

Managing your Parent Carer Participation Grant

And other useful tips to help you manage the day to day running of your forum

Introduction

In order to help you to manage your grant effectively during the course of the year, we have produced the following guide which is sent out by the grants team with the confirmation that your grant application for 2020-2021 has been successful.

We suggest that you print out a copy of this document and place it in a ring binder to act as a handy reference point through the year and to add information to it as and when required.

The guide covers how to manage your forum's records; how to organise your invoices; along with practical advice and tips on expenses claim forms, grant variations, good governance, and more.

Some of the information contained below may appear in the grant application, monitoring guidance or terms and responsibilities of grant, but here it is all in one document that will assist your forum with day to day matters, and to help you to manage your grant effectively. If you refer to the document regularly, it will help you to have the right information prepared ahead of the grant monitoring in April 2021, and to deal with other situations as and when they arise.

This guide is intended to complement, and not replace the advice of your Parent Carer Participation Advisor. If you have any queries or are unsure of anything, please contact your Advisor or a member of the grants team for further personalised support.



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Pre-committing grant spend

You should not commit to any expenditure of the grant in 2020-2021 until you have received confirmation from Contact that your application has been approved and processed for payment. You should also confirm that grant money has been received into the specified account before committing to purchase any goods or services. If you do commit expenditure and you are not successful in your grant application, you will not be able to make a claim for the payment to Contact and you will be liable for any costs incurred.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION for forums with new or different bank accounts:

Due diligence checks by the Department for Education on new bank accounts may delay receipt of parent carer participation grant by up to 6 weeks - if your parent carer forum changed its bank account since submitting the 2019-20 grant application, is a new parent carer forum, or has changed grant host, your forum will have completed a proforma which was returned to the DfE with the new account details. If this was done several weeks before submitting your grant application, these checks may be underway, or be complete and the delay will be minimal. For further information or a progress report, please contact the grants team - pcfgrants@contact.org.uk.



Good record keeping

In order to be able to demonstrate how the grant has been spent during 2020-2021, we recommend that you keep a record or diary of your forum's activity (or outputs) to refer to at the end of the year for grant monitoring purposes, either in a shared folder, or nominate one person in your forum who collates information. This can include things like events, meetings, consultations, workshops, training, attendance at regional network meetings as well as details of strategic meetings or works groups attended.

To track the outcomes (the difference you made through your activities) you should collect the following kinds of information:

Quantitative information

The number of:

- parents attending events/conferences/training hosted by the forum or other organisations
- new members joining the forum
- visits to your website/social media
- parent representatives
- strategic groups with parent representatives
- consultations the forum has taken part in, and the topic
- parents responding to surveys
- newsletters/bulletins sent out - including the number distributed

Qualitative information

- details about any meetings, events, consultations, workshops, or training that the forum has hosted, joint funded or attended and the difference that they made to the forum; to services; and to families (outcomes)
- feedback from parents about your activities
- feedback from LA Officers, CCG, about parental involvement and co-production – what difference they think it's making
- feedback from parent representatives on strategic groups about the impact they've had and where they have successfully influenced decision making
- the impact of involvement on individual parents – such as parents finding work, building skills/confidence – the difference their involvement makes for themselves (e.g. better able to understand services and decision making) and other families, changes to services
- key challenges, changes and successes
- feedback from your wider membership about your forum's work and impact
- issues raised by parents – feedback from surveys and activities



Changes of signatory or key officers during the grant period

It is not unusual for there to be changes of key officers at election times, when people step down from roles naturally, or at other times when there have been particular challenges in forums.

You should follow the handover advice in this guide and notify your Parent Carer Participation Advisor as soon as you become aware that there is likely to be a change of Officer so that we can amend our records. If an outgoing Officer of the forum was also the signatory on the Conditions of Grant form, a new form will need to be completed by another forum Officer – the grants team can help to facilitate this.

All outgoing Officers and Committee Members remain responsible for ensuring that the change of signatories is completed with the bank in a timely manner, and for handing over:

- all forum equipment and resources
- policies and procedures
- usernames and passwords including those for laptops, social media, website etc.
- accounts, chequebooks, bank statements, invoices etc.
- all information relating to the DfE grant and any other funding including invoices and proofs for the grant spend
- any other forum information
- any office or storage keys
- any data that you hold about members must remain securely with the forum and comply with GDPR data processing regulations after May 2018
- Further information about GDPR and the lawful basis for processing can be found here: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/#ib3>

Outgoing Officers or Committee Members have a duty to return any information belonging to the forum (such as accounts, financial information or proofs of expenditure, claims and invoices, database, governance documents, minutes of meetings, copies of grant forms etc.) that they hold either electronically or in hard copy.

