

Changes to the 2020-21 grant monitoring form and 2021-22 grant application form processes

We have produced a brief explanation of the changes to the grant forms this year so that forums can identify the changes and understand why they have been made.

Unfortunately, the flexibility offered last year by the DfE to allow carry forward of the previous year's grant without it affecting the new grant, cannot be offered again. This was a one-off exception due to emerging Covid-19 situation and the first lockdown, which fell at the end of the financial year affecting forums' activity. This year, we revert to the way it has always been – all spend must take place by 31st March, and any/all underspends must be deducted - from the 2021-22 grant – there will not be any carry forward of up to £500 as has been permitted previously.

As you will be aware, the value of the main grant has increased to **£17,500** per year for 2021-22.

Forums can still spend up to 75% of their total grant on salaries or a paid worker this year.

Contact will now be the grant giver and all grant payments will come direct from Contact and not from the DfE. This is because of the extended delays to payment last year that meant that changes were necessary. We hope that payments will now be more efficient and that forums will receive their grant money more quickly.

Note: it will take new forums or forums with a new bank account longer to be paid as Contact will need to perform due diligence checks and to set up the forum as a payee. *New forums and those with new bank accounts will no longer have to complete the DfE's verification form to be set up on their finance system, which did cause significant delays in some cases.*

Application form

We have kept the format of the grant application form largely the same as feedback from forums was positive and the Formsite platform continued to be reliable. The grant application guidance will continue to be on the application itself as hover text rather than in a separate document.

What has changed, and why?

The main changes to the 2021-22 grant application form are to the Conditions of Grant.

It is necessary to change the conditions of grant as this is the legally binding contract. As Contact will be the grant giver this contract now needs to be between Contact and parent carer forums applying for the grant, and not the DfE.

Contact argued why agreeing to the government's standard 40-page grant agreement was not appropriate for parent carer forums. The DfE has acknowledged this, however, we did have to ensure that we covered the content of the agreement in as many ways as possible. Therefore, we have combined the conditions of grant and terms and responsibilities of the grant award, and have added in clauses re GDPR, insurance, clawback etc. There is also a link to the DfE's code of conduct for grant recipients which we strongly urge all forums to read as the DfE expects that all forums will adhere to this. It feels more robust, and there is more to read, but much of the agreement is common sense and is put in place to protect forums and their members.

The person that signs the Conditions of Grant needs to read all clauses carefully as they are legally binding. We also encourage all forum committee or steering group members to read the guidance, revised Managing Your Grant document, and the fraud guidance on Contact's website.

The Managing Your Grant document has been updated to reflect this year's changes.

Monitoring form on next page



Monitoring form

What has changed, and why?

The monitoring form remains largely the same, but we have reduced some sections to make them quicker to complete.

Not all forums will need to submit their POEs, or full POEs this year. We expect all forums to keep accurate and up to date records and to submit a spreadsheet detailing all expenditure and with a final total of grant spend (for the main DfE grant and any discretionary grants). If requested, we expect all forums to be able to submit their POEs within a given deadline. Whether your forum is requested to submit their POEs will be dependent on several factors including concerns from previous years, whether the forum is new, whether there were any additional grant conditions or advisory requests in the previous year's approval letter that need to be checked, or if the forum's overall risk requires checks.

We will be focusing on education this year, and we will be offering grant forms workshops with our grants programme officer for forums, which may be 1:1 sessions or small group workshops, as well as our usual grants webinar which will take place in April. We hope that this will enable forums to be more confident in completing both forms and that it will ensure that forums know exactly what is expected, also taking into account signs of fraud, and what to do to protect the forum and its members.

6.5 - Interim SEND visits. As SEND inspections were halted due to the pandemic, we have renamed this section and it will only apply to a small number of forums. If your local area had an interim visit, or if your forum is involved in preparation for the full inspection, please complete as best you can.

6.6 – Relationships. We have condensed this section to have only one text box for comments about good practice, or challenges to make it less repetitive.

Satisfaction levels. We have taken on board feedback from forums who felt unable to leave honest feedback about Advisors who they have an ongoing relationship with as the Advisors could read what was written. This section will now be hidden from Advisors so that forums' responses will not be read by them.

The grant monitoring guidance is in a separate document (see grants webpage) and is not include don the form as hover text. This is because the monitoring form is more complicated to complete – however, we have reduced it this year and have taken out some of the text that is already on the grant form itself and some of the repetition, to make it easier to follow.

We look forward to receiving your grant submissions, and as always, if you require any help with either form, please contact your Parent Carer Participation Advisor or a member of the grants team.

Deadlines:

Monitoring – Friday 30th April

Applications – Monday 7th June

We will be in touch to let you know the dates of the annual Grants Webinar and Grants Workshop with the grants team.