



Department
for Education

Family Hubs – Growing Up Well: Local Area Partner (Round Three)

Application guide

March 2022

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1. Executive summary

We are seeking completed expressions of interest (EOIs) from local authorities (LAs) to partner with us on the information sharing strand of the Family Hubs – Growing Up Well digital project. Partner LAs will test and embed one or both of the solutions already identified through the project discovery phase (*connecting professionals to each other, connect a family to support*) to improve how information is shared between professionals in a family hub network.

The Government has committed to championing family hubs. Family hubs are a way of joining up locally to improve access to services, the connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and to put relationships at the heart of family help. They bring together services for children of all ages, with a great Start for Life offer at their core¹.

The Family Hubs – Growing Up Well digital project is a key part of this commitment and is directly funded by HM Treasury through the Shared Outcomes Fund. The project largely works across education, health, and social care to improve outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged families, young people and children using digital levers.

The project aims to address two key complex issues:

1. **Information sharing** – improve how information is shared between professionals who work with families in a family hub; and
2. **Family experience** – improve how families access and navigate services through a family hub

The project is being delivered through an iterative, **agile process** that involves working closely with LA partners and frontline professionals across several stages to develop, test, and embed digital and data products².

We have already worked with three LA partners on the **information sharing** work strand to identify user needs and pain points (discovery), and to develop and test potential solutions with users (alpha). The purpose of these phases of the project was to understand how we might help professionals share information so that they can save time, make informed decisions and help children and families receive the right support at the right time.

¹ [The Best Start for Life - The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671111/the-best-start-for-life-the-early-years-healthy-development-review-report.pdf)

² For an overview of Agile delivery, ([Agile delivery - Service Manual - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671111/agile-delivery-service-manual.pdf)). See Table 1 on page 6 for an explanation of the various phases.

We developed two information sharing digital solutions: *connecting professionals to each other* and *connect a family to support*. For more information on the user needs identified at the discovery and alpha phases, see page 10.

Local area partner opportunity

We are now seeking to recruit up to six new LAs to partner with us on the **information sharing** work strand. We will undertake rapid validation activities with the successful LAs to understand their information sharing needs and challenges, and to validate our *connecting professionals to each other* and *connect a family to support* solutions. This will form part of a wider beta phase that will test, embed, and iterate the solutions locally. LA partners will be able to set a preference in their application to work with us on one or both of these solutions. See Table 1 for an explanation of the agile phases on page 6. It is important that LAs demonstrate that their **needs are similar** to those already identified in the discovery/alpha LAs on page 10 and that they also hold the **technical infrastructure and resource** to run a successful beta. Further information on the technical specification can be found on pages 14-15.

Activities are expected to include, but are not limited to: providing dedicated resource through a representative to maintain daily engagement with DfE policy and digital teams; exploring how information is shared between services and how it can be improved; developing and testing proposed solutions within your existing systems; exploring how the solutions can be integrated into your current/future family hub model; working with the family experience team to share insights to inform this project. Further information on role of the LA can be found on pages 12-13.

LAs recruited through this EOI process will each have access to capacity and transformation grant funding to support their work on the digital project. **Each LA will receive up to £10k to initially onboard and support staffing resource.** Funding requirements to support implementation through beta stage will be subject to costed plans and value for money assessment. Further information on funding can be found on page 16.

IMPORTANT: Due to local elections 2022, the DfE will be placing an embargo on all LAs from publicly disclosing their application, and successful LAs from publicly disclosing their partnership with the Department, until after the local elections in summer 2022. The DfE will announce successful LAs in summer 2022. Failure to adhere to this may result in your application being withdrawn from this process or funding terminated without appeal.

Table 1 – Phases of an agile project.

Discovery – Exploring the problem space (completed)

The discovery phase is about understanding the problem that needs to be solved and involves learning about users and what they are trying to achieve; any constraints; the underlying policy; and opportunities to make improvements. At the end of discovery, we will know there is a viable service that could be built to meet users' needs and a list of ideas to test at alpha.



Alpha – Testing options with hypotheses with our current LA partners (December 2021 – May 2022)

The alpha phase is where we will try out different solutions to the problems learnt during discovery. Prototypes are built and different ideas are tested with users to see which one should be taken forward.



