

Changes to the 2022-23 grant application form and 2021-22 grant monitoring form processes

We have listed below the changes to the grant forms this year so that forums can easily identify the changes and understand why they have been made.

General pointers that remain unchanged –

- All 2021-22 grant spend must take place by 31st March, and any/all underspends (including unused vouchers) must be deducted from the 2022-23 grant. Forums should not commit to any further spend or use of their underspend until they have an approved grant application for 2022-23. We encourage all forums to put in early applications to avoid a funding gap.
- The value of the main grant remains at **£17,500** for 2022-23.
- Forums can spend up to 75% of their total grant on salaries or a paid worker.
- Contact is the grant giver, and all grant payments will come direct from Contact.
- We would urge everyone involved in the grant application to read the HM Government Code of Conduct for grant recipients because as grant recipients, you are bound by this, and it is in place to protect forums and their members.

Note: Contact will need to perform due diligence checks and set up new forums as payees on our finance system, which will result in a slight delay – this will be kept to a minimum if all required information is supplied. We will also offer all new forums a grant 1:1 with our grants team.

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 now be on a separate document to avoid accessibility issues with the grant form. Some of the language in the form has been reduced and simplified.

What has changed, and why?

The main changes to the 2022-23 grant application form are to the Conditions of Grant.

Contact received feedback from some forums that the new Conditions of Grant were too long, and too complicated – and we agree that they were. As a legally binding document, the conditions do need to cover all the legal clauses that are in place to protect forum members and public money. However, we sought agreement from the DfE to make the conditions more 'Plain English' and to provide a glossary of the jargon terms within it, which are listed in the order that they appear. The conditions and clauses are still long, but hopefully, you will find them more straightforward. There is a new condition for grant holding organisations to agree to that will ensure that emerging, and established forums are in control of the grant and the forum's direction.

We have added a sentence in Section 2.1 that states that if a paid forum worker (or a host's worker) is the applicant, parental support from a forum officer needs to be sought in Section 6.3 – this will be taken as confirmation that the forum is aware of what is in the application and supports it. This is an additional safeguard to protect against conflicts of interest as paid workers may receive a large proportion of the grant. We need to ensure that the forum has been fully involved in the decision-making around the use of the grant. We recognise that forums that are CICs may have paid directors; we do not mean paid directors as they control the work and direction of the forum.

We have made some distinctions this year between forum applicants and forums with a grant host organisation to make responsibilities clearer and to stress that parent carers drive the forum's work.

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. All forums going through the grant process for the

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first time will be offered a 1:1 grants workshop with the grants team to go through the grant responsibilities, fraud awareness and have a chance to ask any questions they might have about the grants.

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. As with the application, we have cut out some unnecessary words to make the language plainer.

As last year, all new forums will need to submit their full proof of expenditure (POEs) with their grant monitoring form. Other forums expected to submit some, or all, of their POEs will be notified by the grants team.

We have split the outcomes section into categories to focus on impact in different areas of forums' work. We do not expect you to give more information here, but it should enable you to talk about different areas and to identify areas where there are gaps that you might want to focus on next year.

- Strengthening the forum - strengthening the committee or steering group; capacity building; training; cohesion; increased diversity; financial stability
- Furthering participation - increased membership; promotion; greater influence; website and social media reach; responses to consultations; outreach / diverse and underrepresented groups
- Relationship building with local services - Responses to consultations (above); and boards and meetings you have reps on (below) might go into this category
- Positive outcomes for service development - boards and meetings you have reps on; changes made as a direct result of the forum's involvement or influence; reports submitted as evidence
- Outcomes for parent carers - increase in knowledge, confidence, skills, resilience, reduction of isolation
- Any other outcomes not listed above

6.5 – section on SEND inspections has been reintroduced.

6.8 - SENDIASS as we will be part of the same contract as the national Information, Advice and Support (helpline and SENDIASS) next year, we have a new question to help to benchmark relationships between forums and local SENDIASS services and so that we can check in on progression over the course of the contract.

Section 8 on Engaging with parent carers and other groups and reaching diverse and underrepresented groups – we have reworked this section to reflect the welcomed increased focus on diversity in Government contracts and to make the data collected more meaningful. We have separated out ethnicity from other underrepresented groups and want to try to help forums to identify gaps in their outreach or engagement. We hope that getting this information will identify examples of proactive engagement that can be added to our diversity and Inclusion toolkit and can help other forums to successfully engage with diverse groups.

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 29th April

Applications – Monday 6th June

The annual grants online learning session will be on 5th April between 10.30am and 11.30am.