



Department
for Education

contact For families
with disabled children

Parent carer participation grant application 2024/25 – guidance notes

Applications for the **2024/25** Department for Education (DfE) parent carer participation grant are now being accepted and must be submitted by **Friday 21st June 2024**.

Contact will accept applications as soon as the application form is made available to forums, so you are strongly encouraged to submit your application before the closing date to avoid a gap in funding.

Parent carer forums can apply for up to **£17,500**. There is one grant available for each local authority area. If more than one application is submitted from a local area, the grant will be awarded to the parent carer forum or organisation which best demonstrates their ability to develop credible, inclusive, parent led participation and co-production within the area, and who has the support of the local authority.

The application form is available online and forums need to set up an account before completing the form. Speak to Ben Bennett if you have difficulty with this. If you have any other questions relating to your forum's application, please contact your [Parent Carer Participation Adviser](#), or a member of the grants team: pcfgrants@contact.org.uk.

The purpose of the grant is to:

- support, develop and sustain parent carer participation in local areas.
- enable the strategic participation and representation of parent carers with local statutory and voluntary partners in service provision, development, and improvement.

The grant is for parent participation to represent families with children and young people with a range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) 0-25.

To help you:

- Read these **guidance notes** and the **declarations and conditions of grant** which are on the grant application form.
- Forums must also to agree to abide by the [HM Government code of conduct for grant recipients](#).
- Read the 'Managing your grant' document (available on the [grants page](#)) throughout the year to help the forum with day-to-day operation and finance. Pages 11 & 12 explain what the grant can and cannot be used for.
- Our [webpage on fraud](#) has pointers and signposting to useful sources of information on fraud guidance. Use the tips to protect your forum from the possibility of fraud if you are not already doing so.
- All documents are available on the [grants page](#) of our website.

If you want to work on the application form collaboratively or get an idea what kind of information you will need to complete the application, you can download a PDF version from the [grant application form](#). PLEASE NOTE: applications will still need to be submitted online; **PDF submissions will not be accepted**

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There is an option (on the last page of the form) to submit your application, meaning you are sent a PDF copy of your form that can be shared with forum colleagues for their approval. The grants team won't process your application until you have marked it 'ready for approval'.

Opening the online grant application form

Follow the link to the online application form. Read the instructions and contents before progressing. Take note of the information you will need to be able to submit the form. This includes the consent of anybody named as a contact or bank account signatory to submit their details as part of the application.

Remember to 'Save Progress' before going on to the next page and click submit and mark it as read for approval when you are ready to submit the form.

Section 1 – Area

Enter the local authority area that the forum is located in. If you are working in more than one local authority area, separate applications must be completed for each area.

Let us know if another organisation is holding your forum's grant and their legal status.

Let us know the current status of the forum's steering group.

Section 2 – Applicant details and contact information

2.1 & 2.2 Enter the details of the organisation making the grant application, and the person who is leading the work. This is usually the Chair/Co-Chair/Secretary/Treasurer of a parent led forum. In most cases where the forum is parent led, and holds their own bank account, this is the same person who agrees to the declarations and conditions of grant form and who takes responsibility for ensuring that the grant is spent in accordance with the approved grant application.

Please tick the relevant boxes to indicate whether the grant applicant will be paid a salary or fee from the DfE grant in this financial year and, if applicable, whether the salary or fee has been agreed by the steering group. If the applicant only receives remuneration to attend strategic meetings, and/or expenses they can answer 'no' to this question.

When Contact holds the grant for a local area and there is a DfE recognised parent carer forum, the forum is the grant applicant. When Contact holds the grant for a local area without an established parent carer forum, Contact is the grant applicant. **2.2 Only to be completed if the forum is not the grant holder.** A senior representative of the grant holding organisation must complete and sign this section, i.e., CEO, senior officer, or Local Authority manager. This organisation is also responsible for signing the declarations and conditions of grant. When an organisation holds the grant on behalf of the forum, the grant holder, along with the applicant (if different), is/are responsible for ensuring that the grant is spent in accordance with the approved grant application and adheres to the declarations and conditions of



grant and HM Government Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients. When Contact holds the grant for a local area with a DfE recognised forum, Contact is the grant holder.

If your forum's grant is being held by another organisation Contact recommends that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) is put in place between the forum and their grant holder to ensure that the expectations of both parties are clear from the outset, and that the forum is fully involved in all decision-making.

Keep contact details up to date: It is essential that we have up to date contact details for the grant applicant and grant holder. It is your responsibility to notify Contact of any change of officers or contact details of key personnel as the grant holder will be contacted to discuss any concerns regarding grant spend. This person, their organisation, and the forum are accountable for the grant having agreed the conditions of grant.

