

Family Hubs Transformation Fund Q&A

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General

Q: What is the aim of the Transformation Fund?

A: The Transformation Fund will support at least 12 LAs in England to move to a family hub model of service delivery and open family hubs by March 2024.

It will also enable us to learn more about the process of local transformation, build our evidence base, and create valuable resources and learning for those LAs who follow.

Family hubs are a way of joining up locally to improve access to services, the connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and put relationships at the heart of family help. Family hubs bring together services for children of all ages, with a great Start for Life offer at their core, and can have a physical and virtual offer. How services are delivered varies from place to place, but these principles are key to the family hub model.

Q: What is the purpose of the Family Hub Model Framework?

A: We have published a Family Hub Model Framework as an annex to the application guide for the Family Hubs Local Transformation Fund. The framework provides further information for LAs applying for the fund. LAs should use this to assess for themselves where they are in their family hub journey and to understand what they are expected to achieve with the funding.

The framework is not intended to be used in isolation. LAs should use it alongside the guidance and tools that they are already using to help transform their services. For example, [The best start for Life: A vision for the 1001 critical](#), the Supporting Families [Early Help System Guide](#) and the [Reducing Parental Conflict Planning Tool](#).

We expect the framework to develop and iterate further. We plan to review and update it periodically to ensure it reflects the latest evidence on effective family hub characteristics, including the learning we derive from the Transformation Fund.

Eligibility

Q. Who can apply for the Transformation Fund?

A: The fund is open to the 151 upper tier LAs in England (which include metropolitan districts; London boroughs; unitary authorities and county councils), that do not currently have family hubs, and that wish to transform to a family hub model of service delivery and open family hubs by March 2024.

To be eligible to apply for funding, LAs must currently provide the six core services for the conception to age 2 period that make up the Start for Life 'Universal Offer'. These include: midwifery; health visiting; mental health support; infant feeding advice with specialist breastfeeding support; safeguarding; and those services relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as set out in the [Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days](#).

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Q. How can local authorities (LAs) determine whether they are already operating a family hub model of service delivery?

A: We have published a Family Hub Model Framework as an annex to the application guide to the Family Hubs Transformation Fund. The framework provides a standard definition of a family hub that LAs can use to assess for themselves where they are in their family hub journey and their suitability for the fund.

LAs that meet some of the criteria of the family hub model framework, but that wish to develop their model of service delivery so that it aligns more fully with the definitions set out in the framework are encouraged to apply for funding.

Q: Can LAs that currently have family hubs apply for this funding (e.g. to open more hubs, further develop their model)?

A: We are seeking applications for transformation funding from LAs that do not currently have family hubs, and that wish to transform to a family hub model of service delivery, with a commitment to open family hubs by March 2024.

We have published a Family Hub Model Framework alongside the application guidance. LAs should use the framework to assess for themselves where they are in their family hub journey and their suitability for the fund.

LAs that meet some of the criteria of the family hub model framework, but that wish to develop their model of service delivery so that it aligns more fully with the definitions set out in the framework are encouraged to apply for funding.

However, it should be noted that in awarding funding, we will be prioritising LAs that can deliver the greatest transformation for their areas.

Q. Will there be any future funding available to LAs with existing family hub provision to support them to further transform and develop their models?

A: At Budget, the Government announced a further £82m to create a network of family hubs in 75 areas – half of all top-tier LAs in England. This is part of a wider £300m package to transform services for parents and babies, carers and children in half of LAs across England. The family hubs investment is in addition to the £39 million we had already committed to champion family hubs. We will set out more detail in due course.

Q. Can LAs apply for this funding if they have been awarded funding through the Children's Social Care (CSC) Covid-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better Fund?

A: LAs in receipt of a grant through the DfE's CSC Covid-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better Fund, to accelerate the opening of family hubs, may apply to the Transformation Fund so long as it is clear that any additional funding will be used for different activities to those covered by the CSC grant. LAs should set this out as part of their application. They do not need to reach a certain point in their CSC funded project to submit an application.