Until a formal handover has taken place, the outgoing Officer will remain responsible for any forum equipment, information, data, resources or grant money that they are in possession of.

If there are any personal conflicts or other circumstances which are likely to hamper a successful handover, the outgoing applicant/grant holder or Officer should get in touch with their Parent Carer Participation Advisor to discuss a way forward.



Transferring the grant

During the course of the grant period, you may request to transfer the grant to another grant holding organisation. It's also possible that the forum may request to have the grant money transferred to them from a grant holder. In this case, a new Conditions of Grant form must be completed and signed. An official handover will take place, the organisation 'handing over' will need to provide a mid-year monitoring account and POEs for the grant spend so far; these will be calculated and if approved, confirmed in a letter to the original grant holder. This sign off letter must be received before any money is transferred. Both parties must be in agreement before the new grant holder receives the remaining grant monies and accepts responsibility for the grant and for submitting the grant monitoring. The new grant holder must receive the amount stipulated in the letter from Contact.

The same process applies if a new forum/grant holder takes over from a folded forum or past grant holder at the beginning of a new financial year and the previous grant holder was expecting to claim the grant and has spent some of the under spend from the previous year. A monitoring account would need to be approved before a handover of any remaining under spend can be transferred to the new forum/grant holder. We strongly advise that any under spend from the previous year's grant should not be utilised until the following year's grant is officially approved as there is a risk that unapproved spend may result in the forum having to pay money back to the DfE.



Advice for Treasurers

We advise that your Treasurer keeps all invoices, receipts, expenses and remuneration claim forms, and other proofs of expenditure securely in one place and adds to these through the year. It will help to keep a running total throughout the year to reconcile against agreed budget headings. It may also be useful to colour code the expenditure for different budget headings and to reference the proofs in chronological order. Using the grant budget heading as a reference may also help e.g. Infrastructure – your April phone bill might be referenced as INF1. Contact’s budget spreadsheet may help you to do this, located on this [page](#).

If your forum’s Treasurer is unsure of the requirements of their role, it is important to seek guidance or support from your Parent Carer Participation Advisor. The forum can also use the DfE grant to fund training for any Committee Member to help them to understand their role and responsibilities.

Gathering proofs of expenditure during the course of the year along with the evidence of work done (your outputs and outcomes), will make the monitoring process easier. It will also help to identify any areas of spend where projected, and actual spend differ.

Please note that the Treasurer needs to ensure that the forum operates and manages their finances, expenses and remuneration in line with the forum’s financial control policy, and any expenses or remuneration policies. See Contact’s webinar for Treasurers for more information on the role and what it entails. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cr3wtJUoK0Q>



General points for grant accounting and usage

Accountancy or Auditing Services

If the forum does not have a Treasurer who is confident to take on the day to day running of the forum's accounts, it is an acceptable use of the grant to have your forum's accounts prepared or checked by a qualified accountant or auditor.

Forums can also use the grant to pay another organisation or individual to manage their accounts. They, or your Treasurer, may present regular reports to the committee so that the forum understands how much of the grant has spent; has been committed to spend; and how much is left in your bank account, or is uncommitted grant funding left to spend.

It is the forum's responsibility to ensure that their accountant understands the format for reporting on the grant, and also the Conditions of Grant.



Grant spend and current financial year

The grant is awarded for the purchase of goods, or funding of activities or services which occur in the financial year 2020-2021. This means that goods must be purchased, or the activities or services happen, no earlier than 1st April 2020, and no later than 31st March 2021. The grant cannot be spent to fund activities or services which will occur **after** 31st March 2021, unless a recurring subscription, for example for Antivirus protection or MS Office falls across two financial years; or if the forum is invoiced late for an event. This is illustrated by the examples below:

Example: you hold an event in early March 2021, but the venue does not invoice you until late April. This can be paid for by the grant, as it is the date when the service or activity happened which matters, not the date of invoicing. This is the principle of accrued payment. An accrued payment is where a payment is recognised in the accounts before the payment is made.

Example: your forum's MS Office annual subscription is due at the end of January. It is a once per year payment that recurs each year at the same time. This is an acceptable purchase using the current year's grant despite much of the period covered being in the following financial year.

We will not be able to accept proofs of expenditure that fall outside the correct financial year unless there are genuine extenuating circumstances, such as an event arranged for March which was postponed by a trainer or venue, which was outside of the forum's control. In such cases, please inform your Parent Carer Participation Advisor as soon as possible and rearrange for the activity to go ahead as close to the correct financial year as possible as you would still need to be able to account for this activity in your grant monitoring return which is due at the end of April.