2.3 Provide full details of the bank account into which the grant will be paid. If your forum hasn't held the grant before, please attach a scanned copy of a bank statement/bank letter evidencing the bank account number and sort code. Please select how many bank signatories are on the bank account.

2.4 Provide details of up to three signatories on the forum's (or host's) bank account – these must not be partners/spouse/related. You must ensure that you have their written consent to share their details with us as per the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Declaration and ensure that you keep these records stored safely in case you need to refer to them in the future. If you are a new applicant or have new bank details, bank signatories will be emailed to check they are aware of the application and to confirm they are the bank signatories. If your forum does not have 3 signatories, we recommend that you look to get a third in place as soon as possible.

2.5 Provide the details of at least two contacts, preferably more. These need to be the people that are responsible for running the forum (from your steering group/committee/trustees/directors). At least one of the contacts must be a parent carer. Please also provide a contact from the grant holding organisation (if this is not the forum).

(You must have written consent from these contacts to share their details with us as per the GDPR declaration).

These contacts will be emailed to inform them that they have been named on the form and they will also receive a copy of the completed application.

(Ensure all committee/steering group members also receive a copy of the form).

We will use these details as the main contacts (along with the contacts in 2.1 and 2.2) to discuss the grant, if we have any concerns about the use of the grant or require further information during the grant application process. Keep these records stored safely in case you need to refer to them in the future.

2.6 Complete this section with information that your forum is happy to be made public via Contact's website. You are responsible for notifying us of any changes to these details.



Indicate who your Parent Carer Participation Adviser is so that they will be notified of your submission.

Click on save before you move to the next page.

Section 3 – Information about the forum

3.1 Choose from the list what type of organisation the forum is e.g., parent led forum, local authority etc.

3.2 Choose the forum's status from the list e.g., registered charity, constituted group etc. Include the forum's Charity Commission number or Companies House registration number if applicable.

3.3 Indicate the approximate numbers of parent carers involved in different aspects of the forum.

3.4 Indicate if the forum received any other funding during 2023/24 to support participation activity. This does not include funding awarded to the forum for any other purpose. Tell us who the funder was and how much the forum received from them. Completing this section of the form **will not** impact on your entitlement to the grant. State whether parent carers are remunerated by a third party for sitting on strategic groups or boards and who funds them to do this.

Section 4 – Summary budget

Complete the summary budget table. The forum can claim a grant of up to **£17,500**. This can be used for a number of different types of activities, goods, or services. Most will fall under one of these headings and there is an option for 'other'. Choose the relevant heading and enter the amount claimed. This can be further broken down in the right-hand column. The form will automatically calculate the total spend for you.



Budget description 1

Budget amount 1

Budget breakdown 1- only provide a cost breakdown of budget entries rather than the full detail - outputs and outcomes are provided on the next page and do not need to be duplicated here.

If you choose 'other' for any items, you must include a description in the budget breakdown box.

This section is for your budget breakdown only. Do not provide further detail of the forum's intended activity here or you will repeat this again in section 5.1.

Examples are given under each heading below.

- **Events**
 - venue costs and refreshments for events such as conferences, consultations, information days, engagement events to extend your reach
- **Meetings**
 - venue costs and refreshments for regular forum or steering group meetings
- **Training**
 - training for parent carers and professionals in parent carer participation
 - training for parent carers on skills relevant to their involvement or to help them develop the local parent carer forum
- **Infrastructure**
 - cost of office space, telephones, IT equipment, purchase of stationery, printer ink, stamps, broadband or server costs

- **Developing information and resources**



- developing materials including leaflets, newsletters, and web-based information about the work of the forum, and how to engage parent carers
- developing different resources on aspects of participation
- banners and display items for events
- publicising the outcomes of participation and parent involvement
 - **Web development**
- developing or improving a website for the forum.
 - **Staffing costs**
- paid roles (whether an employee, self-employed, contracted, commissioned or remunerated) to carry out basic administration, managing the day-to-day accounts, communications and marketing, co-ordination of activities, the development of participation or outreach work (which should not be more than 75% of the total grant awarded in the financial year).
 - **Parent carer remuneration**
- paying or otherwise remunerating parent carers who are actively involved in strategic decision making and planning, under an agreed policy/agreement.
- if you wish to remunerate parent carers who carry out regular work for the forum, **not** in their capacity as a parent carer, but as e.g., an administrator, you will need to include this as a staffing cost in the staffing section and account for it under that budget heading. **NOTE:** *If a remuneration payment does go through payroll, for the sake of this grant application budget please record under 'Remuneration' rather than as a 'Staffing' so that it is not included in your (up to) 75% staffing budget.*
- **NOTE:** We recommend that you complete the [HMRC employment status tool](#) for all workers and remunerated representatives. Parent representatives receiving payments for representative work could still be considered employees. Further information can be found in the online session remunerating and employing people for forums and [setting up and running payroll with Community Matters](#).
- **Parent carer expenses**
- reimbursing parent carers' expenses for their involvement in parent participation activities, meetings, regional meetings, conferences etc. including travel and childcare costs



