



Department  
for Education

## **Regional Scoping and Response Template**

### **Children's Social Care COVID-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better Fund**

#### **South West Response**

**August 2021**

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## Strand 1: Regional Improvement & Innovation Alliance (RIIA)

### Regional response to strand 1: Summary of activities and costs.

Regional response to strand 1 (CORE): Summary of activities			
Core expectation	Regional allocated amount	Lead LA (s)	Reference to where activity is set out in regional plan <u>or</u> summary of activity to meet core expectation
Collection of 18 agreed core children's services indicators	£40,000	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	£30,000 to cover costs for the reporting process on the increased number of indicators as set out in priorities 10 in the regional plan
		East Sussex	£10,000 for the South West contribution to the National Data to Intelligence project as set out in priority 10 in the regional plan
Self-assessment and peer challenge programme which includes all LAs in the region	£3,200 (£48,000 for South West)	Wiltshire	<p>As set out in priority 4 in the regional plan, a new framework and self-assessment form have been drafted and signed off during 2021 building on experience from the regional challenge events in 2017 and the requirements of the South West Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance. The aim is to minimise additional burden on local authorities whilst working within existing assessment regimes but ensuring an element of consistency or the core areas a self-assessment should cover.</p> <p>Funding is calculated at the rate of £3,200 per local authority for £800 per day for four days for the Director of Children's Services resulting in a total of <b>£48,000</b> for the South West's 15 local authorities. The annual self-assessment review will be held in early December 2021.</p>
One LA within the region, with a family hub, to lead work with the department's policy team and national centre	£73,000	Cornwall	<p>As set out in priority 6 of the regional plan, the planned activity within this element is shown below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings with DfE policy team and national centre to confirm DfE requirements/desired outputs from policy work and agree approach to participation of South West Local Authorities</li> <li>Develop a South West Family Hub network</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate a regional self-evaluation of Family Hub delivery for South West local authorities, to identify best practice, cross-cutting themes, rubbing points, barriers and areas requiring further focus</li> <li>• Develop a 'Family Hub toolkit' to support regional roll out of Family Hubs</li> <li>• Develop Family Hub regional action plan to identify and progress areas where a regional collaboration can support and add value to actions already planned by individual local authorities.</li> <li>• Identify priority areas for further focus if the DfE recovery fund is extended into 2022-23</li> <li>• Further regional workshops and learning events as appropriate to develop and launch the Family Hub Toolkit, share best practice and learning around implementing and delivering Family Hub approaches</li> </ul> <p>Cornwall's leads for this work will be our Early Help Service Managers who have a proven track record of successful work developing integrated approach to Early Help and multi-disciplinary Family Hubs in Cornwall.</p> <p>The £73k will be used to contribute to interim management arrangements to provide cover to enable Cornwall's Early Help Service Managers to conduct this work, and to enable recruitment of a dedicated Senior Business Support Officer which will be crucial to co-ordinate this regional improvement activity.</p>
Small packages of sector-led improvement support in the region	£94,000	Wiltshire	<p><b>Thematic Peer Challenge Programme - £89,000.</b>  <b>Regional Learning event - £5,000.</b></p> <p><b>Thematic Peer Challenge Programme</b></p> <p>Building on the success of the Regional Thematic Peer Challenge Programme a new theme will be introduced for delivery in the first quarter of 2022. The thematic peer challenge programme is a two-day diagnostic peer review conducted by a partner local authority in</p>