Any DfE grant money which has not been spent by 31st March 2021 ('the underspend') must remain unspent by the forum from 1st April 2021, until the forum is advised that their grant application for 2021-22 has been approved. If the forum does not make a grant application for 2021-22, or their grant application is not approved, the forum would have to return the underspend to the DfE or their contracted partner (Contact). It is a risk for any forum to spend under spend before they have an approved grant application for the following year.



Best Value

It is a condition of the grant that parent carer forums obtain best value for money when they are buying goods and services. Your forum should obtain at least three quotations for high value goods or services. The stipulated threshold amount will be detailed in your financial control policy; you should follow your policy to ensure best value. You need to consider value from a quality perspective, as well as cost effectiveness. If you have any concerns, please contact your Parent Carer Participation Advisor.

There may be times when you look to buy goods or services from a committee member, a family member, or close friend – in this instance the person with the interest should not be part of any discussion or decision making around this (Conflict of Interest). Steering group members should consider their skills, knowledge, experience and expertise in this area and make an objective decision which is in the best interests of the forum. The decision should be made for the right reasons, including best value, and not be based on whether the individual would be unhappy if their services were not used.



Fraud awareness

The DfE parent carer participation grant utilises public money, and as such there need to be certain safeguards in place to protect against misuse of the money, or fraud. As part of the grant application and monitoring process, we will conduct due diligence checks to minimise the risks and to protect against fraud or misuse of the grant. We also check for evidence of fraud as part of the grant monitoring process.

By accepting the parent carer participation grant, forums are legally obliged to spend the grant in accordance with the Conditions of Grant.

In the grant application, the applicant and grant holder (if different, both) signed a declaration that stated:

'I hereby confirm that the information contained in this grant application is true to the best of my knowledge.

I confirm that the grant will be used for the intended and approved purposes; and that I will not knowingly misuse information or funding.

I understand that it is my responsibility to notify Contact of any changes which may affect the grant award. I agree to supply Contact with full monitoring information by the set deadline.

I understand that I am liable to prosecution and the recovery of funds should fraud be proven.

I/we understand that if fraud is suspected or proven, Contact may share information with our other funders and the DfE.

If I/we suspect that fraud has been committed, I/we have a duty to report my/our suspicions to Action Fraud at <http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/> or call 0300 123 2040' and inform Contact.

When we assessed your application, we took into account your history with the grant such as the ability to meet deadlines, the quality of monitoring submitted, any past missing proofs of expenditure, or proofs which don't meet the requirements set out in the monitoring guidance and in this document. This helps us to assess any risk associated with the awarding of the grant. We also asked for details of any other funding that your forum receives to support parent carer participation so that we are aware of the potential for increased risk.

If your forum does have other sources of funding, you are advised to keep the accounting completely separate from your parent carer participation grant. This will minimise the risk of double accounting or of any duplication between the grants. If you part fund activities from your parent carer participation grant along with money from another funder, you must indicate clearly what proportion of your invoice you are submitting in your grant monitoring. If you require advice on this, please contact your Parent Carer Participation Advisor.

If for any reason your forum's grant monitoring from the previous year cannot be signed off, the forum will not be awarded a further grant. Forum officers may be asked to sign a monitoring declaration to confirm that the money has been spent in line with the Conditions of Grant and that forum officers have not



committed any fraud or deception. If serious financial malpractice is identified at any stage, including fraud or money laundering, the DfE may take steps to recover the grant, or notify the Police. If fraud is suspected, or proven, Contact may need to share information with other funders, if there are any.

If you become aware of any misuse of the grant money or suspect fraud, you have a duty to report this to Action Fraud at <http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/> or call 0300 123 2040 and to Contact..

Contact has a new webpage with useful tips and resources on fraud for forums: <https://contact.org.uk/get-involved/parent-carer-participation/fraud-advice-for-parent-carer-forums/>



Grant variations: changes to approved activity

Even though your grant application has been approved, it is worth remembering that your forum's priorities and focus may change during the year. Your grant activity may vary because you wish or need to change what you wanted to do. You no longer need to fill in a grant variation form, but any variations you make **must** meet the Conditions of Grant. If you are in any doubt whether your proposed variation will meet the Conditions of Grant, contact your Parent Carer Participation Advisor. If your Advisor confirms that the variation fits the grant conditions, you may amend your forum's spend and account for this amended spend in your grant monitoring in April 2021. **If you do not seek clarification that your varied activity falls within the conditions of grant, there is a risk that parts of your grant monitoring may not be approved, and money may be recouped from the grant holder.** If in any doubt, speak to your Advisor **before** amending your plans.