Beta – Building and refining options (May 2022 – March 2023)

Beta is where the best idea from alpha is built and a version is released to test with a limited number of users. The solution may require further iterations based on user needs. Once the solution has been improved and we are confident we can run it at scale, we will understand how to build and scale.

Rapid validation of user needs with LA partners

As part of this beta phase, rapid validation will be undertaken to confirm the information sharing user needs with our new LA partners.



Live – Continuously improving (April 2023 – March 2024)

The live phase is about supporting the service in a sustainable way, and continuing to iterate and make improvements. We will continue to address any constraints identified at beta and develop the service. The capacity and transformation grant funding will not support product implementation into the Live phase.

2. Background

Case for change

Evidence shows that disadvantaged and vulnerable children suffer from poor outcomes across the four key domains of development from conception to 19. Children in school who are either a Child in Need, have a Special Education Need or Disability, or receive Free School Meals will do much worse than their peers. These domains are key drivers of later life chances, including long-term employment and health, and are fundamental to the creation of human capital for the economy and to build a strong Britain.

We already know that a child's experiences from conception to five play a critical role in their development, and that the early years represent a key opportunity for families, policymakers and the economy. However, we know that measurable gaps in outcomes between disadvantaged and vulnerable children and their better off peers can emerge early, before children are two years of age, are difficult and costly to close once open.

As children grow older and move into adolescence, the risks to them not only come from within their families but also the wider community. These include child criminal and sexual exploitation, gang involvement, county lines, and trafficking, as well as serious violence, and peer-on-peer abuse, and can take place in both physical and online spaces. These risks often co-occur and can be further exacerbated by a child or young person's own vulnerabilities, for example if they have a learning disability, or where they have already experienced adversity earlier in childhood.

There is evidence to show that a child's home environment, family stability and parent-child relationships, are central to children and young people's development and their success in life. Local and national services have a vital role to play in supporting families with this and reducing disparities. However, disadvantaged, and vulnerable families often experience significant difficulty as they interact with a complex service landscape and have to constantly 're-tell their story' to different services. Often professionals working in these services face practical barriers to working together as a team around the family, such as information sharing.

For families, there is too often no consistent public-facing point for access, assessment, and navigation of family services that directs them to the services across the myriad of needs they might have – such as maternity services, support for SEND, mental health, housing, parental support, and debt advice.

The Family Hubs approach, which is championed by Government, provides huge opportunity for local areas transforming their services. Family hubs are a way of joining up locally to improve access to services, the connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family

help. They bring together services for children of all ages, with a great Start for Life offer at their core. At the Budget, the Chancellor announced a £300 million package to transform services for parents and babies, carers and children in half of local authorities across England. Many local areas are already using a family hub model, in the process of transforming their services, or exploring doing so.

Innovations in digital and data provide opportunities to support local areas to develop their Family Hub or other integrated services offer. While the pandemic provides a challenging backdrop, it has also sharpened awareness of how some disadvantaged and vulnerable families risk being left behind and has encouraged local agencies to share information.

Outcomes

The Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project seeks to improve a wide range of cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes in disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people across the four domains of development to help achieve their potential and provide benefits throughout their lives.

The areas of development are:

- **Physical** – physical development involves physical health and obesity, sexual maturation and the presence or absence of a physical disability. Physical outcomes targeted by early intervention activities include improving birth outcomes, reducing the incidence of infectious diseases and decreasing obesity.
- **Intellectual** - intellectual development includes children and young people's acquisition of speech and language skills, the ability to read and write, numeracy capabilities and logical problem-solving. Positive intellectual development is strongly associated with a child's success in school and young people's entry into the workforce. Outcomes typically targeted by early intervention include performance on standardised tests, school achievement, and higher education and employment opportunities for young people once they leave school.
- **Social and emotional development** - social and emotional development is the process by which children and young people acquire the knowledge and skills to understand and manage their emotions, sexual identity, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Social and emotional development is highly associated with children and young people's ability to form positive relationships with others, increase pro-social behaviour, and reduce the risk of depression and other clinically diagnosed mental health problems.
- **Behavioural** - behavioural development involves children and young people's ability to monitor and regulate their own behaviour, their attention, and their impulses. Children and young people's self-regulatory skills are highly associated with their ability to form positive relationships with others, as well as their success

in school. Behavioural self-regulation difficulties during childhood are highly predictive of children and young people's involvement in criminal activity during the teenage years and adulthood. Behavioural outcomes frequently targeted by early intervention include reducing young people's antisocial behaviour and crime, violence and aggression at school, and affiliation with antisocial peers.