			<p>the region. Previous Thematic Peer Challenges have been focused on neglect, children in need of help and protection and most recently quality assurance. Each participating local authority receives a report detailing findings and recommendations on the key lines of enquiry. Previous evaluations of the programme have indicated that there are positive outcomes for both the host and challenge authority.</p> <p>Comments from one participant shows the immediate benefits of participating on challenging perceptions and being able to reflect on practice:</p> <p>“It was very helpful to consider social work from another perspective. Stepping outside your own LA is a really helpful way to reflect on social work practice, strategy and structures at a slight distance. Immersion in another LA approach supported our own reflections on our practice (strengths and weaknesses). It was helpful to know that small LA’s like ours struggle with the same practice challenges as a large county; the answers are not always straightforward. It was helpful to reflect on the ways they have sought to respond to key challenges in respect of their front door and edge of care work with adolescents in particular.”</p> <p>The costings for the thematic peer challenge are as follows:</p> <p>A local authority team of three which may include Service Director, Heads of Service or Team Managers for five days work each challenge. This includes preparation for the challenge, conducting the challenge, evaluating and reporting on the challenge.</p> <p>3 people for 5 days at £600 per day is £9000 per challenge.</p> <p>Estimate 8 local authorities participating in the thematic challenge is £72,000</p> <p>Training and co-ordination costs for the challenge £15,000</p>
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			<p><b>Regional Learning event</b></p> <p>The region will run a ‘Sharing Good Practice’ regional event with workshops delivered by local authorities within the region. There will be 4 -5 places per local authority.</p> <p>These costing and activities are set out in priority 4 of the regional plan.</p>
Regional arrangements to support the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) National Transfer Scheme (NTS).	£50,000	Gloucestershire	<p>As set out in priority 5 in the regional plan, the funding will be used to support the development of a regional approach to the allocation of UASC with support from the Regional Strategic Migration Partnership.</p> <p>Initially this will consist of support for the implementation of a rota system to enable a more streamlined placement of children and young people who cannot be matched to a placement.</p> <p>Following this, a feasibility study will be undertaken by March 2022 to look at the potential for several regional centres of excellence which would allow a number of placements together in more urban centres across the South West. This would have the potential to enable efficiencies to be made in commissioning services such as education and other support services.</p>

<b>Regional response to strand 1 (Optional project): Summary of activities and costs</b>	
<b>Priority / focus area (e.g., Family law, placement sufficiency, workforce)</b>	
<p>Developing leadership capability in the region’s workforce – to develop and strengthen the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management throughout the region and help overcome long-standing challenges in succession planning. The regional has successfully delivered well evaluated similar programmes to more senior leaders in the region and this will help us to reach down to ensure that we are investing in all leaders in our workforce and planning for the long-term.</p> <p><b>Lead contact: Theresa Leavy, Dorset</b></p>	

## Activities

Regional leadership development programme for up to 50 aspiring Heads of Service which will include:

- 360-degree survey
- Face to face and virtual sessions
  - 4 half day workshops x2 (25 participants each)
  - 1 one day workshop x2 (25 participants each)
- Coaching and mentoring opportunity (4 sessions)
- Links to a learning portal providing leadership and management tools and resources
- Creation of a peer network

## Cost breakdown (provide full cost)

**This bid is for £70,200 set out in the table below:**

Activity	Activities	Cost
Leadership programme delivery	Design/Prep	£9,600
	Delivery	£14,300
	Guest Speakers	£6,000
	Programme Management	£4,000
	Administration	£3,500
	Materials	£300
	Venues	£12,000
Virtual Coaching & mentoring sessions	Administration and matching	£2,000
	Delivery	£8,000
Learning Portal	Administration	£1,000
Programme Director	10 days @750 per day	£7,500
Evaluation	Report writing	£2,000
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>£70,200</b>

**Success Measures (Include KPIs which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound)**

- Participation and completion rates
- Distance travelled on before and after 360 survey – leadership competence and confidence
- Session satisfaction surveys (after each session)
- Retention rates over 18 months
- Tracking of take-up of head of service roles within 18 months of completion

**How will you ensure delivery of the above activities before March 2022? (Please limit response to 750 words)**

We will build on our existing delivery programme and adapt the resources to meet the needs of this cohort. The regional network will be used to identify appropriate participants, and this will be championed by the regional DCS network. The region will draw upon its existing networks of coaches and mentors to enable speedy matching.