What the grant can be used for:

If your proposed activity was open ended, or if you decide that a grant variation is necessary during the course of the year, please remember that by accepting the parent carer participation grant you agreed to spend the grant money on activities such as those listed below. Note, this is not an exhaustive list:

- activity which supports the development of collective parent carer participation in the local area
- activity which strengthens the forum's membership or increases its reach and inclusivity across all disabilities and SEN
- outreach activities to include parent carers from seldom heard communities
- engagement events whether these are solely organised by the forum or in partnership with other organisations – make sure you explain the outcomes for parent carer participation
- day to day running costs of the forum including – a wage to support an administrator or development worker (up to 50% of the forum's **total** grant spend); office space; stationery; IT equipment; accounting; phone and broadband costs; insurance; parent carer expenses; parent carer remuneration for reps who attend strategic meetings
- website development and website hosting – the updating of websites and social media may be considered as part of staffing costs
- information, marketing, promotion, branding, publicity and resources
- one-off commissioned work on the forum's website, on a consultation or training
- events with a participation focus
- to part-fund Information Days or co-produced events with other organisations (such as SENDIASS, Carers organisations or the Local Authority) as long as there is participation content and outreach
- attendance or stands at other events where you might attract new members to the forum
- capacity building and outreach to seldom heard groups
- paying associates, consultants or trainers, providing forum focus days to develop the forum's governance, to enable the forum to plan and develop more effectively, training to support the involvement of the wider parent carer group, or support the development of the decision-making group of parents.

If you are in any doubt as to what the grant can or cannot fund, or if you have an innovative or unusual idea that you think might benefit the forum and are not sure whether your intended activity fits the Conditions of Grant, please check with your Parent Carer Participation Advisor before going ahead.



What the grant cannot be used for:

The purpose of the grant is to strengthen parent participation. Therefore, the grant **cannot** be used:

- to fund activities which are the responsibility of the local authority or other body. During the course of your forum work you may identify a need for a particular service, publication, activity or facility. It is not within the scope of this grant to fund this – the forum should use the evidence they have collected through consultations to discuss with commissioners and service providers and work with them to make decisions about next steps
- to purchase alcohol
- to pay for parent carers' involvement in shaping individual care packages for their own children
- to develop forums which pursue the resolution of individual parent carer problems or concerns regarding their own child
- for the development of parent carer forums which are exclusive to one service for disabled children (for example a forum on education issues, or short breaks services)
- to fund support groups or advocacy
- to fund political, religious, campaigning or lobbying activities
- to pay for training in relation to impairment specific issues, for example autism, cerebral palsy, Down's Syndrome unless you can demonstrate that this is an identified need or gap in your membership and that putting on a particular activity may help you widen participation. Please speak to your Parent Carer Participation Advisor to discuss this
- to pay for parking fines or other fines
- to fund training for staff in a host organisation unless this has been agreed with the Advisor prior to the training taking place.

If in any doubt as to whether your proposed activity will meet the Conditions of Grant, speak to your Advisor.



Different types of payments to individuals

Individuals who undertake work for the forum can be paid or recompensed in a number of different ways. This section explains the difference between paying a salary or wage; payment as a professional fee; remuneration as a parent carer; and parent carer expenses.

Salary and wage costs

Up to 50% of the grant can be used to fund the costs associated with organising and running the forum, including the development of participation and outreach. By wage or salary, we mean when someone works a regular or set number of hours for the forum which would constitute contracted employment or self-employment. Administrative or co-ordinating tasks may be undertaken by employees; people who are self-employed; or by parents who are being remunerated on an ad hoc basis (see below for more information on parent remuneration). Please seek specialist advice where a parent is receiving remuneration to provide ongoing services as this may be regarded as a contract of employment.

See the Contact Parent Participation webinar on employing staff, working with volunteers and remuneration or contact HMRC, ACAS or DWP prior to making payments, to seek advice.

Fees and costs for professional services

The grant can be used for fees and costs for professional services, where they are for services or activities which strengthen parent participation e.g. redesigning a website, running a consultation, or a training event. These costs are not included in the 50% limit for administrative and co-ordination costs.

These costs may be a contribution to an individual's salary if it is clear that a professional service has been provided. You will need to be able to demonstrate best value, so please see additional best value guidance (within the conditions of grant) and ensure that you obtain at least 3 quotes before committing resources to a particular project over the value set in your financial control policy.