Appropriate and timely support for young people on their journey to adulthood is essential to ensure future health and wellbeing.

Objectives

We know that professionals working with children, young people and their families work incredibly hard and have developed and deployed much good practice. However, we are aware that a range of constraints mean that in many cases it is still difficult to engage families and meet their needs in a way that is integrated and personalised.

Family Hubs are a key approach that many areas have deployed, with encouraging signs. This project aims to use the opportunities created by digital and data to help give professionals the tools they need to collaborate more easily as a 'team around the family' in Family Hub models. We aim to do this in a way which is scalable and can be spread across other local areas. The information sharing strand aims to allow professionals to spend more high-quality time working with the families who need it most, and to have the information to hand to make high-quality decisions, and less time on administration and lower impact work – yielding better value for money and outcomes.

As part of this work, we will also want to engage with the partner LAs to explore a) how services are funded and their value for money, and b) the role that a Family Hub approach could play in the above, and more widely.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be a crucial component of the project from the beginning. The partner LAs will be expected to work together with DfE and our evaluation partner/s to carry out evaluation activity. This will require input from your teams and possibly information and data from your service providers locally.

3. Discovery, digital solutions, and delivery timeline

Discovery

In July 2021, the Family Hubs – Growing Up Well digital team partnered with Bristol City Council and Lancashire County Council to begin the discovery phase of the information sharing strand. The purpose of this phase was to understand how we might help professionals share information so that they can save time and help children and families receive the right support at the right time. The project goals were to identify and understand the pain points and user needs that professionals have around the sharing of family information between services; to develop an understanding of the challenges and opportunities LAs have encountered within digital transformation and migration to a family hub model; and identification of the areas where we can deliver the greatest impact to improve information sharing among professionals in a family hubs setting.

We worked closely with a range of professionals who are involved in non-statutory care, help, and support, such as education and school settings; family and group work practitioners; professionals who access and triage cases; and health professionals. Through this research, we developed a set of overarching user needs to summarise our findings:

- I need to build a complete picture of the family, so that I can offer support that best suits them.
- I need confidence that I am doing everything in my power to protect a vulnerable child or family.
- I need to feel certain that I have documented everything required so that I have met my obligations and can prove it.
- I need to understand what our local data is telling me, so that I can plan to support our families.

We identified two key pain points that have the potential to be developed into viable solutions to meet user needs and to further develop and test at the alpha stage of the project:

- It can be difficult to identify and get in touch with the right professionals to find out more about the family.
- There are vague requests for support with little contextual or background information, which then require follow up detective work. There is a lack of guidance or clarity around what a good request looks like.

Digital solutions

Following the successful discovery and alpha phases of the project, we have developed two information sharing solutions: *connecting professionals to each other* and *connect a*

family to support. We want to further develop these ideas with new local area partners who have a need for these solutions and who believe these solutions will be an upgrade to their existing practices, with a view to implementing them throughout the beta phase of the project.

Solution 1 – Connecting professionals to each other

Vision:

Our product *connecting professionals to each other* will provide the history of the interactions a child or family has had with child services, and how to contact the individuals who have worked with the child. It will provide just enough information to allow the next person working with the child to understand what has gone before. This is to allow for an informed decision on next steps, through rich conversations with experts who have interacted with the child. It is not intended to be a repository for case notes, evidence, plans, risk etc – this would conflate it with a case management system.

The product is anticipated to be:

- A timeline of when a child/family has been involved with a family hub and other services around a child.
- The type of interaction and when it occurred, for example a hospital visit
- Contact details of the previous healthcare, education, law enforcement, family professionals involved.
- This will initially be used by healthcare professionals and family support workers in the family hub setting in an LA.