- **Outreach/diversity and inclusion**
- work with particular groups of parent carers who are not currently involved, or whose voices are underrepresented.
- **Other**
- any other expenditure which does not fall into the above categories but does support the aims of grant to develop parent participation such as Associate Support or other activities aimed at increasing parent participation.
- **Contact held fee**
- If Contact will hold the grant on behalf of the forum until you are able to hold the money yourselves, you will need to allow for this. The Contact held fee is 10% of the total grant awarded (including any priority grant), so £1,750 if the forum is applying for the full grant only.
- **Associate fee/expenses**
- If the forum's application includes Associate support from Contact, this will need to be included at a rate of £320 per day, plus expenses (as a suggestion, add £100 per day). Include the number of days that you anticipate will be required.

For more information about the activities that the grant can and cannot pay for see pages 11 & 12 of the managing your grant document. If the forum wants to apply for something but you are not sure the grant can cover it, talk to your Parent Carer Participation Adviser before submitting your application.

If the forum is applying for the grant before completing last year's grant monitoring and you think your underspend will be over £8,750, please let us know by choosing the appropriate option.

Section 5 - Intended outputs and outcomes for 2024/25

Outputs are the activities that your forum intends to carry out to help you to achieve the desired outcomes (results/difference/impact), e.g., an event or meeting to reach families and hear their views (output) that means that the forum can input evidence to the LA that makes them reconsider their plans to better meet families' needs (outcome). Discuss your outputs and outcomes with your Parent Carer Participation Adviser if you are unsure what to record, or to check that they fit the conditions of grant.

5.1 Outputs (activities): For each item of spend identified in **Section 4**, provide a brief highlight description of the activities that you intend to carry out. There is a guide word limit of 750 words to help you to be succinct, but the form will not prevent you from entering further text if you go over. Try to be as concise as you can, i.e., 3 x events on: next phase of local offer; transition to adulthood, and school transport. You don't need to enter the staffing activities here as the form asks about this in section 5.3

5.2 Outcomes: Describe the changes/differences/impact you hope to see as a direct result of the forum's activity (outputs). Tell us how the activities, services and resources will impact upon the forum's development, strengthening of participation, the parent carers involved in participation, or the



improvement of local services and facilities – there are some suggestions on the form. Tell us how any paid roles have helped to further the forum’s work. We do not need to know the outcomes of infrastructure costs such as office rental, room hire, or for stationery costs as these are self-explanatory. Again, there is a guide word limit of 750 words.

5.3 Staffing: These questions are for forums who pay someone to carry out administration tasks or participation/development, or coordination work. We ask how many hours the worker usually works and their hourly rate and if other funding contributes towards their salary. Please remember that salaries cannot exceed 75% of the total grant awarded. We would like to know about employed, self-employed, commissioned, or contracted staff. We need to know if their time is funded solely through the DfE grant or if other funding pays for part of their post – if the post is secured using joint funding, we need to know who the other funder is, and the proportion of the split between the DfE grant and other funding. We recommend that you complete the [HMRC employment status tool](#) for all workers and remunerated representatives. Please tell us the tasks the DfE worker will carry out.

5.4 List which work streams the forum currently has parent reps sitting on or is influencing. This demonstrates how the participation grant will be used to influence local service development or improvements.

5.5 & 5.6 Tell us which other local partners, organisations, support groups, and health organisations/services your forum works with to demonstrate how the forum links into the bigger local picture, and who you are working with.

Section 6 – local authority support

Forums need to work with their local authority (LA) to be able to perform their role effectively. As part of the application process, the forum must obtain the local authority’s agreement to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Provide a contact from the LA, for example, a senior officer or manager with responsibility for Disabled Children’s Services, Assistant Director, or Director of Children and Young People’s Services/All Age Service. This still applies if the grant holder is an arm’s length service of the LA including Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). The LA lead must consent to you using their personal information on the grant form as per the GDPR Declaration. Provide their full work contact details.

A copy of the MOU between the parent carer forum and local authority will be emailed to your local authority contact automatically when your application is submitted. This agreement removes the misconception that the LA is approving the content of the grant form; instead, they are agreeing to work in co-production with the DfE funded forum in their local area. Contact will receive notification once this



agreement has been confirmed. Contact will not be able to process your application until this MOU is completed and received.

