

EARLY OUTCOMES FUND: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Q: What is the Early Outcomes Fund?

- The Early Outcomes Fund, launched today, is worth around £6.5m. It will support bids from LAs undertaking transformation work to improve how their local services are designed and deployed to improve language outcomes for 0-5s, and to assess and codify existing good practice of this type.
- The fund aims to: a) increase leadership focus at local authority level on the key issue of early language; b) enable LAs to undertake work to improve their services and how they are delivered; and c) resource evaluation and partnership working amongst LAs that will spread innovations around the wider system.

Q: Who is eligible to bid to the Early Outcomes fund?

- We are seeking bids from partnerships of 3-4 LAs (with one LA in the lead.)
- We will accept bids from individual LAs who have outcomes 'below the median' (i.e. in the bottom half of LAs in terms of early communication language and literacy outcomes). But, our preference would be for joint bids from Combined Authorities or LAs working in informal partnerships.
- In joint bids from Combined Authorities at least one LA must have outcomes below the median. In joint bids from informal partnerships, the lead LA does not need to have outcomes below the median, but partner LAs do.
- Further guidance on checking whether your eligibility is in the bidding guidance, including an explanative diagram.

Q: Can a partnership bid include more than 4 LAs?

- Yes. We have set this out as a guide/expectation only.

Q: What types of projects are eligible for funding?

- We will accept bids for **two types of project**:
 - **Priority A:** Projects that implement a new approach by kicking-off and/or progressing system change that addresses leadership, funding, commissioning, workforces, data, accountability and/or evaluation (non-exhaustive list - see section 3c of the guidance), with the ultimate aim of improving good early language outcomes in a local area; or
 - **Priority B:** Projects that 'assess' and 'codify' existing approaches to improvement currently being undertaken within the LA which are thought to be effective and might be shared more widely.
 - **Assess** in this context is defined as: *Working to evaluate or otherwise measure the impact of an approach to understand and agree what has or is likely to have worked.*
 - **Codify** in this context is defined as: *Creating sufficiently detailed guidance setting out what has happened, why and how, what impact it has had, and positioning it in the wider context so as to give other LAs the tools and theoretical and practical grounding needed to implement a similar approach.*

- We would be open to joint-bids which included a mixture of priority A and B projects. For example, a lead LA could apply to assess and codify an existing approach (B) and to implement it in partner LAs (A).

Q: How would I know if a project that I have in mind is really suitable for the Early Outcomes Fund?

- At a high-level, to understand whether your idea is a good fit for the fund, it might be helpful to apply the following questions. If the answer to each is yes, it is likely that the core of your idea fits the fund:
 - Is my idea ultimately focused on securing improved early language outcomes for 0-5s?
 - Will my idea require engagement from more than one 'discipline' or workforce within my local area? (e.g. health, education, early help, family support, social work etc)
 - Is my idea broader than a single intervention/type of intervention?
 - Does my idea explore changing cultures, i.e. 'how' we do things, and how we think about them, in order to achieve improved outcomes, as well as 'what' we do, i.e. processes?
- Please look at the bidding guidance for further details of the types of activity we might expect to see in bids. The above is a guide only, not an exhaustive test.

Q: How much money is available per project?

- We would prefer to fund a small number (5-10) substantial and impactful projects. We would expect joint bids in the range of £500k to £1.5m and any individual LA bids in the range of £500k to £1m.

Q: Is it possible to bid for more than this?

Yes. We have set out our expectations in the guidance but LAs can bid for higher sums. However, the ambition, reach, quality and vfm of the project must be proportionate to the funding quantum for it to be competitive.