

Experts and Mentors Programme Frequently Asked Questions

Funding Model

Could you explain a bit more about the funding model, how does my employer claim for me if I am successful in becoming a Mentor/Expert/Area Lead?

We will issue a grant offer letter to your employer, which they need to complete, sign and return to DfE. Each term they will submit a claim form outlining how many days each Mentor/Expert/Area Lead have been working on the programme. Claims will be verified and subject to a grant assurance process.

Applications

I am not currently working in a setting can I apply?

Unfortunately as the funding is paid in the form of a grant to a registered setting/school we can't reimburse individuals directly to undertake this work.

We are now allowing staff working in early years roles within local authorities to apply for the Area Leads and/or Expert role and those in universities or similar organisations currently delivering Child Development and/or Early Years Teacher Training qualifications to apply for the mentor role. In light of this change we will now extend the deadline until the 10th of December 2021. Individuals who wish to apply will need to be based in or near the pilot programme areas of [LWY](#) and [North](#) RSC regions.

Given the focus of this programme on providing peer to peer and setting to setting support we intend to focus first on applications from people currently working within settings, and will then consider applications from other people as set out above, where we need greater numbers of Area Leads, Experts or Mentors in that locality. Flexibility has now been given to allow those working in local authorities to act as Area Leads and Experts given their experience of delivering this type of support to settings. For those working in universities, used to supporting individual practitioners we are accepting applications for the mentoring role.

Can multiple staff from the same setting apply?

Yes as long as the manager/head teacher agrees. For example a setting may have a manager working as an expert and a practitioner working as a mentor. The manager will only need to return one grant form for the setting.

My setting hasn't been inspected by Ofsted yet can I still apply?

Yes if your setting has not yet been inspected then please indicate this on your application. You will still be able to apply.

I don't have a Level 6 qualification in childcare can I still apply?

For the pilot programme we are looking for those with a L6 or above qualification in childcare. We will revisit this criteria once the recruitment for pilot Experts, Mentors and Area Leads has closed and consider if this is still appropriate for full roll out.

I am a childminder can I apply to be a Mentor, Expert or Area Lead?

As the support offered in the pilot programme will focus on PVI settings, we are currently looking for applicants based in a setting, with some flexibilities to include those working in local authorities or universities as outlined above. The programme will be extended to childminders in the future, with the intention to begin recruitment of childminder mentors from January 2023.

I am not in the pilot regions how can I get involved?

We are currently looking for Experts, Mentors and Area leads that can support the Lancashire and West Yorkshire and North RSC regions. It may be the case that applicants based in other local authorities wish to apply. For example a PVI leader in Barnsley (East Midlands and Humber RSC region) may wish to apply to support a neighbouring LA that they have knowledge of such as Wakefield (LWY RSC region).

Recruitment for Experts, Mentors and Area Leads for the full roll-out will begin in the Spring term of 2022.

Settings

How will you communicate this offer with settings?

Currently we are asking local authorities to notify settings in their locality of the opportunity to apply to be an Expert, Mentor or Area Lead. We will ask them to communicate the support offer with settings in the new year.

Which type of setting are you focusing on?

For the pilot programme, the support is aimed at PVI settings that have been judged as requires improvement or below in the last three years, have high numbers of children in receipt of EY Pupil Premium, high numbers of children with SEND and high numbers of children taking up the disadvantaged 2-year-old offer. In the pilot programme we are allowing local authorities the flexibility to nominate other settings that don't meet the criteria but may be in challenging circumstances, to still receive support (up to 20% of the total number of settings supported).

How many settings can an LA nominate?

We expect around 10 settings per LA, per term to be supported, dependent on the numbers of Mentors and Experts available locally. We may ask LAs to nominate more settings to support with our evaluation process.

How does it work with LAs and their existing engagement with these settings?

We wish to work with local authorities throughout the pilot period to understand more about their existing arrangements with settings and ensure the right settings are supported.

Is there a financial incentive for PVI settings to take part in this?

PVI settings receiving support will not receive any financial incentive to take part. Settings that provide Mentors, Experts and Area Leads will be given grant funding to facilitate release of their staff.

Will settings be matched to a Mentor or Expert from their own local authority?

In the majority of cases we would expect the Mentor and Expert that is matched to a setting would be local to them. In some cases Experts and Mentors may come from neighbouring localities if we have a mismatch of supply and demand.

Wider Programme

How can I find out more about the wider recovery programme?

An overview of the wider early years recovery package has been published on the [Foundation Years](#) website.