If a parent carer from your forum (either officer, steering group member or wider member) is going to be the provider of these services, please also ensure that you have followed your Conflict of Interest policy, or where this does not exist, good practice in ensuring that the person concerned is not involved in any discussion or decision about that service. The decision needs to be minuted, and the forum should have systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the service.

Parent carer remuneration

The grant can be used to remunerate parents for activity that strengthens parent participation, e.g. if they are representing the forum on a strategic decision-making board/work stream or other ad-hoc activities. Your forum should have a clear policy about paying expenses and remuneration which details the kind of activities that are remunerated, and those activities which are unpaid voluntary roles, such as being a steering group member. Talk to your Parent Carer Participation Advisor about any questions or concerns you have.



If your forum is remunerating parents for carrying out administrative or other tasks on a regular basis this would come under **staffing, and not remuneration** - you will need to gain additional advice about whether this is likely to be considered a contract of employment by HMRC. If so, think about whether this would be better done by someone as a paid employee, or on a self-employed basis. Individuals will need to consider the implications on benefits, tax liabilities and other entitlements. This would also come under the 50% of grant rule. If a member of forum staff paid through payroll for their forum role also receives remuneration for representing the forum on strategic groups, the forum will need to provide an authorised account of the strategic meetings attended, dates, time and hourly rate so that this can be differentiated from their paid role.

If staff paid on a self-employed basis also carry out strategic work representing the forum, they would invoice form and outline the information below. All other remuneration claims from parent carers not employed by the forum should be via claim forms which also include the information below:

- Date of invoice/claim
- Name, full postal address, telephone number including landline (if they have one), and email address of claimant
- Date of activity
- Details of activity, including purpose and venue e.g. transitions work stream meeting, Pool Lane Resource Centre, My Town.
- Signature of the person claiming to confirm that the activity was on behalf of the forum
- Signature of the forum officer approving the claim
- Amount claimed for each activity
- Total claimed for all activities

Parent carers **should not** be paid until they have submitted either an invoice or claim form as above which has then been checked and authorised by an approving forum Officer. Some forums also make it a condition of remunerating parents who sit on strategic boards that they submit a feedback sheet on the meeting before they will be paid.

The forum officer approving the claim should **never** sign off their own claims, or sign cheques for their own claims or any claims for their spouse, partner or relative. Please talk to your Parent Carer Participation Advisor for advice on resolving any issues around this.

If remuneration claims do not meet the requirements (as set out above) when you submit your grant monitoring, they may not be accepted. We have included a remuneration claim form template on our parent carer participation web pages of the Contact website [here](#).

Further information about making payments to volunteers is available on the links below.

[Volunteer payments - Tax and National Insurance considerations for parent carer forums.](#)



[Co-production and participation: paying people who receive benefits from the Social Care Institute of Excellence, 2019.](#)

Parent carers who are unsure if receiving remuneration will impact on their benefits or tax liabilities can phone the Contact Freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555 for personalised advice.

Parent carer expenses

Parent carer expenses are different to parent carer remuneration. Expenses are out of pocket expenses incurred when on forum activity or when representing the forum in strategic meetings and can include reasonable travel expenses, childcare, meals when away from home on forum business, or payments for telephone or printer cartridges, stationery etc. Payment of expenses must be in line with your forum's expenses policy and decisions and must also follow the guidance below.

All claims for expenses should be submitted on an expense claim form, which as a minimum, should contain the following information:

- date of the claim
- name, address and phone numbers/emails of the claimant
- date of the activity
- details of the activity
- if travel expenses – where from and to – if it was a return journey etc.
- amount of mileage for the journey
- signature of the claimant to confirm that the expenses were incurred on forum business
- signature of the forum Officer approving the claim
- attach receipts for everything other than mileage - such as bus fares, taxi fares etc.

If the claimant has lost a receipt, you should refer to your Financial Control Policy to decide whether you will allow the expense and should indicate on the form where this is the case. When assessing the grant monitoring, Contact will not approve payments with lost receipts which total more than £10 - unless there are exceptional circumstances, or additional proof of expenditure is supplied.

No expenses should be paid out in advance, or without appropriate proofs of expenditure i.e. receipts for train tickets or parking tickets. Petrol receipts are not acceptable; mileage should be claimed at the agreed rate, in accordance with your expenses policy and submitted on a claim form.

Expenses submitted to Contact from receipt books, stubs or handwritten on pieces of paper may be rejected in the grant monitoring process and classed as under spend to be deducted from the following year's grant.

