

## Changes to the 2024-25 grant application form and 2023-24 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 2023-24 grant spend must take place by 31<sup>st</sup> March, and any/all underspends (including unused vouchers) must be deducted from the 2024-25 grant. Forums should not commit to any further spend or use of their underspend until they have an approved grant application for 2024-25. 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 2024-25.
- 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.

## Local Authority MOU

We've added 'role' so you can enter the person's job title.

## Children and young people with SEND with a range of disabilities 0-25

Where we used to refer to 'children and young people with SEND' we've added 'with a range of disabilities 0-25'. This is simply to be clear that forums need to be pan disability and represent families with children and young people with SEND 0-25. This isn't a change to what the grant is for, we have just updated the language to make sure it's clear.

## When the grant applicant is paid from the grant

We received feedback it wasn't always clear to forums whether parent carer support is needed if the applicant is paid. Occasionally, during the approval process last year, we went back to forums for this information. We've revised our approach now so that if the applicant is paid a fee/salary, additional parent carer support for the application is **not** required. We still ask if the applicant is paid a salary or fee from the grant. If the answer is yes, we ask if the fee/salary amount has been agreed by the forum's committee/trustees/directors.

The reason we previously asked for additional parent carer support if the applicant was paid was to mitigate the risk of someone applying for the grant and taking payment from the grant without appropriate oversight. We are satisfied we have enough safeguards within the grant process to minimise



this risk without needing to ask for additional parent carer support for the application when the applicant is paid.

The application guidance has been updated to confirm that when we ask if the applicant is paid a salary or fee, we don't mean remuneration for attending strategic meetings and/or attendance. So, if the applicant is only receiving payment for remuneration to attend strategic meetings and/or expenses they don't need to answer yes to the question about being paid a salary/fee.

Section 6.3 parent carer support has been updated to account for the change above. So now the main reason a forum would need to provide additional parent carer support for the grant application is if neither the applicant, nor host (if there is one) are a parent carer.

### **Staffing**

We've broken down the existing questions about the hourly rate/fee/number of hours and part funding so forums can answer them one by one. Forums that confirm they don't pay staff won't see these questions. We realised that putting too many questions into one means it's easy to miss answering some of it. Breaking it down in this way should mean forums don't miss any of the questions meaning we won't need to come back to you to request additional information.

We've added an additional question 'What tasks will the DfE grant funded worker carry out?'. This means you don't need to include the staffing activities in the 'activities' section. In a small number of cases last year, we had to go back and ask about this as it wasn't always included. Having a specific question on it should minimise us having to ask you for additional information during the approval process.

### **Activities**

We've removed reference to staffing costs here. We've added 'you don't need to include staffing activities here as we ask you about these later in 5.3.'

### **Associate fee**

We've updated the application guidance to include the new Associate rate of pay of £320 per day.

### **Conditions of grant**

Where the applicant or host clicks to agree the conditions of grant an additional bullet point has been added which says "All grant spend will be related to activity for the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Any spend outside this time period or spend that does not meet the conditions of grant, will be deducted from the total grant expenditure." This is not a new condition of the grant; we are just ensuring this point is clear as we've had a small number of cases where forums haven't realised this.

## **Grant monitoring**

### **Staffing**

In line with the changes to the application form we've broken down the questions about the hourly rate/fee/number of hours/part funding so that these questions can be answered one by one. We've added



the question 'What tasks did the DfE funded worker carry out?'. This question will only be seen by those answering 'yes' to the staffing question.

In 6.1 the activities section the wording 'Staffing costs for running the forum' will be removed because this is captured earlier in the form under the staffing section.

### **Outcomes**

We occasionally have to go back to ask for outcomes of high-cost items. We've added a question for forums to confirm outcomes for high-cost items have been included. The grant application guidance explains that high-cost items are above £500. We hope this will help to minimise us needing to come back to you for further information.

### **Section 8 – Engaging with parent carers and other groups.**

We've changed the wording 'Parent carers of children and young people who have sight loss, or blindness' to 'Parent carers of children and young people who are blind or partially sighted,' to be in line with our Diversity and Inclusion toolkit and the Royal Society for Blind Children.

***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 Adviser or a member of the grants team.***

### **Deadlines -**

**Applications: Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June**

**Grant monitoring: Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**

The live [online learning session about the grant forms](#) will take place on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 12:00 – 13:00 and will be recorded and uploaded to the parent carer participation YouTube channel.