a new partner involved and there are concerns about substance misuse. There have been recent police call outs. The woman has a baby under the age of one and a four-year-old child.

As with scenario one, local authorities were then asked to list the types of support they felt would most likely be offered in this scenario. The types of support noted included, but was not limited to:

- Child in Need (CIN) plan
- Social workers / social care assessment
- Targeted Support Family worker
- Child and Family centre groups
- Domestic abuse service
- Drug and alcohol support

- Early Help assessment and support plan

In terms of which types of staff would most likely be involved in this scenario, over seven-in-ten (72%) noted the involvement of frontline workers, followed by social workers (69%), and managers and supervisors (66%).

Figure 8: Type of staff that would be involved in scenario two



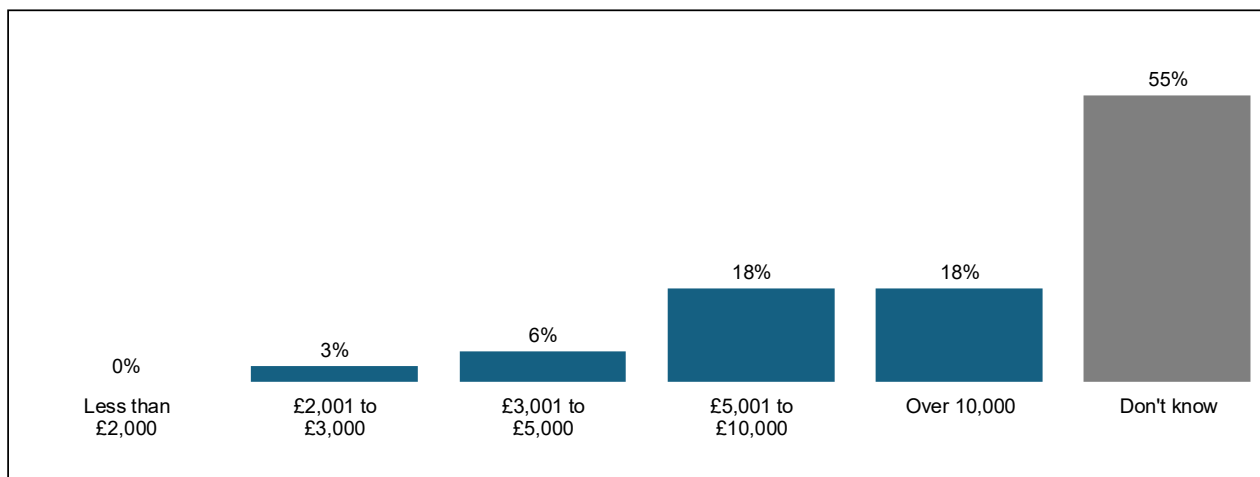
Base: H6. Who would be involved in this case? All local authorities (n=32). Responses below 9% have been excluded from this chart (apart from other: 9%)

As with scenario one, over half (55%) of local authorities did not know what the costs would be due to a range of wider factors.

Costs would be difficult to estimate due to consideration of a wide range of resources, facilities & staffing. – *Local authority*

However, compared to scenario one, of those able to answer, spend was higher. Almost two-in-ten (18%) reported that spend would be £5,001 to £10,000, and another almost two-in-ten (18%) reported that spend would be over £10,000.

Figure 9: How much the support would cost over a six-month period



Base: H7. Thinking about the types of the support that would be offered, how much would this cost over a six-month period? All local authorities (n=33)

Scenario three

Local authorities were presented with the following scenario which was framed as sitting within 'Child Protection' support:

A mother of a baby under the age of one and a four-year-old child has a new partner who is using heroin and numerous domestic abuse incidents have been reported, including one whereby the four-year old-child was injured.

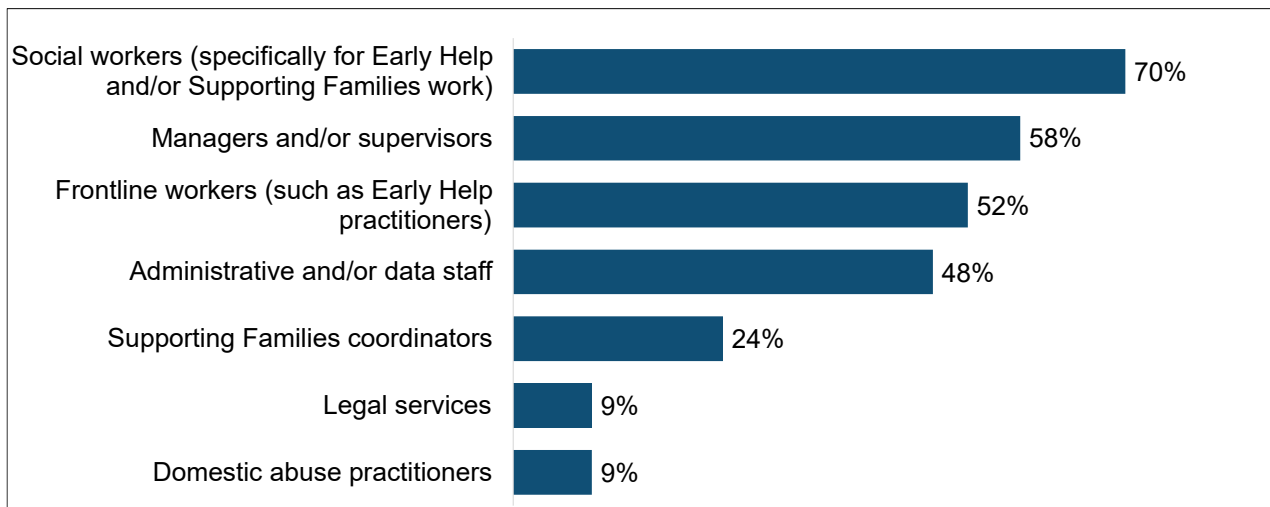
The types of support noted included, but was not limited to:

- Child protection (CP) plan
- Social workers/social care assessment
- Domestic abuse service
- Drug and alcohol support
- Health visitation
- Adult mental health services

In terms of the types of staff which would be involved in a case like scenario three, the majority (70%) reported that social workers would be involved. Compared to scenario one and two, there were a higher proportion of local authorities reporting that social workers would be involved, most likely due to the increased severity. In contrast, just

over half (52%) of local authorities reported that frontline workers would have some involvement.

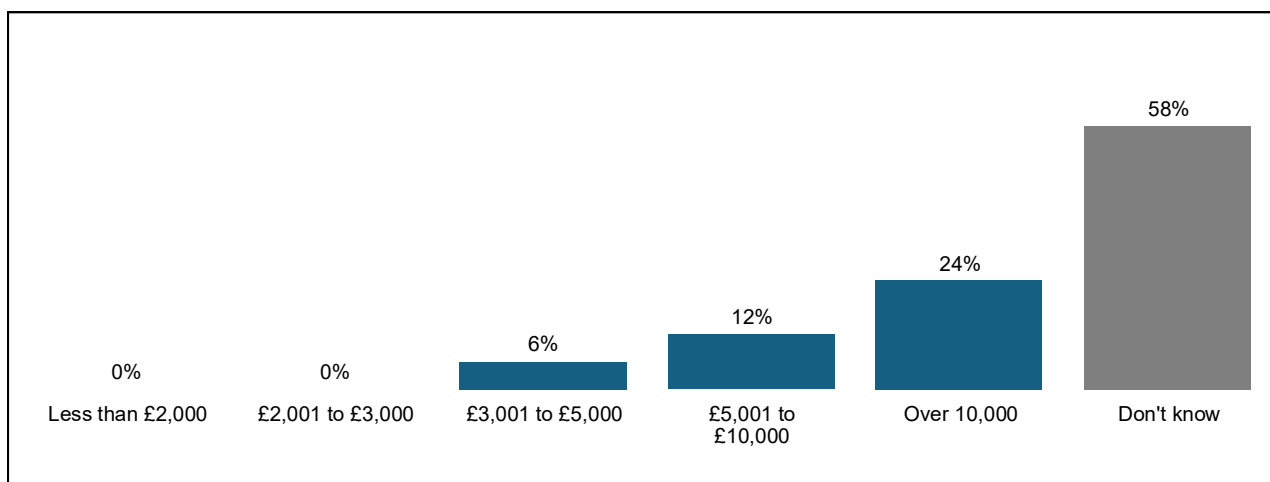
Figure 10: Types of staff that would be involved in scenario three



Base: H10. Who would be involved in this case? All local authorities (n=33). Responses below 9% have been excluded from this chart (apart from other: 16%)

As with scenario one and two, around six-in-ten (58%) of local authorities were unable to estimate how much the support needed would cost, due to needing more information. However, compared to both scenario one and two, the anticipated cost of this scenario was higher, with one quarter (24%) reporting that it would cost over £10,000. This suggests that as the case becomes more complex, more senior staff become involved and the costs typically increase

Figure 11: How much the support would cost over a six-month period



Base: H11. Thinking about the types of the support that would be offered over a six-month period, how much would this cost? All local authorities (n=33)

5. Case study findings

This chapter presents key findings from the case study element of the research. Case studies were undertaken in ten LA areas: Camden, Cambridge, Derbyshire, Isle of Wight, Kingston-Upon-Hull, Northumberland, Sandwell, Sheffield, Somerset and Southend-on-Sea. These were selected to provide variation by region, urban vs. rural locations, funding model (Payment by Results and Earned Autonomy) and data maturity. For each case study 5 to 12 interviews were conducted with stakeholders covering those with strategic or managerial responsibility for Supporting Families and / or Early Help, key workers / frontline staff, Supporting Families coordinators, and managers in other services (e.g. police, housing, school staff). Interviews were conducted in February and March 2024.