We have provided a template expenses claim form on the parent participation grant pages [here](#). Further guidance on the definition of parent carer expenses, and how to manage them, can be found in the Parent Carer Forum handbook [here](#).



In May 2018 new General Data Protection Regulations came into effect which parent carer forums must adhere to when holding or processing the data of individuals. Forums will need to be clear to cover GDPR on their expense claim forms relating to the DfE grant, – there is a lawful basis for collecting and holding this data and in sharing it with Contact, the DfE’s contracted partner administering the grant. In this instance, processing is necessary to ‘exercise a function of a ministerial department and for the exercise of a function of a public nature that is in the public interest’. Individuals need to consent to sharing their data with Contact and the DfE, and to understand that it is a requirement of the grant. Such data may include their name, address, telephone number, emails address, national insurance number, payroll or employee number, or bank details.



Events

Engagement events to encourage new members

We want to encourage forums to make participation an enjoyable experience and recognise that forums need to put on a range of activities that will encourage the participation of new members and hard to reach groups. The outputs and outcomes for events should indicate how, and in what way, parent carer participation or the forum will be strengthened or enhanced through these activities. There will need to be solid outcomes relating to participation for each activity that your forum undertakes.

The grant **cannot** be used to fund fun days, social activity, sports or leisure events where this is the sole focus. However, such events are acceptable in specific contexts, where the forum is being promoted e.g. for outreach including reaching out to seldom heard communities, consultation, recruiting new forum members, building trust and confidence in the forum through getting to know parents and enabling parents to get to know the forum and its members; or where the forum has a stand or presence at an event at which parent carers will be present and they may attract new members to the forum. **If in doubt**, check with your Parent Carer Participation Advisor.

Costs relating to the National Event

It is strongly recommended that you include costs for the annual Parent Carer Participation National Event within your grant application (date and location for 2020 cannot be confirmed at present due to the Covid-19 pandemic and uncertainty around this). You should allow for travel and accommodation for one or two forum members. The event itself will be free. If you do not allow for this, it will be possible to vary the grant spend later in the year as this activity fits the conditions of grant, however, there may be another activity you may not get to complete as a result of this. There may also be the opportunity to apply for a Discretionary Grant to cover the cost of the annual event, if your forum does not include this in their main grant application.



Documenting your 2020-21 spend

Proofs of expenditure: examples of acceptable and unacceptable proofs of expenditure.

Acceptable proofs of expenditure
Invoices which have name, address, phone number of provider, date of invoice, date and details of work, service or product, total amount claimed, name and address of forum who the invoice should be made out to, or to grant holding organisation.
Expenses claim forms which give all the information outlined in this guidance below and on our template, and that have been signed as approved by a different officer of the forum who is not a spouse, partner or relative.
Remuneration claim forms or invoices which give us the full information needed as outlined in this guidance and our online template which have been signed as approved by a different forum officer who is not a spouse, partner or relative.
Legitimate receipts or travel tickets from the correct financial year i.e. between 1 st April 2020 up to and including 31 st March 2021, that are legible, and we are able to read.
Pay slips or payroll extracts – the monitoring form must outline how the work done strengthens participation with clear outputs and outcomes for their work
Invoices as above made out to the grant applicant or holding organisation.
Recharges and internal invoices from the grant holding organisation have to show what the forum received for the money they were charged e.g. staffing support, payroll, infrastructure costs must be broken down or itemised with evidence of outputs and outcomes which strengthen the forum or participation demonstrated in the form narrative
Bank statements accompanied with copies of cashed cheques (which you can obtain from your bank – please note you may have to give them a lot of notice to supply this). This will only be an acceptable proof in particular exceptional circumstances, and in agreement with the Parent Carer Participation Advisor.
Any of the above invoices, receipts, claim forms etc. which show the percentage of expenditure claimed against the participation grant (as opposed to another funding stream). Where a proportion of expenditure on an item is from another funding stream, it is especially important that the parent carer participation element is demonstrated to have contributed to outputs and outcomes which strengthen participation.
Unacceptable proofs of expenditure
Invoices or expense claims with limited information , or expense claims that have been signed off by the person claiming them.