From a technical perspective this will be a software development kit (SDK) containing the *connecting professionals to each other* interfaces and information display screens which you will need to host, configure, and embed into your existing systems; along with a set of data views and data connectors that draw the data required from your own data warehouse or data lake.

The source code would be provided as open source; an LA will be able to manage it and modify it as they require.

Solution 2 – Connect a family to support

Vision:

Our product *connect a family to support* is an online digital form which will allow professionals that interact with a vulnerable child a means to be able to request support from their LA.

The form will help professionals to unpack the issue at hand through providing a clear prompt structure, and support the LA experts with getting the request for support to the

right people. We anticipate this will help professionals in the LA's early help function who assess the form to make better informed decisions with less time chasing contacts for further information.

The product is anticipated to be:

- An online form, replacing the need to download word documents or pdfs.
- A set of multiple choice questions, relating the type of problem being faced. The questions will be dynamic based on the previous answer and designed to indicate the type of support required.
- The questions will prompt the user to look further than the initial presenting issue and to consider wider contextual factors. This will help to support a whole family model of working.
- A progress bar to show users how many questions they have left to complete.
- A mechanism to send the completed form directly to a LA.
- In the future, we would like to help support the ability to be able to save and continue, provide analytics to understand how the form is being used, and upload supporting evidence.

From a technical perspective this will be written guidance; details of form design; and a software development kit (SDK) containing software code that provides the form and handles the submission of the form offering options as to how the information captured by the form is delivered. A LA can use the SDK in the following ways:

- Host and configure the solution as an internal service for use by the LA and their users.
- Use the guidance and form design to understand what good looks like, they can then make changes to their existing forms as they wish.

The source code would be provided as open source; an LA will be able to manage it and modify it as they require.

Role of the Local Authority

We are looking to continue the partnership approach that the Department has taken with existing LA partners. Partners should ideally have completed or be in the process of moving to a family hubs model in their local area. At a minimum they must be actively taking steps to explore introducing a family hub model locally. LA partners should drive forward the project through further testing, implementing and embedding the solutions locally. We envisage this role will involve (non-exhaustive):

- Working closely with the DfE's Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project team (policy and digital delivery leads, user researchers, service designers and business analysts) during beta phase (including validation).

- Providing dedicated resource to act as an embedded member of the digital team, to lead and coordinate local delivery, and liaise with the team through meetings and other communication platforms (ie. Slack, Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Teams).
- Attend regular team meetings, such as daily stand-ups, fortnightly sprint planning meetings, catch-up meetings, fortnightly Show & Tells, as well as other ad-hoc meetings and engagements.
- Support DfE’s project team with stakeholder and user engagement, providing local contacts for research purposes and supporting recruitment activities. You will be expected to start this activity once you have been notified of your successful appointment.
- Engage in a beta phase (including validation) where you will be expected to test our prototypes and use local insights about users and services to improve them.
- Engage in the live phase of the project where you will be expected to continue to use the digital solution after the funding period has ended.
- Attend monthly governance meetings to discuss progress, next steps, and any challenges/ risks to delivery.
- Sharing local data where appropriate (local insights and best practice).
- Facilitating access to frontline professionals, such as family support workers and practitioners, midwives, health visitors, school nurses, family hub front door teams/ triaging staff etc.
- Engage with DfE’s in-house analytical teams and external evaluation partners, participating in local and national evaluation activity as required.
- Work closely with the National Centre for Family Hubs to produce information sharing guidance.
- Provide DfE with regular reporting on expenditure of grant funding.

Given the level of engagement and work required for a successful beta we expect dedicated resource to be allocated to the work above. See section 4 (funding).

Information sharing user need(s)

To ensure that partner LAs are able to run a successful beta phase (including validation), we are looking for LAs that meet our minimum user need(s) requirements.

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Definition</u>
The information sharing user needs identified are similar to your own.	You are able to clearly demonstrate that you have similar information sharing user needs to those identified in the discovery phase of the project (page 10).