Operational structures

Although the exact operational structures used to deliver and monitor the Supporting Families programme differed between local authorities, typically the pattern was as follows:

- Heads or Directors of Early Help / Children's Services had high level, strategic oversight of the programme
- Supporting Families Coordinators had responsibility for delivery of the programme and the outcomes achieved
- A team of data analysts/engineers had responsibility for the monitoring data on children and families
- Key workers, lead professionals and frontline staff were responsible for identifying and obtaining / providing the right support.

The following two examples (Southend-on-Sea and Derbyshire) show this broad approach.

In Southend-on-Sea, the delivery structure comprised a Head of Service with strategic oversight for the Supporting Families programme and the Supporting Families team, and a Supporting Families team consisting of a Supporting Families coordinator and four teams of family support practitioners offering intensive family support, as well as their team leaders. In addition, two data analysts worked closely with the LA's data teams to support the process of evidencing Supporting Families outcomes. The local authority had two secondees from the DWP to support the work of the family practitioners. Support was also provided by other teams within the LA, though outside of the specific Supporting Families team, providing specialist expertise in areas such as youth justice, domestic abuse, gangs, and exploitation guidance and support.

In Derbyshire, the approach for the Supporting Families programme was to embed the Supporting Families ethos and framework into existing services that frontline practitioners provide to children and families. The programme was overseen by the Head of Service for Early Help, who provided strategic overview of the Supporting Families programme and the council's Early Help teams. The Supporting Families programme was delivered through a small Supporting Families team who oversaw Supporting Families data and who worked with frontline practitioners to ensure that they understood the Supporting Families ethos and the outcomes framework. The Supporting Families team comprised a coordinator for the whole county, who managed two Supporting Families officers who oversaw different areas of the county. The team worked closely with frontline practitioners to capture evidence of eligibility and outcomes of interventions with children and families.

Supporting Families was usually run through Early Help with close integration of services. In Northumberland the Supporting Families Project Team sat within the Early Help remit of the Council and made up a part of the Early Help Coordination Team. (It is interesting that in several areas, including Northumberland, the support children or families received was not referred to as Supporting Families but rather Early Help or Family Help support, and Supporting Families was used more as an administrative term within the LA.) In the Isle of Wight Council, responsibility for the Supporting Families programme sat across two teams, the Early Help team who allocated support to families that met the Supporting Families criteria, and the Supporting Families resource team, who were responsible for the monitoring and outcomes data. In Cambridge, rather than Supporting Families being considered a distinct stream of work, the Supporting Families programme approach and its outcome framework was applied to all cases that come under Early Help, and support for families was provided by Early Help support officers. In Camden, Supporting Families was run through three teams which oversee a different age group (0-4, 5-12 and 13-18 age groups); these teams do not work exclusively on Supporting Families, but the Supporting Families Programme sat within their wider remit.

Some local authorities, particularly those with greater data maturity, placed emphasis on data monitoring and hence had larger teams focusing on this element. Somerset LA, for example, allocated a substantive proportion of their funding on data management, and their data and analysis team grew from two to 18 staff members over the past ten years. The team collect and maintain data on children and families, and monitor the outcomes data, which was previously essential for the evidence required for Payment by Results funding, before it moved to Earned Autonomy funding. The data collected was kept on one database, which included records of the families that the local authority was supporting through the programme, the types of support received, and the progress made against their outcomes. The database also included school records and police data, such as call out records and domestic incidents, to further inform practitioners' understanding of the families being supported.

There was extensive use of partner organisations for the delivery of Supporting Families, from initiating referrals, help in delivering interventions through to providing outcomes data. The partner organisations mentioned included schools, the police, DWP (typically employing staff seconded from the Department), NHS, health visitors, Youth Justice Service, Domestic Abuse Support Services and Substance Misuse Services. Isle of Wight, for example, primarily used partners to deliver the Supporting Families programme, with Barnardo's and Home-Start delivering direct support to families that met the Supporting Families criteria. Two Supporting Families key workers were employed by Barnardo's and sat between the local authority and Barnardo's intensive family support team, reviewing referrals and offering any immediate support that could be provided whilst they waited for an intensive family support worker to become available.

Nearly all staff delivering the Supporting Families programme were employed on full-time contracts, though key workers tended to be employed on a fixed-term basis.

Different delivery models

All local authorities described a very similar broad approach to the delivery of the Supporting Families programme from the point of referral to the delivery of support. Once a referral was made, then the child or family needs were quickly assessed along with Supporting Families eligibility. Where needs were identified a lead practitioner would be assigned and an action plan put in place identifying the support needed, who needed to provide it, and the intended outcomes. Progress would be monitored to see if the interventions were effective, and to identify if more or less intensive or different support was needed.

Within this broad structure there were relatively minor differences in approach, for example in how soon an assessment needed to be undertaken after referral, or how regularly support was reviewed (e.g. every 3 months in one instance to every 8-10 weeks in another).

Referrals came from a wide range of sources including health (e.g. doctors, health visitors or mental health workers), education (e.g. school family liaison officers), housing, and the police. They could also be self-referrals from a young person or a parent / carer themselves. 'Front Door' referral services were known by various names including Family Front Door, Integrated Front Door, Early Help Front Door, and Starting Point.

The process of conducting an Early Help Assessments and identifying Supporting Families eligibility followed similar patterns across all case studies in the LA. The output of the Early Help assessment was an identified level of need, with cases then allocated to a social worker if high (level 4), or to a lead practitioner (job titles of these lead

practitioners included family intervention workers, family support practitioners, family help workers, Early Help practitioners and intensive support workers).

One local authority discussed how they had recently changed their approach from having Supporting Families as a separate form to all social care referrals using a single form incorporating the Supporting Families criteria. This helped Supporting Families be seen as business as usual rather than an add on and helped the Supporting Families team focus on the most appropriate families to support and therefore have the greatest impact. Another local authority discussed how previously their decision on whether families' needs warrant intervention was determined using the Supporting Families criteria. However, in order to reach more families, a Threshold of Need document is now used (which has lower thresholds than Supporting Families). They often found that families who would not have met the Supporting Families criteria would do so once they get to find out more about the family and their circumstances.

Clearly the action plan would be very tailored to the specific needs identified and could draw on a wide range of professionals including educational psychologists and children's and adult's mental health specialists, health advisers, domestic violence support services, Home-Start and employment advisers. A key aspect of Supporting Families support was the Team Around the Family (TATF) approach. This aims to ensure the full range of professionals best suited to support the family's particular needs are used, and that all partners involved in supporting the family coordinate their actions, discuss progress and outcomes, and identify potential further support needs.

One LA, Somerset, described how they had changed in 2020 from deploying multiple teams to deliver support to families to merging these teams to form the Family Intervention Service within Children's Social Care. In addition, over time the Supporting Families programme strategy of joining up local services and offering holistic support, has become an embedded way of working across early help.

"It made sense to work towards joining all [support] up and helping some of those areas get more capable of delivering whole family working, [rather than] parachuting in specialist workers and taking them back out again. So, we're using our existing pathways and we've supported our partnerships to work with that Supporting Families methodology." – *Somerset local authority staff member*

The final aspect of delivery was assessing progress and monitoring outcomes. Nearly all case study areas mentioned using the Supporting Families outcome framework to track the progress of a child or family. Some had developed bespoke elements: Somerset, for example, used the outcomes framework to develop a more detailed system to record progress and outcomes. Most benefitted from having all data in one single case management system e.g. Liquid Logic or Mosaic, to help accurately record and keep track of progress. Northumberland, for example, used the Liquid Logic case management

system, and described how the 2022/23 financial year funding uplift has enabled them to invest in a 'bolt-on' module to the Liquid Logic system so that they could view all of a family's data in one place. This helped Family Help Workers to save time on administration and more accurately evidence outcomes.