Statements or delivery notes from a provider, or quotations for work not yet carried out .
Receipts or invoices from the wrong financial year (except by prior agreement if a service spans two financial years) i.e. before 1 st April 2020 or after 31 st March 2021.
Receipts with missing information, no date, or illegible information .
Petty cash vouchers or receipts for petrol i.e. without expense claim forms showing mileage.
Parking fines or any other fines . These are never acceptable.
Any expenditure for alcohol .
Pay slips or payroll extracts for salary costs of officers or practitioners from an organisation where there is no additional evidence that the work they did strengthened participation, or without clear outputs and outcomes for work – or did not include a breakdown of remuneration for strategic work paid via payroll.
Invoices or internal recharges from the grant holding organisation not backed up with other evidence of spend , or evidence of outputs and outcomes which strengthen participation.
Invoices/receipts which have been fully claimed against another source from a different funder.

If unacceptable proofs of expenditure accompany your grant monitoring form, they may be deducted from the total grant spend, (unless other acceptable proofs can be supplied) leaving you with an underspend to account for in the following year. Please speak to your Parent Carer Participation Advisor at the earliest opportunity to discuss any unacceptable proofs of expenditure you may have, and any possible solutions.

If when it gets to February/March you have any lost or missing invoices or proofs, it would be a good time to ask providers for duplicates. If you have commissioned a service and the provider has not yet provided you with an invoice, you will need to politely remind them and if necessary, outline the terms of your grant.



Activities funded by other grants

Please **do not** include activities in the grant monitoring return which are **solely** funded by other grant giving bodies. Do include activities which are solely, or part funded, by the parent carer participation grant even if they are joint funded through other sources, and please highlight where this is the case in your grant application and monitoring forms. If you do need to split an invoice between funders, it needs to be clearly marked as such indicating the proportion of the invoice that each funder is paying for. This will enable us to ensure that there is no double accounting.



Assets

It is good practice for forums to develop a register of their fixed assets. Assets are the items that the forum has purchased such as computer equipment, printers, office equipment etc. The register will enable you to keep track of the items that the forum owns and to know their value. The register should be in a table format and should detail:

- The asset number
- A description of the item – e.g. Intel quad core, i7-860, 1tb SATA 4GB DDR.
- Brand – e.g. Hewlett Packard
- Model No.
- Serial No.
- Supplier
- Purchase date
- Purchase price
- Funding stream – e.g. DfE grant / LA grant
- Location – who has the equipment, or the place where its stored
- Depreciation – the decrease in value
- Current value – depreciation calculation*
- Date of disposal (if applicable)

*Useful websites that will help you to calculate depreciation are [here](#) and [here](#).

It might be useful to carry out an annual inspection of the forum's assets so that you know that everything is in good working order and that the location of the item is still current. If the location of the item has changed, the register should be updated to reflect this. All assets are the property of the forum and should not be retained by individual parents who leave the forum.

You also need to consider the useful life of items. Each year items will depreciate in value to the point where they are worth very little. With computer equipment, the operational lifespan is usually about five years. After this time the equipment is either obsolete, or worth very little if sold. The forum is likely to purchase updated equipment. When you do, dispose of the old equipment carefully, ensuring that any confidential data is wiped, and the hard drive destroyed.

Websites, Facebook pages, other social media pages, other intellectual or digital property such as training packages, passwords to equipment and social media are also considered assets of the forum and should be part of a well-managed handover when different Officers are elected or are in post. Please see the advice on handovers on the Contact website for guidance on this, and if in any doubt, notify your Parent Carer Participation Advisor before the handover takes place so that they can advise you accordingly.

In the event of the forum folding and a new forum being established, you will need to formally transfer the assets purchased with the DfE grant to the new forum (also refer to the section below on if a parent carer forum closes down) once established. This should be recorded by both parties at the point of handover.



Use your asset register as the basis for this transfer. Work out which assets are going to be useful to the new forum and compile an inventory or list of the items. Items such as letterheads, flyers or business cards containing the old forum's logo and contact details would not be of any use to the new forum.

If there is no new forum, assets must be returned to the DfE's contracted delivery partner – in this instance, Contact. Failure to hand over equipment purchased with the parent carer participation grant may result in the DfE being notified and they could decide to take further action, including notifying the Police.

Your forum might also want to keep a record of any high value items are held in stock, for example stamps, vouchers etc. and to ensure that they are securely stored.



Good governance

One of the key elements to the running of a successful forum is good governance that underpins all that the forum does. Good governance helps to protect the committee, your wider forum membership, and public money.

The following information will help your forum to think about what governance you have already and identify what you may still need to put in place, to ensure that you have adequate policies and procedures to support the effective running of the forum. Throughout 2019-20, we will continue to produce webinars and other resources to support forums in their day to day running.

You may also want to consider using some of your grant to support your forum to develop its governance. This could be by commissioning a Contact Associate or working with a local voluntary sector development agency.