Q. Do LAs need cabinet-level approval to submit an application?

A: LAs do not require cabinet-level approval to apply for the Transformation Fund. However, all applications should be approved by and have the full support of the following local stakeholders (or equivalents): the Director of Children's Services, Director of Public Health, Director of Adult Services and the Chair of the Local Health and Wellbeing Board.

Funding

Q: How much funding is available?

A: The Transformation Fund is worth approximately £12m. LAs can apply for up to £1m - £833k programme and £167k capital - over two financial years (2022-23 and 2023-24).

LAs should provide a clear breakdown and rationale of costs requested in their application, and how it demonstrates value for money.

Q. How many LAs will be awarded funding?

A: This fund will support at least 12 LAs to transform to a family hub model of service delivery and open family hubs by March 2024.

Q. Can applications exceed £1m?

A: No. Applications which exceed £1m will not be assessed.

Q: How can the funding be used?

A: The Transformation Fund will pay for the change process, supporting LAs to move to a family hub model and open family hubs by March 2024 through programme and capital funding. It will not cover the costs of family hub services themselves, including Start for Life services. LAs should continue to fund these from existing funding streams. We anticipate that the funding could be used to pay for:

- **Programme expenditure** - an LA transformation team; local consultation; workforce development / training; development of a digital/data strategy; and communications to families.
- **Capital expenditure** - adapting existing buildings (to ensure fit for all ages); improving accessibility and to enable multi-agency working. This could include, for example, IT upgrades; improving building space; new furniture to ensure suitability for older children; and new equipment such as sinks or specialist flooring for clinical use.

Q. Why is there only a small proportion of capital funding?

A: This is not a new building programme. Funding will support LAs to carry out system change activities to enable them to transform to a family hub model of service delivery. The capital funding will support LAs to carry out minor adaptations to existing buildings, and to improve accessibility and enable multi-agency working. This could include: IT upgrades; improving building space; new furniture to ensure suitability for older children; and new equipment such as sinks or specialist flooring for clinical use.

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Q. Can LAs use the funding to pay for activities/items not listed in the guidance?

A: The suggested list of activities/items provided in the guidance is not exhaustive. Funding should pay for the change process, rather than services. LAs should provide a clear breakdown and rationale of costs requested in their application, and how it demonstrates value for money.

Assessment Process

Q. How will DfE decide which LAs receive funding for family hubs?

A: Funding will be awarded through a competitive bid process. Eligible applications will be assessed and scored by a cross-government panel against six key criteria: strategic vision, delivery plan, start for life, project costs and value for money, risk management, and sustainability. We will consider key factors when deciding which LAs to fund, including level of need; geographic location; and level of rurality.

In awarding funding, we will be prioritising LAs that can deliver the greatest transformation for their areas.

Q. Who will be included in the cross-government panel and how is this decided?

A: The Transformation Fund is a cross-government project, therefore the assessment panel will be made up of representatives from a range of relevant government departments that include as a minimum: the Department for Education, the Department for Health and Social Care, and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Full membership of the panel has not yet been decided, and will be determined in due course.

Application form (added 13/12/21)

Q. Can visuals/diagrams be included in the main application form?

A: We cannot accept visuals/diagrams in the text boxes in the application form. However, if it would be helpful **to illustrate your delivery plan** (Q2 p.10 of the application form) with visuals/diagrams, you may submit a maximum of two annexes alongside the application form - each annex must be a maximum of two A4 pages and Arial size 12 font. Any text included in the annexes does not count towards the word limit in the application form.

We cannot accept annexes in response to any other questions in the application form (e.g. strategic vision).

Q. Can hyperlinks be included the application form?

A: We cannot consider other documents when assessing applications to the transformation fund, and this includes those accessed via hyperlink. We will only review the contents of the application form and annexes (see above).