One local authority discussed how they used two frameworks to help evidence progress and track impact and outcomes. The first of these was the Signs of Wellbeing Framework used to identify strengths and areas of improvement for families. This allows the local authority to assess where there may be areas of progress and development for the family. Alongside this was the Outcome Star Framework, a tool used to measure change and progress. Practitioners used these tools alongside the Early Help Assessment to allow for easier tracking of the impacts and outcomes of their work with families.

Another LA, Camden, had developed an in-house single-view dashboard that practitioners can record and view outcomes on. Previously, data for different aspects of a family such as school attendance reports, police data and health data were stored in different datasets. The new single-view software allowed practitioners to access all data in one place and look at intervention over time. This made evaluating the needs of a family, as well as assessing outcomes, much easier.

“From an operational perspective, I think the biggest transformation has been the dashboards that bring together the different data sources. ... you can see at a glance whether there's been any rent arrears in the last six months or if there's been any antisocial behaviour in the last six months, whether they've got any HCP, who their caseworker is, what their school attendance has been like” – *Camden local authority staff*

Successes

Beyond the outcomes of the Supporting Families programme (the number of families helped and the often transformative nature of the support provided) successes of the programme were often described in terms of good or improved levels of data maturity i.e. using data efficiently to make effective support decisions and in the effective, joined-up partnership working.

Improved data maturity

A high level of data maturity, particularly being able to access and analyse all relevant data in a single source, was seen as contributing to a more streamlined process with less administration time (e.g. trying to find relevant data) and quicker identification of initial and ongoing support needs. It also increased the ability to evidence what works, not only

making it easier to claim against results but to help decide on appropriate future interventions.

Northumberland, for example, ensured, as far as possible, that data collected in Early Help was held under one umbrella and could be easily shared. They also used specialist data software (such as Liquid Logic and Tablo Prep) and had a Data Analyst specially for the Supporting Families team. Demographic data was analysed to establish where need was highest and where it could be focussed, and where need might be highest in the future. A number of staff talked of a data-led approach to delivery.

Somerset also had a high level of data maturity. They had grown their data and analysis team from two to 18 staff members over ten years and had received funding from DfE to create guidance and provide training for other local authorities on how to improve their data maturity.

One local authority staff member in Cambridge described as a 'huge success' the move to more integrated data. Partners such as schools, voluntary service and other services were now able to access and provide data into one system, which meant it was far easier to get a clear picture of the family and the support they were receiving.

Other local authorities appreciated that improved data maturity would improve their success. One felt it would enable them to be more intelligent in terms of commissioning and resourcing. Another, funded on the Payment by Results model, felt it would improve their claims which would mean further funding which could then be put back into the system and improve services for families.

Improved partnership working

Effective and joined-up partnership working was seen as an important prerequisite for successful delivery of the Supporting Families programme, but the development of improved multi-agency networks was also often felt to be one of the successful outcomes of the programme which would help to deliver continued high quality Early Help support. Joined-up, effective partnership working was felt to improve the overall support for families, allowing them to receive suitable, targeted support based on their specific needs.

One local authority developed a Supporting Families Early Help System Guide which enabled the team to expand their identification of all the participants who can come to support a family, and with the development of an internal practice model for Early Help, they have improved ways to support families through an integrated approach to intervention.

Similarly, in another local authority, staff pointed to a more joined up approach which enabled staff to focus on outcomes and ultimately ensured that families got support from

a variety of different teams. The move towards more interconnected and multiagency working also allowed more people to understand the impact of early intervention, and to provide a more holistic view of the family and their support needs.

The development of this partnership working was also felt in some cases to help ensure the Supporting Families programme is sustainable. Somerset LA, for example, reported that if Supporting Families funding were to stop, then the networks of support that families were using and had access to, would continue to exist.

Challenges in delivery

All case study local authorities identified some challenges in the delivery of the programme. Challenges and frustrations often related to achieving Payment by Results targets:

- Some local authorities felt that targets were difficult to reach or arbitrary
 - One felt meeting their increased target would be very challenging. They put this down to multiple factors: alongside significant financial challenges within the local authority which meant all non-statutory services were being assessed, they pointed to a rising demand for services resulting from an increase in families with vulnerabilities and the resulting burden on the capacity of both frontline workers and partners.
- Recording outcomes consistently can be difficult, for example there can be variation on how schools record attendance
- The move from two to three criteria points was seen as too much of ‘a jump’ (i.e. it made it much harder to claim funding even when significant improvements had occurred)
- Families can make progress but not reach an outcome, but this is not officially recognised in the outcome options. One local authority described multiple cases where families had made significant changes and experienced much improvement, but the team would be unable to close the intervention because of one small area where improvement was below the criteria threshold.

More generally, some felt that significant resource was being employed on monitoring outcomes and data rather than on Supporting Families directly. One local authority staff member went so far as to say, “we end up within the Supporting Families programme spending more money on employing people to look at outcomes and results and data than on the families.”

A number of local authorities highlighted the short-term nature of the Supporting Families funding as presenting challenges. Without a guarantee of long-term funding, some local

authorities would only recruit staff on a fixed-term basis, which made it hard to find appropriately experienced applicants. Fixed-term contracts also have a knock-on effect on morale within the team as they are not sure if funding for their roles will be renewed:

“The short-term nature of the funding in general, which means that in theory you should be putting a load of staff on notice every 18 months because the programme is only ever three years in cycles.”

A number of rural local authorities indicated that their rural setting added challenges to the delivery of Supporting Families. It meant home visits to those in the most rural locations took up a lot of Family Help Worker time and that it was often difficult for people to access training or employment opportunities that they would benefit from.

6. Conclusions

The Supporting Families programme was launched in March 2021 and built on the previous Troubled Families Programme, launched in 2011. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Supporting Families programme received an additional £200 million in funding for programme delivery, taking overall funding to £696 million.

This evaluation was commissioned to help fill evidence gaps around the impact of this additional funding, how Supporting Families funding was used in conjunction with Early Help funding, and how delivery and spending patterns varied across local authorities. It aimed:

- To assess the feasibility of consistently and accurately measuring Early Help spend, including spend funded by Supporting Families.
- To understand how local authorities were spending Early Help funding, including Supporting Families funding, and how and why this may differ between local authorities.
- To explore early impacts of Early Help spend pre- and post-Supporting Families funding uplift on local authority outputs and outcomes for children and families, and whether this differed between local authorities. However, the feasibility assessment found that a full impact evaluation was not possible.

This section of the report considers each of these aims in turn.

Feasibility of measuring Early Help spend

Local authorities measure and report Early Help and Supporting Families spend at an overall level. However, tracking Early Help and Supporting Families spend at a granular level is hugely challenging. Key issues include very limited data availability and inconsistency between how spend is recorded and reported by different local authorities. Under the terms of the Supporting Families programme, local authorities were not required to record detailed spend information (to minimise administrative burden on local authority teams). Local authorities collect some data on Early Help and Supporting Families spend and outcomes, but the methods and definitions used are not always consistent across local authorities. In addition, while local authorities are able to identify which spend categories use Supporting Families and/or wider Early Help funding, they generally find it difficult to provide granular information on Supporting Families funding spend specifically, because Supporting Families funding is often merged with wider Early Help funding.

Gaps in data availability and consistency also mean that it is difficult to assess the relative success of different approaches and Early Help models. Where Supporting Families funding is added to a wider Early Help funding pot, it is not always possible to reliably attribute specific outcomes to the Supporting Families funding. In addition, relevant outcomes are not necessarily recorded in a consistent format across Local authorities. This makes programme monitoring and evaluation more difficult. It also makes it difficult for Local authorities to reliably interrogate spend data and learn which spending patterns are most effective, to learn from and share best practice with other Local authorities, and for Local authorities and DfE to identify which approaches and models are most successful in ensuring Supporting Families spend has maximum impact.

Recommendation: DfE should develop clear processes, templates for recording data consistently on Early Help spending, and guidance for local authorities on how to track and monitor spend and outcomes. This will allow for local authorities to better track their spending against outcomes being delivered and analyse what is working well. It will also allow DfE to gain a better understanding of where funding is being spent in the system, what impact is having and identifying areas of best practice.

How are local authorities spending Early Help funding?