A basic level of governance might include:

- A governing document – constitution or terms of reference
- Financial Control Policy – we ask you to submit this with your grant application
- Expenses and Remuneration Policy
- Safeguarding Policies and procedures, including having a named person responsible for safeguarding issues in your forum
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Data protection and Confidentiality policies
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Asset Register and Handover Policy
- Social Media policy

Governing Documents

A governing document is a set of rules outlining how your forum will operate. It can be in the form of terms of reference, a constitution, memorandum and articles of association, charitable constitution or other rules.

Forums who already have a governing document in place will need to make sure that everyone involved in the main decision-making group of the forum has a copy of it. It should also be available on your website (if you have one) for all of your membership, and other partners, to be able to read to understand the remit and rules of the forum.

It is good practice to review your governing documents, policies and procedures annually, if possible, to see if any changes are needed and to refresh your memories about how the forum should be operating and working together.



For those forums who have no governing document, or would like general advice on governance issues, you should speak to your [Parent Carer Participation](#) Advisor.

Further information on governance and the policies listed above, including samples and templates can be found on the page [setting up and running a forum](#) on Contact's website.



Community Matters Membership

As part of our support offer to parent carer forums in 2020-21 we will continue to offer all forums a complimentary membership to Community Matters an information service to help with any legal or governance issues, including GDPR.

Community Matters works to advise and support community organisations, charities and public-sector bodies across the UK with a team of in-house community advisers. They provide a range of services including advice and information, training and consultancy and quality standards. These services help organisations understand and tackle often complicated legal, technical and regulatory challenges.

Forums' complimentary subscription includes access to Community Matters **Advice and Information service**. This service provides access to a comprehensive Knowledge bank of Information, with over 150 information sheets and template documents. As well as this, you are also able access Expert Email Advice.

Those forums that have already set up an account can access it by using the web address www.communitymatters.org.uk and clicking on the organisations section. Those who did not sign up last year are able to take advantage of this free subscription by filling in a simple online form and registering for their subscription: <http://www.communitymatters.org.uk>

Once the form is completed, your forum's complimentary account is activated within 48 hours, after which you are able to log in and access the resources as required

In addition to the complimentary advice and information that is available to parent carer forums via Contact's core offer, Community Matters also offer a range of **additional, specialist paid for** services, including legal services, training and consultancy and quality standards **which are not included** in your forum's complimentary subscription and **would incur additional costs** if forums wished to access them. Further information about these services can be found on the [Community Matters website](http://www.communitymatters.org.uk).



If a parent carer forum closes down

There are times when a parent carer forum may decide that they no longer want to continue as the forum, and there are no other parent carers willing to take on their roles. In these circumstances the grant holder must notify the Parent Carer Participation Advisor at the earliest opportunity who will give advice about the next steps. Careful consideration will also need to be given to any data that the forum holds on its membership to ensure that GDPR is complied with. Contact **Community Matters** for further guidance on this if you are in any doubt.

The Conditions of Grant stipulate that the functional assets paid for by the grant should be returned to the DfE's contracted provider – in this instance Contact.

If the forum dissolves, the grant applicant and all outgoing officers, in addition to the grant holder (if different) will remain responsible for the grant in its entirety and any forum property purchased with the grant until a handover of all forum property on the Assets Register has been completed. The outgoing forum may be asked by Contact to retain forum assets until there is a new forum to pass them on to.

The Contact Parent Carer Participation team will take steps to ensure that all the assets are handed on to a new parent led forum in the area and if there is no forum in existence, will take steps to support the development of a new parent led forum.

Once there is a new DfE funded forum set up with adequate governance, all equipment should be passed on to the new forum to enable them to carry out their role effectively. The handover should be formally documented on a Handover form by the outgoing forum's Chair, and new forum Chair, and Contact notified that this has taken place. If this is not possible within a reasonable timeframe, arrangements will be made to collect all assets or agree an alternative solution.

In other cases, a decision has been taken that the parent carer forum cannot be permitted to run as the DfE funded forum, for whatever reason. In this instance, arrangements must be made to return all forum property to Contact.

It is a term and responsibility of holding the grant that a forum must co-operate with the Parent Carer Participation team and to satisfy the Conditions of Grant and monitoring process in order to finalise all necessary paperwork; hand over any assets that the parent carer participation grant has funded, before the forum can be released from its legal obligations to the DfE.

If an outgoing forum fails to return property funded with the DfE grant in a timely manner, or disposes of the equipment, the DfE will be notified and they may take further action or notify the Police.