A desire to implement and test either, or both solutions.	You are able to clearly demonstrate the need and desire to implement and test our information sharing solutions.
The solutions of <i>connecting professionals to each other</i> and <i>connect a family to support services</i> would be an upgrade to existing systems/practices.	You can demonstrate that you do not have an online <i>connecting professionals to each other</i> or a <i>connect a family to support</i> solutions and these solutions would be an improvement to your existing practices.

Technical specification

To ensure that partner LAs are able to run a successful beta phase (including validation), we are looking for LAs that meet a minimum technical specification. This section sets this out in further detail.

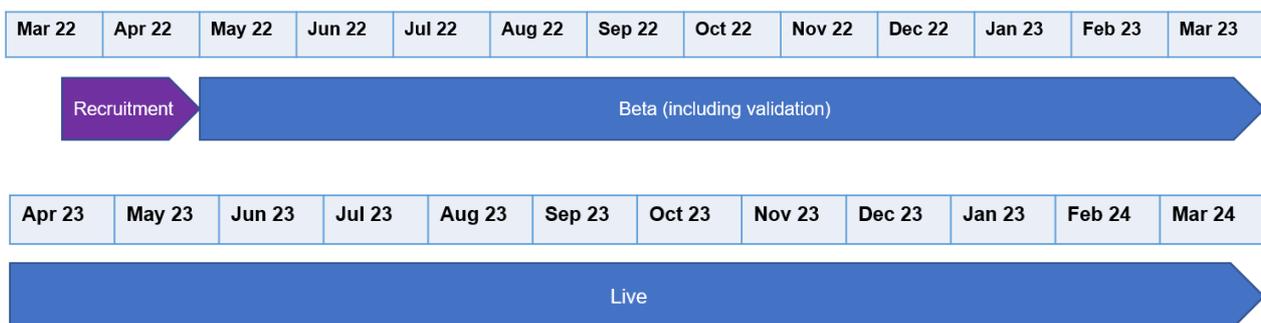
<u>General Criteria</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Hold a data maturity model of 1, 2, 3, or 4.	DLUHC's Data Maturity Survey is a self-assessment tool intended to help local areas better understand the importance of data in identifying hidden need, optimising services and support and efficiently evidencing successful family outcomes. Please identify which of these models is the closest fit to how you are using your programme data in your local authority.
You will provide committed staffing/resource	You are able to provide committed staffing/resource for the project and necessary skills/ expertise to deliver the project including key roles identified to leave the activity as well as other roles to support delivery. Roles may include relevant analytical, digital, and/or IT capabilities.

Connecting professionals to each other Criteria	Definition
You use software solutions in conjunction with a data storage solution	An example of a software solution would be a case management system with either an internal database or a connection to an

to manage cases with children, young people, and adults.	external database which house the data used by the case management system.
You have accessible data storage and/or you aggregate data from different departments across the LA or from external partners.	You have data storage used by existing software solutions, or you have a data warehouse or data lake that aggregates multiple data sources containing data about children, young people, or families into one place. Examples of data sources may be from health, education, police or front door domains.
You have the technical resource and infrastructure to host, install, configure, and manage any software solution or access to third party resources that can manage this for you.	The software provided will feature web interfaces that run within a browser, any software provided will need to be hosted on suitable infrastructure and configured to utilise your own data sources. There will be some technical work required to ensure that the data that the connecting professionals to each other requires is provided in a suitable format.

Connect a family to support Criteria	Definition
You have the technical resource and infrastructure to host, install, configure, and manage the online form or access to third party resources that can manage this for you.	The form provided will feature web interfaces that run within a web browser, any software provided will need to be hosted on suitable infrastructure and configured according to your needs.

Delivery timeline



4. Funding and Eligibility

Available Funding

Each LA will initially receive up to £10k to onboard and support staffing resource for the beta phase (including validation). This is subject to change and dependent on the length of time required. Subsequently, all LA partners will have access to a grant from the capacity and transformation fund (total fund worth £1.7m) to support their role and project activity. Allocation of this funding will be subject to costed plans based on the requirements for implementation .

Funding will only be allocated as required for successful completion of the project's objectives. We reserve the right to not issue the full funding pot.