Operational structures and delivery models

Delivery models for Early Help and Supporting Families varied across local authorities. Typically, Heads or Directors of Early Help / Children's Services had high level, strategic oversight of the programme and Supporting Families Coordinators had responsibility for delivery. A team of data analysts/engineers had responsibility for the monitoring data on children and families. Local authorities' greater data maturity placed emphasis on data monitoring and hence some had larger teams focusing on this element. Key workers, lead professionals and frontline staff were responsible for identifying and obtaining / providing the right support. Nearly all staff delivering the Supporting Families programme were employed on full-time contracts, though key workers tended to be employed on a fixed-term basis.

Supporting Families was usually run through Early Help with close integration of services. There was extensive use of partner organisations for the delivery of Supporting Families, from initiating referrals, help in delivering interventions through to providing outcomes data. Local authorities generally described very similar broad approaches to the delivery of the Supporting Families programme from the point of referral to the delivery of support. Referrals came from a wide range of sources including health (e.g. doctors, health visitors or mental health workers), education (e.g. school family liaison officers), housing, and the police, as well as self-referrals.

The process of conducting Early Help Assessments and identifying Supporting Families eligibility followed similar patterns across all case study local authorities. Nearly all local authorities mentioned using the Supporting Families outcomes framework to assess progress and monitor outcomes. Beyond the core Supporting Families outcomes (number of families helped and the often transformative nature of the support provided), programme successes included good or improved levels of data maturity, and effective, joined-up partnership working.

All case study local authorities identified some challenges in the delivery of the programme. Some local authorities felt that Payment by Results targets were difficult to reach or arbitrary. Supporting Families

Recommendation: DfE should consider simplifying the outcomes framework for Early Help and providing clear guidance. Minimising burdens for local authorities whilst maximising learning for practice.

Mapping spend

The spend mapping tool provides a way of understanding spending by category across local authorities, and a deeper understanding of which delivery models might be most effective in achieving outcomes for the same level of funding.

Types of staff employed, training, service procurement/specialist workers and infrastructure used for the delivery of Early Help and Supporting Families-related services varied significantly across local authorities.

Local authorities were generally able to identify which spend categories were funded by Supporting Families and/or wider Early Help funding. For staff costs, they could distinguish Supporting Families funding as a proportion of wider Early Help funding. However, accurately identifying Supporting Families funding spend for each spend category was challenging.

Local authorities collect data on Early Help/Supporting Families spend and outcomes, but the methods for doing so are not consistent across local authorities. Many collect or can report spending against broad categories (staff costs/salary; service procurement/specialist worker; training and upskilling; infrastructure; and wider services).

For many local authorities, the biggest single expenditure category for Early Help and/or Supporting Families funding was staff costs - primarily salaries for frontline workers, administrative and/or data staff, managers/supervisors and Supporting Families coordinators. Almost six-in-ten (58%) local authorities used procured services / specialists to deliver the Supporting Families programme, and most (82%) also used Early Help and/or Supporting Families funding for training. Most often this funding went on training relating to parents/parenting. Two-thirds (67%) of local authorities used Early

Help and Supporting Families funding on infrastructure, most commonly on data / case management.

Early impacts of Supporting Families funding uplift

Some local authorities had received additional funding as part of the Supporting Families uplift. However, only a minority reported that they would be able to identify exactly which spend categories the uplift has been allocated to. It was not feasible to assess the impact of the additional Supporting Families funding as local authorities do not collect spending data in a format that allows the spending associated with it to be isolated. Examples of ways the uplift was used included paying for specialist early help workers and upgrades to case management systems.

7. Annex A

Annex A includes the spend mapping tool and accompanying glossary, the spend survey, as well as the characteristics of the local authorities (Local authorities) who took part in the spend survey.

Supporting Families Spend Mapping Tool – Financial Year 2022/23



Supporting Families Spend Mapping Datasheet – Financial Year 2022/23

If you cannot give exact answers at any question, please give your best estimate.

Thank you for taking the time to help us understand how Supporting Families and wider early help funding is being spent across local authorities in England. As a reminder, any information given as part of this exercise is completely confidential and will be reported back to DfE at the aggregate level, meaning no information given can be directly attributed to you or your Local Authority. More information on data protection can be found at the end of this datasheet. Once you have completed this datasheet, please return it to IFF Research via email at supportingfamiliespend_info@iffresearch.com.

A. Early Help staff costs

*This section covers the total Early Help and Supporting Families spending on **staff salaries** across your Local Authority, in the financial year 2022/23. When we say ‘staff’, we are referring to anyone who is permanently employed on a salaried contract. This does not include agency staff or subcontractors. The types of staff members we are referring to here could include:*

- *Supporting Families coordinators*
- *Frontline workers (such as Early Help practitioners)*
- *Social workers (specifically for Early Help and Supporting Families work)*
- *Managers and / or supervisors*
- *Administrative and / or data staff*
- *Other Early Help staff costs (please state at Q2)*

1. Has your Local Authority used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on **staff salaries**? Select one, please highlight answer in yellow.
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. We don't collect this information

If answering 'a' at Q1, please go to Q2. If answering 'b' or 'c' at Q1, please go straight to Q8.

2. Which types of **staff members' salaries** were part or fully funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2022/23? Please select all that apply, please highlight answer(s) in yellow.

- Supporting Families coordinators
- Frontline workers
- Social workers (specifically for Early Help and / or Supporting Families work)
- Managers and / or supervisors
- Administrative and / or data staff
- Other, please specify _____

3. How many full-time equivalent (FTE) staff roles at your Local Authority were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2022/23?

4. What was the total amount spent in your Local Authority on **basic annual salaries for salaried staff members** funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2022/23?

£ _____

- 4a Did the figure you gave at Q4 include employers' National Insurance, pension contributions, or other costs related to staff members' employment?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

5. What proportion of the total amount spent in your Local Authority on **basic annual salaries for salaried staff members** would you estimate was funded specifically by the Supporting Families programme? *We are aware that some salaries are part-funded by the Supporting Families programme. An approximate estimate of the extent to which the salaries were funded by Supporting Families is fine. If you are unable to isolate Supporting Families funding from wider Early Help funding here then please leave blank.*

_____ %

*If you selected that **Supporting Families coordinators** salaries were funded by Early Help and / or Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2022/23, please answer question 6 and 7. Otherwise, please go straight to question 8.*

6. What was the total amount spent in your Local Authority on **basic annual salaries for Supporting Families coordinator** (not including employers National Insurance, pension contributions, or other costs related to a staff members' employment), funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2022/23?

£ _____

7. What proportion of the total amount spent in your Local Authority on **basic annual salaries for Supporting Families coordinator** would you estimate was funded specifically by the Supporting Families programme?

_____ %

8. Has your Local Authority **procured any services and / or specialist workers** to support with the delivery of the Supporting Families programme? By this, we are thinking specifically about any procurement costs for external specialist workers or for specialist support services at partner organisations. This excludes those who are permanently employed on a salaried contract. Select one, please highlight answer in yellow.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. We don't collect this information

If answering 'a' at Q8, please go to Q9. If answering 'b' or 'c' at Q8, please go straight to Section B.

9. Which types of **service procurement and / or specialist workers** were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2022/23? Please select all that apply, please highlight answer(s) in yellow.

- Parenting techniques
- Mental health

- Domestic abuse
- Substance abuse or alcohol dependency
- Other, please specify _____

10. What was the total amount spent in your Local Authority on **service procurement and / or specialist workers**, funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2022/23?

£ _____

11. What proportion of this **service procurement and / or specialist workers** spend would you estimate was funded specifically by the Supporting Families programme? *If you are unable to isolate Supporting Families funding from wider Early Help funding here then please leave blank.*

_____ %

B. Training and upskilling

*This section covers the total Early Help and Supporting Families spending on **training and upskilling** across your Local Authority for those salaried staff, in the financial year 2022/23. The types of training and upskilling we are referring to here could include but not limited to the following:*

- *Safeguarding*
- *Child development*
- *Parenting techniques*
- *Practice frameworks*
- *Family Group Conferencing*
- *Domestic abuse training*
- *Parental conflict training*
- *Mental health training*
- *Team around the Family training*
- *Data training*
- *Other training or upskilling (please state at Q13)*

12. Has your Local Authority used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on **training and upskilling**? Select one, please highlight answer in yellow.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. We don't collect this information

- If answering 'a' at Q12, please go to Q13. If answering 'b' or 'c' at Q12, please go straight to Section C.

13. Which types of **training and upskilling** activities were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2022/23? Please select all that apply, please highlight answer(s) in yellow.

- Safeguarding
- Child development
- Parenting techniques
- Social learning theory
- Motivational interviewing techniques
- Family Group Conferencing
- Domestic abuse training
- Parental conflict training
- Mental health training
- Team around the Family training
- Data training
- Other training or upskilling, please specify _____

14. What was the total amount spent in your Local Authority on **training and upskilling** for salaried staff members, funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2022/23?