**What is the sustainable impact of the activities above and how will you ensure activity is not reliant on any future DfE funding? (Please limit response to 750 words)**

This is a standalone programme that will be delivered within the timeframe. The outcome of the evaluation will be used to determine if the region will continue to deliver into the future and the expectation is that individual authorities will pool funding from existing workforce development budgets to fund in the future if its impact is demonstrated.

**Regional response to strand 1 (Optional projects): Summary of activities and costs**

**Priority / focus area (e.g., Family law, placement sufficiency, workforce)**

South West Sufficiency Project: Placement Sufficiency for fostering, residential and independent special schools

**Lead contact: Chris Sivers, South Gloucestershire**

**Activities**

- Analyse 42 data sets for each LA
- Create a detailed MPS (online with navigation and for print)
- Create a summary document of MPS (online with navigation and for print)
- Produce graphics/imagery for the MPS
- Analyse the provider survey

- Liaise with the project manager on a weekly basis
- Consult with the three project groups fostering, residential and non-maintained independent special schools to ensure all information is corroborated
- Be available for the following project and board meeting dates if necessary:
  - 16, 18, 19 August
  - 13, 15, 16, 23 September
  - 04, 15, 17, 18 November
  - 06, 08, 09, 16 December

Deadlines:

04 October 2021 – 1st DRAFT

28 October 2021 – 2nd DRAFT (Board review 04 Nov)

29 November 2021 – 3rd DRAFT (Project groups review 06/08/09 December)

13 December 2021 – FINAL (Board sign off 16 December)

**Cost breakdown (provide full cost)**

**This bid is for £24,900 of the total cost set out in the table below:**

Team member	Nick Spyropoulos	Aliya Saied-Tessier	Dr Elisabetta Pasini	Sara Laabid	In-house web development & graphic design team	Days per activity	Budget per activity
Role	Project Director & Account Manager	Expert Advisor	Lead Consultant	Analyst			
Daily rate (£ excluding VAT)	1400	1200	600	400	400		
Project activities	Days allocated						
<b>Data analysis</b>							
Analysing LA data			5.0	5.0		10.0	£5,000
Analysing the provider survey			3.0	3.0		6.0	£3,000
Producing graphics/imagery			1.0		3.0	4.0	£1,800
Workshops with project groups	0.5		1.0	1.0		2.5	£1,700
<b>Drafting and reporting</b>							
Drafting the MPS	0.5	1.0	3.0	5.0	2.0	11.5	£6,500
Drafting the MPS summary			1.0			1.0	£600
Creating the online MPS			1.0		3.0	4.0	£1,800
Integrating comments/ draft revisions	0.5		5.0		2.0	7.5	£4,500
<b>Total days per team member</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>£24,900</b>
<b>Total budget per team member</b>	<b>£2,100</b>	<b>£1,200</b>	<b>£12,000</b>	<b>£5,600</b>	<b>£4,000</b>	<b>TOTAL (Exc VAT)</b>	<b>£24,900</b>
						<b>VAT</b>	<b>£4,980</b>
						<b>TOTAL (Inc VAT)</b>	<b>£29,880</b>

### Success Measures (Include KPIs which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound)

The success measures for this piece of work will be meeting the milestones set out in the plan below with a final outcome of achieving an agreed regional Market Position Statement by the end of December 2021.

Month:	Jul-21				Aug-21					Sep-21				Oct-21				Nov-21					Dec-21			
Week Commencing:	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27
<b>Project activities</b>																										
<b>Data analysis</b>																										
Analysing LA data																										
Analysing the provider survey																										
Producing graphics/imagery																										
Workshops with project groups																										
<b>Drafting and reporting</b>																										
Drafting the MPS																										
Drafting the MPS summary																										
Creating the online MPS																										
Integrating comments/ draft revisions																										
<b>Milestones</b>																										
Inception meeting																										
Weekly update																										
Submit 1st draft																										
Submit 2nd draft																										
Submit 3rd draft																										
Submit final version of the MPS																										

**How will you ensure delivery of the above activities before March 2022? (Please limit response to 750 words)**

Inception meeting has already taken place in week commencing 26 July 2021 where the background to the project was discussed along with the methodology and project plan to arrive at a shared understanding about the outputs and timetable.