How will the funding be used?

The beta phase for the information sharing work strand will focus on further developing, implementing and testing in situ two existing ideas: *connecting professionals to each other* and *connect a family to support*.

This work will be carried out by a mixed team comprising of the DfE Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project team, an identified LA lead and local stakeholders working together in partnership; with the LA using the grant funding to support resourcing. The beta phase will aim to test the two solutions already identified and stress-test locally to ensure it functions adequately and addresses local needs.

We anticipate that the funding is likely to be for the following purposes³:

- To test and implement our solutions and infrastructure that contributes to the project's objectives.
- To test and deploy other solutions, products, processes or staffing necessary to achieve the project's aims, this could include, but is not limited to:
 - Relevant workforce training e.g., to create new expertise, system familiarity or cultures.
 - Relevant staff capacity e.g., new strategic, digital or data staff to carry out change programmes.

³Not an exhaustive list and remains subject to change.

Who can submit an EOI?

Only the 152 top tier LAs may submit an EOI application to be considered for selection⁴. A maximum of one application form per LA can be submitted. Joint bids involving more than one LA will not be accepted.

Note that you may submit an application to work on one of the solutions as opposed to both. There will be an opportunity to express this preference in the application form.

The Family Hubs – Growing Up Well digital project is expressly concerned with the integration of services and reducing barriers between them and for families. Therefore, we expect work to be conducted in partnership by the relevant local organisations in participating areas using a multi-agency approach. However, for the purposes of administering funding, we expect the LA to take the leading role and ‘hold’ the funding.

The funding may then be transferred to other organisations to facilitate delivery of the project in a manner which will be agreed between DfE and the successful authority in the grant funding agreement.

Should my LA submit an EOI?

If the answer to the following questions is yes, then your LA is a likely a good candidate:

- ✓ Are the solutions (*connecting professionals to each other and connect a family to support*) a welcome upgrade to your local information sharing practices?
- ✓ Do you have the underlying technical infrastructure needed to make this possible?
- ✓ Could you secure strong multi-agency strategic buy-in to implementing and testing these solutions in your local area support the delivery of the project through beta phase (including validation)?
- ✓ Do you agree to join our Family Hubs – Growing Up Well LA co-design group?
- ✓ Do you see improving cognitive and non-cognitive development outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people from conception to age nineteen (up to 25 for SEND) as a priority in your area, and want to go further?
- ✓ Are you already: operating a family hub model, in the process of transformation, or exploring making this transition?

⁴ See here for the full list of 152 top tier LAs: [List of council in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671122/List_of_council_in_England.pdf). To note, we are using Metropolitan districts; London boroughs plus City of London; Unitary authorities plus the Isles of Scilly; and County councils.

5. Application Process

How to apply

The application period will open from Monday 21 March 2022 and will close at 23:59pm on Sunday 10 April 2022. Key dates and deadlines for the selection process are set out in the table below.

Milestones	Dates (subject to change)
Bid round for Round 3 opens	21 March 2022
Bid round for Round 3 closes	10 April 2022
Assessment of EOI applications	April 2022
LAs informed of outcome	April 2022
First funding instalment to successful LAs and commencement of beta phase (including validation)	April / May 2022
New LA partners announced by DfE (after local elections)	Summer 2022
Beta phase (including validation) to build and test solutions with users in partner LAs	May 2022 – March 2023
Live phase to continue to iterate and make improvements to the solutions with partner LAs	April 2023 – March 2024

Completing your application

Please complete the accompanying EOI application form to the best of your ability. Information on what is expected in each section of the form has been provided within the EOI form to support you in completing your EOI. Please make sure you refer to these prompts throughout to ensure you have addressed the questions fully.

A limit on the number of words is stated for each section where a text box is provided, any text that exceeds the stated limit will not be assessed. Please include the total number of words for each section at the bottom of each text box.

Sections marked with * are mandatory and must be completed in order for your application to be accepted. A maximum of one application form per LA can be submitted, and joint LA bids will not be accepted.

Submitting your application

Please email a single Word or PDF version of your completed application to **project.growingupwell@education.gov.uk**

Your 'LA name' followed by 'Family Hubs - Growing Up Well Round 3 EOI' should be included in the email "subject" field when submitting your application.