£ _____

15. What proportion of this **training and upskilling** spend would you estimate was funded specifically by the Supporting Families programme? *If you are unable to isolate Supporting Families funding from wider Early Help funding here then please leave blank.*

_____ %

C. Early Help infrastructure

*This section covers the total Early Help and Supporting Families spending on **Early Help infrastructure** within your Local Authority, in the financial year 2022/23. By this, we are thinking specifically about any spending on improving or investing in physical and data infrastructure related to Early Help services. The types of infrastructure spending we are referring to here could include:*

- *Case management systems*
- *Data systems*
- *Family feedback and experiences*
- *Premises*
- *Networking and catering*

- *Other Early Help infrastructure (please state at Q17)*

16. Has your Local Authority used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on **Early Help infrastructure**? Select one, please highlight answer in yellow.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. We don't collect this information

If answering 'a' at Q16, please go to Q17. If answering 'b' or 'c' at Q16, please go straight to Section D.

17. Which types of **Early Help infrastructure** spend were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2022/23? Please select all that apply, please highlight answer(s) in yellow.

- Case management systems
- Data systems
- Family feedback and experiences
- Premises
- Networking and catering
- Other, please specify _____

18. What was the total amount spent in your Local Authority on **Early Help infrastructure**, funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2022/23?

£ _____

19. What proportion of this **Early Help infrastructure** spend would you estimate was funded specifically by the Supporting Families programme? *If you are unable to isolate Supporting Families funding from wider Early Help funding here then please leave blank.*

_____ %

D. Services beyond Early Help and / or Supporting Families

*This section covers the total Early Help and Supporting Families spending on **services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families** within your Local Authority, in the financial year 2022/23. By this, we are thinking about services that sit outside Early Help and Supporting Families but may be supported with funding from Early Help and Supporting Families. The types of services we are referring to here include:*

- *Looked-after children, e.g. residential care, fostering services, adoption services, asylum seeker services for children*

- *Sure Start children's centres and other spend on children aged under 5*
- *Other children and family services, e.g. counselling services*
- *Family Hubs*
- *Safeguarding children and young peoples' (aged 18-25) services, e.g. social work, local safeguarding children boards*
- *Family support services, e.g. direct financial support, respite for disabled children*
- *Services for young people (aged 18-25), e.g. youth work, activities for young people, teenage pregnancy services*
- *Youth justice, e.g. delivery of the September Guarantee, Youth Voice*
- *Other services beyond Supporting Families and / or Early Help (please state at Q21)*

20. Has your Local Authority used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on **services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families**? Select one, please highlight answer in yellow.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. We don't collect this information

If answering 'a' at Q20, please go to Q21. If answering 'b' or 'c' at Q20, please go straight to Section E.

21. Which types of **services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families** spend were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2022/23? Please select all that apply, please highlight answer(s) in yellow.

- Looked-after children, e.g. residential care, fostering services, adoption services, asylum seeker services for children
- Sure Start children's centres and other spend on children aged under 5
- Family Hubs
- Other children and family services, e.g. counselling services
- Safeguarding children and young peoples' (aged 18-25) services, e.g. social work, local safeguarding children boards
- Family support services, e.g. direct financial support, respite for disabled children
- Services for young people (aged 18-25), e.g. youth work, activities for young people, teenage pregnancy services
- Youth justice, e.g. delivery of the September Guarantee, Youth Voice
- Other, please specify _____

22. What was the total amount spent in your Local Authority on **services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families**, funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2022/23?

£ _____

23. What proportion of the spend on **services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families** would you estimate was funded specifically by the Supporting Families programme? *If you are unable to isolate Supporting Families funding from wider Early Help funding here then please leave blank.*

_____ %

E. Other

*We'd now like to ask whether there were any **other areas** within your Local Authority that were supported by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, in the financial year 2022/23. This would be anything that benefitted from Supporting Families funding that you have not already included in an above answer.*

24. Are you aware of any other areas within your Local Authority that were supported by Supporting Families funding in the 2022/23 financial year? Select one, please highlight answer.

- a. Yes
- b. No other area received Supporting Families funding
- c. Don't know

If answering 'a' at Q24, please go to Q25. If answering 'b' or 'c' at Q24, please go to Section F.

25. What was the total amount of Supporting Families funding spent in your Local Authority on **other areas** during the financial year 2022/23?

£ _____

26. Would you be happy to specify the **other areas** within your Local Authority that have been supported by Supporting Families funding? *(If you would prefer not to, please leave this box blank).*

- Yes

F. Additional Supporting Families funding

In the 2021 Spending Review, it was announced that an additional £200 million would be invested in the Supporting Families programme across the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years.

27. Did you notice an increase in Supporting Families funding for your Local Authority, in the financial year 2022/23? Select one, please highlight answer.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

If answering 'a' at Q27, please go to Q28. If answering 'b' or 'c' at Q27, please go to Section G.

28. Are you able to say where this additional funding has been directed within your Local Authority? If yes, please specify. *If no, or you would prefer not to say, please leave this box blank.*

G. Closing statements

Thank you very much for taking the time fill in this datasheet.

As a reminder, any information given as part of this exercise is completely confidential and will be reported back to DfE at the aggregate level, meaning no information given can be directly attributed to you or your Local Authority. As there a small number of Local Authorities taking part in this exercise, there is a possibility that DfE may be able to infer the identity of your Local Authority from the data provided. Any such occurrence would be unintentional on the part of IFF Research and every step would have been taken to ensure could not reasonably happen.

If you have any questions about this, please contact IFF Research via email at supportingfamiliespend_info@iffresearch.com. You have the right to change or withdraw the data given until 27/03/2024. After this point, the responses you provided will be anonymised and combined with all other interview findings to produce a report and it will not be possible to separate your responses. All of your personal data will be deleted 6 months after the project has been finalised (currently scheduled for June 2026). This means that IFF Research will no longer be able to attribute your name, Local Authority or contact details to this data. You have the right to request that this information is deleted in advance of this. You can find out more information about your rights under the General Data Protection Regulation Act 2018 (GDPR) by going to <https://www.iffresearch.com/privacy-policy/>.

Supporting Families Spend Mapping Glossary

This document breaks down the various categories that we are asking you to provide Early Help / Supporting Families spending data for, from the financial year 2022/23. We are aware that your local authority may define certain staff roles or other spend categories in a different way to others, and this document is therefore designed to provide definitions which will ensure all local authorities are considering the same costs when answering.

Key terminology

Category	Definition
Supporting Families funding	This relates to any funding provided to your Local Authority specifically through the Supporting Families programme for the financial year 2022/23.
Wider Early Help funding	This relates to any funding your Local Authority allocates for spending on Early Help services, excluding that which comes from the Supporting Families programme. This includes any grants that are given for specific purposes, such as Reducing Parental Conflict or Family Hubs.

Early Help staff costs

Category	Definition
Supporting Families Coordinator	This is someone who is employed or nominated by the Local Authority to provide operational leadership for the programme across the partnership. Role involves evaluating user experience and feedback, coordinating with other relevant government programmes, and managing data reporting. This could also be known as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early Help Coordinator• Family in Focus Coordinator
Frontline worker	This someone who leads work with individual families to overcome their problems, work with the whole family, agree a single improvement plan and coordinate other services to support the family. Job title could include:

Category	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyworker • Family Help / Support Worker • Lead Professional • Early Help Practitioner
Social worker (specifically for Early Help / Supporting Families work)	This is someone who provides whole family, sometimes intensive, support for families often in their home, being proactive to reach out to families where needed. They are experts in processes to support families with multiple needs and help families, other professionals, commissioned organisations, and voluntary and community groups to understand those needs, advocating where necessary.
Managers and / or supervisors	<p>This is someone in a managerial or supervisory role working within Early Help / Supporting Families. This person would be in a managerial or supervisory role that is separate from a Supporting Families Coordinator, Frontline worker, or Social worker. Job titles could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Practice Lead • Head of Service • Director
Administrative and / or data staff	<p>Administrative: This is someone who is an administrative assistant or support staff member who is responsible for fulfilling, or supporting with, administrative tasks.</p> <p>Data staff: This is someone working within a data team aligned to the Supporting Families programme to facilitate data development, data sharing and to progress against data maturity milestones.</p>
Other	This would include any other staff members / job roles not included above which were funded by Early Help / Supporting Families Spend

Service procurement and / or specialist workers

Category	Definition
Parenting techniques	This could include programmes such as Triple P, Non-Violent Resistance, Parenting Together, Incredible Years, Parents Plus, Mellow Mums or Parenting Children with ASD/ADHD.
Mental health	This could include specialist mental health advisors, as well as spend on Families Learning About Self Harm, Jigsaw Project (bereavement support), Rapid Access to Psychological Services (RAPT), referrals into Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).
Domestic abuse	This could include specialist domestic abuse advisors, as well as spend on programmes such as Freedom Project, Free Your Mind, Phoenix Project, Empowerment Programme, Sisters in Strength, and any other DV programmes funded by your local authority.
Substance abuse or alcohol dependency	This could include specialist substance abuse advisors as well as spend on referring to rehabilitation programmes such as SHARPS.
Other	This could include Family Group Decision Making services, which might subsequently include Family Group Conferences (such as Daybreak for Family Group Conferences); youth crime (such as Youth Justice Teams); or any other relevant service procurement or specialist workers.