The local authority will agree:

- We commit to uphold the principles of the SEND Code of Practice and to work in partnership with the DfE funded local parent carer forum to improve local services for children and young people with SEND.
- We recognise the independence of the DfE funded parent carer forum.
- We value the role of the DfE funded parent carer forum in representing the needs, experiences, and views of parent carers of children and young people with SEND including their role in raising issues, providing constructive feedback through open dialogue, and challenging partners when necessary.
- We agree to work together with respect and as equal partners.

Agreeing to the grant MOU does not supersede any local partnership agreements or arrangements.

It is in the forum's interest to chase the LA contact if the MOU is not completed swiftly; the forum will be notified when the MOU has been submitted.

As co-production is reciprocal, we also require the forum to agree to the same principles and to also sign up to work in partnership.

- We commit to uphold the principles of the SEND Code of Practice and to work in partnership with the local authority/health organisations to improve local services for children and young people with SEND.
- We recognise the local authority and health organisations as our strategic local partners.
- We value the role of the local authority and health organisations in carrying out their statutory duties and will raise issues from parent carers providing constructive feedback through open dialogue, and challenging partners when necessary.
- We agree to work together with respect and as equal partners.



I confirm we will abide by the principles of co-production above.

***If the grant applicant is not a parent carer involved in the forum, please ask the supporting parent carer to add the above declaration to the text in the letter of support from a parent carer in section 6.3.**

Section 6.3 – parent carer support

If neither of the individuals in Section 2.1 (grant applicant) or 2.2 (grant holder) is a parent carer involved with the forum, the support of at least one parent carer involved in the forum, preferably one of the forum's officers (e.g., Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) must be sought. Ignore this section if the signatory in Section 2.1 or 2.2 is a parent carer involved with the forum.

You must obtain the consent of the parent carer to share their details with us.

Declarations/conditions of grant and HM Government Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients

The declarations and conditions of grant are the legal conditions of receiving the grant set by the DfE. Confirmation of the applicant/host organisation's acceptance of the conditions is included in the application. Parent carer forums must also read and abide by the HM Government Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients (The Code). The Code should be communicated to everyone representing or running the forum and or their host organisation. We strongly recommend that all forums' committee or steering group read the declarations relating to: Safeguarding, HM Government Code of Conduct for Grant Recipients (Code of Conduct), GDPR, Equality Act, Duplication Notice, Clawback clause, Fraud Declaration, and Insurance and Licences, and the conditions of grant in full to ensure understanding of the legal requirements of accepting the grant and the implications of breaching either the conditions of grant or the Code. We have tried to write these in 'plain English' and have explained jargon terms that can't be avoided in a glossary in the order that they appear on the form – this can be downloaded from the [grants page](#). Normally, it is the grant applicant who completes the conditions of grant. However, where there is a **different grant holder** identified in **Section 2.2**, a **senior representative of this organisation must complete the conditions of grant**. Click to confirm acceptance of each declaration and complete the contact details of the person agreeing to the conditions.

Ensure that the person confirming their agreement to the declarations and conditions of grant completes this themselves, as it is a legally binding agreement. This person will also receive a copy of the grant application.

There is a condition of the grant for grant holding organisations to agree to. This is to ensure that parent carers are in control of the grant and direction of the forum's work and are involved in all decision-making. If a grant holder is taking on the grant to help build a forum, we expect them to work towards the new forum gradually taking control and gaining independence. More established forums who choose



to have a grant holding organisation should set in place a Memorandum of Understanding or Service Level Agreement between the forum and their host.

If you are unsure about anything in the agreement or you don't understand what you are agreeing to, please [get in touch](#).

Financial Control Policy

Confirm that you are uploading a copy of the forum's financial control policy. If the forum does not have a financial policy, contact your Parent Carer Participation Adviser to discuss, as the application cannot be approved without it. The financial policy must have been reviewed/adopted within the last 2 years. This will ideally be noted on the policy itself, or by an email on behalf of the committee confirming. The policy does not have to be signed but it is better if it has been.

Remember to save progress as you go, and before you leave the document.

Finally

There is a short survey regarding the completion of the form and a chance for you to make any suggestions regarding the process, along with a reminder to include:

- Contact details for your senior local authority partner
- Parental support letter with MOU text (if the applicant or host is not a parent carer)
- Financial Control Policy which has clearly been reviewed/adopted within the last 2 years.

Without these, your application cannot be progressed.

Once you are ready to submit select the option 'approve my application' and click '**submit**'. You will then see a message that thanks you and confirms that your submission has been received. You should also receive an email confirmation. If you do not receive an email, check your junk, or spam folders. If the email is not received, contact Ben Bennett – ben.bennett@contact.org.uk. You will be able to follow the link in the email to revisit or make any amendments to the form. There will be a pdf attachment for easy viewing of your application.

Contact parent carer participation team:

Please [contact us](#) if you have any queries or concerns.

Deadline: All forms must be submitted by Friday 21st June 2024.