When you have sent the department your application form, we will confirm receipt of your application.

Deadline

The Department for Education must receive all completed applications by email by **23:59 on Sunday 10 April 2022**.

The Department will not be able to consider applications that miss this deadline as to do so would be to unfairly discriminate against those applicants who submitted their application within the allowed timescale.

Questions and FAQ

If you have any questions about your expression of interest to the Family Hubs – Growing Up Well local area partner opportunity, please contact us at the following email address: project.growingupwell@education.gov.uk. The deadline for submitting questions is **Thursday 7 April 2022**. An updated **FAQ** will be published on the [National Centre for Family Hubs](#) website every Thursday afternoon throughout the application window.

Webinar

The Family Hubs – Growing Up Well project team will be running a webinar on 29 March to provide local authorities with further details about: the project and the opportunity to get involved, funding, digital delivery and also run through prototypes demonstrations of the digital products. Further information on the webinar timing and how to join can be accessed on the [National Centre for Family Hubs website](#).

6. Assessing the application

We are seeking to recruit up to six local area partners with the following characteristics:

- **Information sharing user need(s)** – Have identified that the user needs outlined on page 10 are likely similar to their own; have a desire to implement and test either, or both (preferred), solutions, and can demonstrate they would be an upgrade to existing systems/practices.
- **Technical infrastructure and resource** – Must meet the minimum technical criteria as set out in stage 1 of the scoring criteria (see section below);
- **High levels of population need:** Applications will be ranked using the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Indices (IDACI) – Average Rank⁵ metric as set out in stage 2 of the scoring criteria (see section below).

The Assessment Panel

All eligible EOIs will be sifted by a mixed policy and digital team within the Department for Education. DfE reserve the right to contact shortlisted LAs to clarify aspects of their application before recommendations are made. DfE reserves the right to make the final decision on which LAs are successful and the distribution of any funding.

All completed EOIs will be assessed alongside published national and local data, and wider intelligence from LA engagement with DfE directly or through other agencies including the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC); Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC); Office for Health Inequalities and Disparities (OHID).

Scoring Criteria

The following factors will be used when considering applications:

Stage 1: Pass or Fail Qualifying

To be eligible for funding, EOIs must pass all the qualifying criteria (on a yes/no basis) listed below to proceed to the assessment phase (Stage 2).

⁵ [English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) – (File 11)

	Checklist	
1	Top tier LA – Have confirmed that you are a top tier LA (top tier LAs include Metropolitan districts; London borough’s plus the City of London; Unitary authorities plus the Isles of Scilly; and County councils).	
2	Information sharing user need(s) – Have identified that the user needs outlined on page 10 are likely similar to your own; have a desire to implement and test either, or both (preferred), solutions, and can demonstrate they would be an upgrade to existing systems/practices.	
3	<p>Technical infrastructure and resource – Have identified that you hold a data maturity model of 1, 2, 3 or 4 and that you will provide committed staffing/resource.</p> <p>Connecting professionals to each other – Have identified that you use software solutions in conjunction with a data storage solution to manage cases with children, young people, and adults; have accessible data storage and/or you aggregate data from different departments across the LA or from external partners; have the technical resource and infrastructure to host, install, configure, and manage any software solution or access to third party resources that can manage this for you.</p> <p>Connect a family to support – Have identified that you have the technical resource and infrastructure to host, install, configure, and manage the online form or access to third party resources that can manage this for you.</p>	
4	Senior stakeholders buy-in: your LA must provide a declaration where the bidding officer indicates that they have secured sign-off from all senior multi-agency stakeholders for the project, including the Director of Children’s services, Director of Public Health, Local Health and Wellbeing Board and Senior Information Security Officer(s) (or equivalent) for all organisations represented confirming their commitment to the project.	
5	Local digital declaration: this declaration affirms your LA’s ambition to bring local public services into the internet age, and your commitments to realising it. Your LA must have signed the declaration or commit to sign it before the project commences.	
6	Funding information: your LA must agree to share information with the Family Hubs – Growing Up Well team on how existing funding is used to deliver services for families. This will inform the development of digital and data solutions as well as our broader understanding of how services can be delivered in a way which creates values for money.	