Infrastructure

Category	Definition
Case management systems	This could include licenses and subscriptions for case management platforms, such as LiquidLogic.
Data systems	This could include improving or investing in data systems such as paying for hardware and software, e.g. fees for database managements systems.

Category	Definition
Family feedback and experiences	This could include improving and investing in systems for family feedback and experience such as paying for online platforms, surveys etc to capture family voice and experience for service design.
Premises	This could include investing in new premises, utility costs, insurance, etc.; or spend on repair and maintenance of premises including pay of staff involved, e.g. cleaning staff.
Networking and catering	This could include venue rental hire and refreshments.

Services beyond Supporting Families and / or Early Help

Category	Definition
Looked-after children	Any form of care that includes looking after children for continuous periods of more than 24 hours, e.g. residential care, fostering services, adoption services, asylum seeker services for children
Sure Start children's centres and other spend on children aged under 5	Centres that give help and advice on child and family health, parenting, money, training and employment. Some centres also provide early learning and full day care for pre-school children.
Family Hubs	Set up to join up and enhance services delivered through transformed family hubs in local authority areas
Other children and family services	Counselling services, for example.
Safeguarding children and young people (aged 18-25)	Services that protect children from abuse and maltreatment, e.g. social work, local safeguarding children boards

Category	Definition
Family Support Services	Includes direct payments, respite for disabled children, as well as targeted and universal family support.
Services for young people (aged 18-25)	Local authority expenditure on provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities, including youth work and delivery of their duties to support young people to participate in education or training.
Youth Justice	Services related to young offenders including youth offending teams, e.g. delivery of the September Guarantee, Youth Voice

Supporting Families Spend Survey

Supporting Families Spend Survey
Mapping Datasheet - Financial Year 2023/24 J12466
Online

Date 24/6/26

S Landing page

Welcome to the Supporting Families Spend Evaluation Survey.

Firstly, the Department for Education (DfE) and IFF Research would like **to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, your input is extremely valuable**. The aim of the research is to understand how Supporting Families and wider early help funding is being spent across local authorities in England. The findings from this research will be used to build a greater understanding of spend on Early Help and inform preparations for the government's spending review.

The survey should take up to 30 minutes to complete, however you can pause at any time and / or alternate between the sections in the survey. To return to the survey, simply click on the link in your invitation to return to the last question you answered.

This survey includes eight sections, please complete all of them. Once a section is complete, you will be redirected to the main menu to complete the next section, and you will be able to see whether a section is complete. Once all sections are marked as complete, please select 'submit' at the bottom of the main menu. All sections must be marked as 'completed' before you are able to select 'submit'.

In the first seven sections of the survey, we are only interested in the funding that was spent during the 2023/2024 financial year. In the final section of the survey, we will ask you to refer to the current financial year (2024/2025)

You can continue to edit any of the sections up until the end of the fieldwork on **the 10th January 2025** when the survey will be closed.

Please note, this survey is separate to the section 251 data returns.

For more information on the research, how to complete the survey, and the glossary of terms used in the survey, please visit the project webpage [here](#).

If you have any questions about the, please contact IFF Research via email on supportingfamiliespend_info@iffresearch.com. If you wish to confirm the legitimacy of the survey, please contact Thomas Griffiths, at DfE on thomas.griffiths@education.gov.uk.

How will my data be used?

- Any information given as part of this exercise is completely confidential and will be reported back to DfE anonymised, meaning no information given can be directly attributed to you or your local authority.
- The research is being conducted on DfE's behalf by IFF Research, an independent research organisation. Our work adheres to the Market Research Society's code of conduct.
- If you'd like a copy of your data, to change your data, for your data to be deleted or to lodge a complaint, then please follow the process outlined on IFF's website. All of your personal data will be deleted 6 months after the project has been finalised (currently scheduled for September 2025).
- You can find out more information about your rights under the General Data Protection Regulation Act 2018 (GDPR) by going to [Privacy policy | IFF Research](#).

Please select a section below to begin.

SECTION A: An overview of Supporting Families and Early Help services and funding spend	1	[Please complete/ Completed]
SECTION B: Early Help staff costs	2	[Please complete/ Completed]
SECTION C: Training and upskilling	3	[Please complete/ Completed]
SECTION D: Early Help Infrastructure	4	[Please complete/ Completed]
SECTION E: Services beyond Early Help and/or Supporting Families	5	[Please complete/ Completed]
SECTION F: Other	6	[Please complete/ Completed]
SECTION G: Additional Supporting Families funding	7	[Please complete/ Completed]
SECTION H: Support scenarios	8	[Please complete/ Completed]

A An overview of Supporting Families and Early Help services and funding spend

Introduction page

The first section of the survey will cover questions on how much your local authority spends on Early Help, and how Supporting Families and Early Help, more broadly, are funded.

ASK ALL

- A1 **To start with, please would you be able to tell us, what is the total amount that your local authority spent on Early Help in the 2023/2024 financial year?**

WRITE IN TOTAL AMOUNT IN UK STERLING ALLOW 0 to 50,000,000		
Don't know	1	EXCLUSIVE

ASK ALL

- A2 **In the 2023/2024 financial year, was Early Help supplemented by other types of funding, including government funding for wider children's services, or from other types of revenue such as council tax or business rates?**

SINGLE CODE

Yes (please specify type of funding)	1	
No	2	
Don't know	3	

ASK IF YES AT A2

- A3 **How much was Supporting Families supplemented by other types of funding in the 2023/24 financial year?**

SINGLE CODE

Less than £1,000	1	
£1,001 - £5,000	2	
£5,001 – £10,000	3	
£10,001 - £20,000	4	

£20,001 - £50,000	5	
£50,001 - £100,000	6	
£100,001 - £200,000	7	
Over £200,000	8	
Don't know / prefer not to say	9	

B Early Help Staff Costs

Introduction page

This section of the survey covers the total Early Help and Supporting Families spending on **staff salaries** across your local authority, in the financial year 2023/24.

When we say 'staff', we are referring to anyone who is **permanently employed on a salaried contract**. This does not include agency staff or subcontractors.

The types of staff members we are referring to here *could* include:

- Supporting Families coordinators
- Frontline workers (such as Early Help practitioners)
- Social workers (specifically for Early Help and Supporting Families work)
- Managers and / or supervisors
- Administrative and / or data staff

ASK ALL

B1 **Has your local authority used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on staff salaries?**

SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	GO TO B2
No	2	GO TO B10
We do not collect this information	3	GO TO B10

ASK IF YES AT B1

B2 **Which types of staff members' salaries were partially or fully funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/2024?**

MULTI CODE

Supporting Families coordinators	1	
Frontline workers (such as Early Help practitioners)	2	
Social workers (specifically for Early Help and/or Supporting Families work)	3	
Managers and/or supervisors	4	
Administrative and/or data staff	5	
Other (please specify)	6	

ASK IF YES AT B1

B3 How many full-time equivalent (FTE) staff roles at your local authority were partially or fully funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/24?

WRITE IN NUMBER AS A DIGIT 0 to 500 (to 2 decimal points)		
Don't know	1	GO TO B4

IF DON'T KNOW EXACT NUMBER – PROMPT WITH RANGES

B4 Was it...? Please give your best estimate.