Stage 2: Scoring methodology

LAs will be ranked using the following process:

Level of need

LAs will be ranked using the IDACI – Average Rank metric⁶. IDACI shows the proportion of children in each area that live in families that are income deprived; those that are in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Universal Credit (where no adult is in 'Working – no requirements' conditionality regime), Pension Credit Guarantee or Child Tax Credit below a given threshold.

The Average Rank summary identifies the average level of deprivation in the LA, taking into account all Lower-layer Super Output Areas in the area.

LAs with the highest IDACI – Average Rank score will score the highest. This will allow us to prioritise areas with large proportions of deprived children and who, all things being equal, would benefit most from the project.

The 15 highest scoring applications will proceed to stage 3, modified by the following two factors:

Rurality

To ensure that our information sharing solutions work in all areas of the country, and to provide a balance to the other LA partners on the wider Family Hubs – Growing Up Well programme, we will guarantee that at least 20% of LAs proceeding to stage 3 of the assessment process are rural. This includes those LAs that are classified as 'predominantly rural' or 'urban with significant rural'.

Workstrand preference

We have provided LAs the opportunity to participate in both information sharing work strands as well as the option to state a preference for working on one strand over the other. To make sure there are enough bids for the two work strands, we will bring in a minimum of 50% of LAs per work strand to proceed to stage 3 of the assessment process. LAs which apply for both strands will count towards both for these purposes.

⁶ [English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019) – (File 11)

Stage 3: Contextual Factors

A mixed policy and digital team within the Department for Education will examine the 15 highest scoring applications with consideration to the following contextual factors to determine strategic fit:

- Evidence of relevant information sharing user need(s)
- Evidence of technical infrastructure and resource requirements
- Willingness/ability to test and implement both digital solutions
- Geographic and demographic balance
- Rural and urban classification
- Child population and potential reach of benefits for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people.
- Current and future involvement in Government- and non-Government funded programmes/projects, including but not limited to:
 - Local digital and data transformation programmes – i.e. Shared Outcome Fund projects (e.g. DLUHC Local Data Accelerator), NHSx Digital Transformation programme, NESTA Early Years Innovation Partnership etc. (non-exhaustive)
 - Major intervention programmes– i.e. DfE Opportunity Area programme, MHCLG Supporting Families programme, Reducing Parental Conflict Programme, The National Lottery’s Better Start Fund, Five to Thrive etc. (non-exhaustive)
- Family Hubs – i.e., whether the LA considers itself to be running/transforming to/exploring a Family Hub model, uses Family Hub branding or integrates services for children and young people aged conception to 19 (and up to 25 with SEND).

After considering these contextual factors, the panel will determine which applications will be recommended to Ministers to be successful. DfE reserve the right to contact shortlisted LAs to clarify aspects of their application before recommendations are made. DfE Ministers reserve the right to make the final decision on which LAs are successful.

7. Next steps

What happens if your application is successful?

We will inform you via email if your application is successful or not. We expect this to be in late April/ early May 2022. If your application is successful an award letter will be sent directly to the named bidding officer on the application, together with an acceptance form. At this time, we will also send a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) setting out the expectations around funding. The GFA must be signed by the DCS, DPH or equivalent in the organisation. This will demonstrate that they agree to the requirements of the funding.

Drawing of funding

We will make payments to LAs through a Section 14 grant. All grants will be subject to standard [DfE grant terms and conditions](#). The successful LAs will receive an initial instalment of up to £10k to facilitate engagement in the betaphase (including validation) of the project. This funding is subject to change, depending on the length of time required. We expect the allocation of funding for future project phases to be determined as the project progresses past initial validation.

Local Elections

Due to local elections 2022, the DfE will be placing an embargo on all LAs from publicly disclosing their application, and successful LAs from publicly disclosing their partnership with the Department, until after the local elections in summer 2022. The DfE will announce successful LAs in the summer 2022. Failure to adhere to this may result in your application being withdrawn from this process or funding terminated without appeal.



Department
for Education

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