SINGLE CODE

1 to 2	1
3 to 5	2
6 to 10	3
11 to 15	4
16 to 20	5
21 to 25	6
26 to 30	7
More than 30	8
Don't know	9

ASK IF YES AT B1

- B5 **What was the total amount spent in your local authority on basic annual salaries for salaried staff members funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2023/24?**

WRITE IN TOTAL AMOUNT IN UK STERLING ALLOW 0 to 50,000,000		
Don't know	1	GO TO B6

IF DON'T KNOW EXACT NUMBER – PROMPT WITH RANGES

- B6 **Was it...? Please give your best estimate.**

ONE RESPONSE ONLY

Less than £100,000	1
£101,000 to £200,000	2
£201,000 to £300,000	3
£301,000 to £400,000	4
£401,000 to £500,000	5
£501,000 to £1,000,000	6
£1,000,000 to £2,000,000	7
More than £2,000,000	8
Don't know	9

ASK IF DON'T KNOW AT B5 AND B6

- B7 **Thinking about the total amount you said you spent on basic annual salaries for salaried staff members funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, did this include employers' National Insurance, pension contributions, or other costs related to staff members' employment?**

SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	
No	2	

Don't know	3	
------------	---	--

ASK IF SELECTED SUPPORTING FAMILIES COORDINATORS AT B2

- B8 **What was the total amount spent in your local authority on basic annual salaries for Supporting Families coordinators (not including employers' National Insurance, pension contributions, or other costs related to staff member's employment), funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2023/24?**

WRITE IN TOTAL AMOUNT IN UK STERLING 0 to 1,000,000		
Don't know	1	GO TO B9

IF DON'T KNOW EXACT NUMBER – PROMPT WITH RANGES

- B9 **Was it...? Please give your best estimate.**

SINGLE CODE

Less than £20,000	1
£20,001 to £40,000	2
£40,001 to £60,000	3
£60,001 to £80,000	4
£80,001 to £100,000	5
More than £100,000	6
Don't know	7

ASK ALL

- B10 **Has your local authority procured any services and / or specialist workers to support with the delivery of the Supporting Families programme?**

By this, we are thinking specifically about any procurement costs for external specialist workers or for specialist support services at partner organisations. This excludes those who are permanently employed on a salaried contract.

SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	GO TO B11
-----	---	-----------

No	2	GO TO LANDING PAGE
We do not collect this information	3	GO TO LANDING PAGE

ASK IF YES AT B10

B11 **Which types of service procurement and / or specialist workers were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/24?**

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Parenting techniques	1	
Mental Health	2	
Domestic abuse	3	
Substance abuse or alcohol dependency	4	
Other 1 (please specify)	5	
Other 2 (please specify)	6	
Other 3 (please specify)	7	

ASK IF YES AT B10

B12 **What was the total amount spent in your local authority on service procurement and / or specialist workers, funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2023/24?**

WRITE IN TOTAL AMOUNT IN UK STERLING 0 to 5,000,000		
Don't know	1	GO TO B15

IF DON'T KNOW EXACT NUMBER – PROMPT WITH RANGES

B13 **Was it...? Please give your best estimate.**

SINGLE CODE

Less than £10,000	1
£10,001 to £20,000	2

£20,001 to £30,000	3
£30,001 to £40,000	4
£40,001 to £50,000	5
£50,001 to £100,000	6
£100,001 to £200,000	7
£200,001 to £300,000	8
More than £300,000	9
Don't know	10

C Training and upskilling

Introduction page

This section of the survey covers the total Early Help and Supporting Families spending on training and upskilling across your local authority for those salaried staff, in the financial year 2023/24. The types of training and upskilling we are referring to here could include but are not limited to the following:

- Safeguarding
- Child development
- Parenting techniques
- Practice frameworks
- Family Group Conferencing
- Domestic abuse training
- Parental conflict training
- Mental health training
- Team around the Family training
- Data training

ASK ALL

C1 Has your local authority used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on training and upskilling?

Yes	1	GO TO C2
No	2	GO TO LANDING PAGE
Don't know	3	GO TO LANDING PAGE

ASK IF YES AT C1

C2 Which types of training and upskilling activities were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/24?

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Safeguarding	1	
Child development	2	
Parenting techniques	3	
Social learning theory	4	
Motivational interviewing techniques	5	
Family Group Conferencing	6	
Domestic abuse training	7	
Parental conflict training	8	
Mental health training	9	
Team around the Family training	10	
Data training	11	
Other (please specify)	12	

ASK IF YES AT C1

C3 What was the total amount spent in your local authority on training and upskilling for salaried staff members, funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2023/24?

WRITE IN TOTAL AMOUNT IN UK STERLING 0 to 5,000,000		
Don't know	1	GO TO C4

IF DON'T KNOW EXACT NUMBER – PROMPT WITH RANGES

C4 Was it...? Please give your best estimate.

Less than £10,000	1
£10,001 to £20,000	2

£20,001 to £30,000	3
£30,001 to £40,000	4
£40,001 to £50,000	5
£50,001 to £100,000	6
£100,001 to £200,000	7
More than £200,000	8
Don't know	9

D Early Help infrastructure

Introduction page

This section covers the total Early Help and Supporting Families spending on infrastructure within your local authority, in the financial year 2023/24.

By this, we are thinking specifically about any spending on improving or investing in physical and data infrastructure related to Early Help services.

The types of infrastructure spending we are referring to here could include:

- Case management systems
- Data systems
- Family feedback and experiences
- Premises
- Networking and catering

ASK ALL

D1 **Has your local authority used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on Early Help infrastructure?**

Yes	1	GO TO D2
No	2	GO TO LANDING PAGE
We do not collect this information	3	GO TO LANDING PAGE

ASK IF YES AT D1

D2 **Which types of Early Help infrastructure spend were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/24?**

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Case management systems	1	
Data systems	2	
Family feedback and experiences	3	
Premises	4	
Networking and catering	5	
Other (please specify)	6	

ASK IF YES AT D1

- D3 What was the total amount spent in your local authority on Early Help infrastructure, funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2023/24? Please give your best estimate.**

WRITE IN TOTAL AMOUNT IN UK STERLING 0 to 5,000,000		
Don't know	1	GO TO D4

IF DON'T KNOW EXACT NUMBER [D3 =1] – PROMPT WITH RANGES

- D4 Was it...? Please give your best estimate.**

Less than £10,000	1	
£10,001 to £20,000	2	
£20,001 to £30,000	3	
£30,001 to £40,000	4	
£40,001 to £50,000	5	
£50,001 to £100,000	6	
£100,001 to £200,000	7	
More than £200,000	8	
Don't know	9	

E Services beyond Early Help and/or Supporting Families

This section covers the total Early Help and Supporting Families spending on services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families within your local authority, in the financial year 2023/24.

By this, we are thinking about services that sit outside Early Help and Supporting Families but may be supported with funding from Early Help and Supporting Families.

The types of services we are referring to here include:

- Looked-after children, e.g. residential care, fostering services, adoption services, asylum seeker services for children
- SureStart children's centres and other spend on children aged under 5
- Other children and family services, e.g. counselling services
- Family Hubs
- Safeguarding children and young people's (aged 18-25) services, e.g. social work, local safeguarding children boards
- Family support services, e.g. direct financial support, respite for disabled children
- Services for young people (aged 18-25), e.g. youth work, activities for young people, teenage pregnancy services
- Youth justice, e.g. delivery of the September Guarantee, Youth Voice

ASK ALL

E1 **Has your local authority used Early Help and Supporting Families funding on services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families?**

Yes	1	GO TO E2
No	2	GO TO LANDING PAGE
Don't know	3	GO TO LANDING PAGE

ASK IF YES AT E1

E2 **Which types of services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families spend were funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding during the financial year 2023/24?**

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Looked-after children, e.g. residential care, fostering services, adoption services, asylum seeker services for children	1	
SureStart children's centres and other spend on children aged under 5	2	
Family Hubs	3	
Other children and family services, e.g. counselling services	4	

Safeguarding children and young people's (aged 18-25) services, e.g. social work, local safeguarding children boards	5	
Family support services, e.g. direct financial support, respite for disabled children	6	
Services for young people (aged 18-25), e.g. youth work, activities for young people, teenage pregnancy services	7	
Youth justice, e.g. delivery of the September Guarantee, Youth Voice	8	
Other (please specify)	9	

ASK IF YES AT E1

E3 What was the total amount spent in your local authority on services beyond Early Help and Supporting Families, funded by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, during the financial year 2023/24?

WRITE IN TOTAL AMOUNT IN UK STERLING 0 to 5,000,000		
Don't know	1	GO TO E4

IF DON'T KNOW EXACT NUMBER [E3 =1] – PROMPT WITH RANGES

E4 Was it...? Please give your best estimate.

Less than £100,000	1
£101,000 to £200,000	2
£201,000 to £300,000	3
£301,000 to £400,000	4
£401,000 to £500,000	5
£501,000 to £1,000,000	6
£1,000,000 to £2,000,000	7
More than £2,000,000	8
Don't know	9

F Other

Introduction page

We'd now like to ask whether there were any other areas within your local authority that were supported by Early Help and Supporting Families funding, in the financial year 2023/24.

This would be anything that benefitted from Early Help and / or Supporting Families funding that you have not already included in this survey.

ASK ALL

- F1 **Are you aware of any other areas within your local authority that were supported by Early Help and / or Supporting Families funding in the 2023/24 financial year?**

Yes	1	GO TO F2
No other area received Early Help and / or Supporting Families funding	2	GO TO LANDING PAGE
Don't know	3	GO TO LANDING PAGE

ASK IF YES AT F1

- F2 **What was the total amount spent in your local authority on other areas, during the financial year 2023/24?**

WRITE IN TOTAL AMOUNT IN UK STERLING 0 to 5,000,000		
Don't know	1	GO TO F3

IF DON'T KNOW EXACT NUMBER [F2 =1] – PROMPT WITH RANGES

- F3 **Was it...? Please give your best estimate.**

Less than £10,000	1
£10,001 to £20,000	2
£20,001 to £30,000	3
£30,001 to £40,000	4
£40,001 to £50,000	5
£50,001 to £100,000	6

£100,001 to £200,000	7
£200,001 to £300,000	8
More than £300,000	9
Don't know	10

ASK IF YES AT F1

F4 **What were the other areas within your local authority that were supported by Early Help and / or Supporting Families funding in the 2023/24 financial year?**

WRITE IN		
Don't know	1	EXCLUSIVE
Prefer not to say	2	EXCLUSIVE

G Additional Supporting Families funding

ASK ALL

G1 **In the 2021 Spending Review, it was announced that an additional £200 million would be invested in the Supporting Families programme across the 2023/24, 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years.**

Did you notice an increase in Supporting Families funding for your local authority in the financial year 2023/24?

Yes	1	GO TO G2
No	2	GO TO LANDING PAGE
Not sure	3	GO TO LANDING PAGE

ASK IF YES AT G1

G2 **What was this additional funding used for?**

WRITE IN

It has not yet been used	1	EXCLUSIVE
Don't know	2	EXCLUSIVE
Refused	3	EXCLUSIVE

H Support scenarios

ASK ALL

For the next few questions, we are going to present you with three separate hypothetical scenarios. Each of these will be examples of the types of families who might require Early Help support. For each, we will ask what types of support the family would likely be offered, who would be involved and the cost of this support over a period of six months.

For each scenario, we will make it clear where each case sits within children's services.

In contrast to the remainder of the survey, please answer these questions based on the types of support, and corresponding costs, that would be given in this current financial year (2024-2025).

SCENARIO 1: This case is held in early help

A new mother is struggling with breastfeeding her baby (under the age of one year) and received early support provided via a Family Hub. Family life is chaotic, and the older child (aged four years), is showing signs of development delay and recurrent health issues.

H1 **What types of support would this family be offered at this stage in the current financial year, 2024-2025?**

Please answer based on the case lasting for six months and please only include support services commissioned by the local authority.

WRITE IN		
Don't know	1	

ASK ALL

H2 **Who would be involved in this case?**

Please note, we are only interested in roles that are directly funded by the local authority. Please answer based on the case lasting for six months.

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Supporting Families coordinators	1	
Frontline workers (such as Early Help practitioners)	2	
Social workers (specifically for Early Help and/or Supporting Families work)	3	
Managers and/or supervisors	4	
Administrative and/or data staff	5	
Other (please specify)	6	

ASK ALL

H3 **Thinking about the types of the support that would be offered over this six-month period, how much would this cost?**

Less than £1,000	1	
£1,001 - £2,000	2	
£2,001 – £3,000	3	
£3,001 - £5,000	4	
£5,001 - £10,000	5	
Over £10,000	6	
Don't know	7	

ASK ALL

H4 **Do you have anything further you would like to comment on in relation to scenario one?**

WRITE IN		
Nothing further to add	1	

ASK ALL

H5 **SCENARIO 2: This case is held as ‘child in need’**

A woman is struggling and has a history of mental ill-health and domestic abuse. There is a new partner involved and there are concerns about substance misuse. There have been recent police call outs. The woman has a baby under the age of one and a four-year-old child.

What types of support would this family be offered over a six-month period?

Please answer based on the support offered in the current financial year 2024-2025. Please only include support services commissioned by the local authority.

WRITE IN		
Don't know	1	

ASK ALL

H6 **Who would be involved in this case?**

Please note, we are only interested in roles that are directly funded by the local authority. Please answer based on the case lasting for six months.

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Supporting Families coordinators	1	
Frontline workers (such as Early Help practitioners)	2	
Social workers (specifically for Early Help and/or Supporting Families work)	3	
Managers and/or supervisors	4	
Administrative and/or data staff	5	
Other (please specify)	6	

ASK ALL

H7 **Thinking about the types of the support that would be offered, how much would this cost over a six-month period?**

Less than £1,000	1	
£1,001 - £2,000	2	
£2,001 – £3,000	3	

£3,001 - £5,000	4	
£5,001 - £10,000	5	
Over £10,000	6	
Don't know	7	

ASK ALL

H8 **Do you have anything further you would like to comment on in relation to scenario two?**

WRITE IN		
Nothing further to add	1	

ASK ALL

H9 **SCENARIO 3: This case is held in child protection**

A mother of a baby under the age of one and a four-year-old child has a new partner who is using heroin and numerous domestic abuse incidents have been reported, including one whereby the four-year-old child was injured.

What types of support would this family be offered over a six-month period?

Please answer based on the support offered in the current financial year 2024-2025. Please only include support services commissioned by the local authority.

WRITE IN		
Don't know	1	

ASK ALL

H10 **Who would be involved in this case?**

Please note, we are only interested in roles that are directly funded by the local authority. Please answer based on the case lasting for six months.

SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

Supporting Families coordinators	1	
Frontline workers (such as Early Help practitioners)	2	
Social workers (specifically for Early Help and/or Supporting Families work)	3	
Managers and/or supervisors	4	
Administrative and/or data staff	5	
Other (please specify)	6	

ASK ALL

H11 **Thinking about the types of the support that would be offered over a six-month period, how much would this cost?**

Less than £1,000	1	
£1,001 - £2,000	2	
£2,001 – £3,000	3	
£3,001 - £5,000	4	
£5,001 - £10,000	5	
Over £10,000	6	
Don't know	7	

ASK ALL

H12 **Do you have anything further you would like to comment on in relation to scenario three?**

WRITE IN		
Nothing further to add	1	

Characteristics of local authorities who took part in the spend survey

Characteristics	-	Percentage of completes
Rural vs. urban	Rural	12%
Rural vs. urban	Urban	82%
Rural vs. urban	N/A	6%
The income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI)	Quintile 1	12%
IDACI	Quintile 2	21%
IDACI	Quintile 3	12%
IDACI	Quintile 4	18%
IDACI	Quintile 5	24%
IDACI	N/A	13%
The index of multiple deprivation (IMD)	Quintile 1	15%
IMD	Quintile 2	18%
IMD	Quintile 3	12%
IMD	Quintile 4	18%
IMD	Quintile 5	24%
IMD	N/A	13%
Number of children in need on 31 March 2024	Quintile 1	21%
Number of children in need on 31 March 2024	Quintile 2	21%
Number of children in need on 31 March 2024	Quintile 3	18%
Number of children in need on 31 March 2024	Quintile 4	18%
Number of children in need on 31 March 2024	Quintile 5	18%
Number of children in need on 31 March 2024	N/A	4%
Estimated population, mid-2023	Quintile 1	12%
Estimated population, mid-2023	Quintile 2	15%
Estimated population, mid-2023	Quintile 3	21%
Estimated population, mid-2023	Quintile 4	18%
Estimated population, mid-2023	Quintile 5	30%
Estimated population, mid-2023	N/A	4%
Number of families worked with	0-500	3%

Characteristics	-	Percentage of completes
Number of families worked with	501-1,000	18%
Number of families worked with	1,001 – 2,500	36%
Number of families worked with	2,501 – 5,000	24%
Number of families worked with	5,001 – 10,000	6%
Number of families worked with	10,001 – 20,000	3%
Number of families worked with	N/A	12%
Total amount local authority spent on Early Help in 2023/24	£800,001 to £1,000,000	9%
Total amount local authority spent on Early Help in 2023/24	£1,000,001 to £2,500,000	30%
Total amount local authority spent on Early Help in 2023/24	£2,500,001 to £5,000,000	18%
Total amount local authority spent on Early Help in 2023/24	£5,000,001 to £10,000,000	24%
Total amount local authority spent on Early Help in 2023/24	Over £10,000,000	6%
Total amount local authority spent on Early Help in 2023/24	Don't know	12%



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