There will be weekly email updates and/or phone updates detailing the progress of the study, emerging findings and issues with the Lead Consultant, Dr Pasini, to the project’s Contract Manager.

3 workshops will be run with the three project groups - fostering, residential and non-maintained independent special schools during August and September 2021. The goal of the workshops is to (i) present the results of the data analysis (for the LA data and the surveys); (ii) corroborate the findings with providers, and (iii) seek feedback about how the information is presented so we can maximise the usefulness of the outputs.

**What is the sustainable impact of the activities above and how will you ensure activity is not reliant on any future DfE funding? (Please limit response to 750 words)**

The Southwest Sufficiency Project aims to create a whole system approach, with new models of commissioning placements, to ensure we can achieve the desired outcomes for our children and young people. The project will support and establish new ways of working by further developing partnerships and networks across local authorities, providers and independent agencies.

The expected benefits/KPI's of this approach are as follows:

- An increase in retention of Local Authority foster carers.
- An increase in Local Authority foster carers offering therapeutic care.
- An increase in number of placements being made Locally.
- An increase in Locally owned residential buildings.
- An increase in availability of placements in Local children's homes.
- A reduction in placement breakdowns.
- A reduction in the number of children and young people placed out of area.
- Strengths and difficulties questionnaire for looked after children will show a more positive outlook for children and young people.
- A decrease in overall spend for residential placements.
- A decrease in overall spend for foster placements.

Recommendations will not be known until the end of the project, however, the funding for the market position statement will be spent by December 2021. The project will deliver a 5–10-year strategic plan which is set out as an outcome in the regional priorities plan under priority 1.

**Regional response to strand 1 (Optional projects): Summary of activities and costs**

**Priority / focus area (e.g., Family law, placement sufficiency, workforce)**

Workforce Recruitment and Retention

**Lead contact: David Haley, Swindon**

**Activities**

Co-ordination, preparation and delivery of a South West Regional Virtual Recruitment Fair during 2021/22, working with a marketing partner to produce collaborative engaging content to sell the story of a career in Social Work in the South West.

### Cost breakdown (provide full cost)

**This bid is for £15,000 and the breakdown of costs is set out below:**

- Hosting, logistics, registration, facilities - £2,000
- Engagement of Industry guest speaker to aid attraction and CPD - £1500
- Project management/co-ordination - £2,000
- Promotion of event/working in the South West - £5,000
- Follow up video content, toolkit of resources to keep - £4,500

### Success Measures (Include KPIs which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound)

- Significantly, increased engagement of candidates looking for work as a Social Worker in the South West during 2022/23 - measured via:
  - an increase in enquiries and visits
  - an increase in active applications to career websites of South West based regional Local Authority Partners
- Increase in the number of permanent applications to South West Authorities during 2022/23 following the delivery of the recruitment fair event measured at six months and one year - translated into improved ratios of applications to interviews and interviews to offer conversion rates
- Evaluation of Recruitment Fair – both immediately following the event and ongoing, using the content creation from the media partner to continue to measure hits and engagement on individual partner careers websites
- Reduction in the % of agency staff utilised across the south west region during 2022/23 (Workforce Survey outcomes September 2022)

### How will you ensure delivery of the above activities before March 2022? (Please limit response to 750 words)

The South West Recruitment and Retention group is an active well attended network that brings together HR specialists from across the region to share learning and co-ordinate activities that drive the regional approach to management of agency providers and ensure the region has a consistent approach to pay levels of agency staff as well as encouraging social workers to the region.

The recruitment fair is a key activity, which will have participation from all local authorities within the region and will promote the south west as an employer and provide the opportunity for potential applicants to engage with the region in relation to employment opportunities, benefits and current vacancies.

The event will include presentations from Local Authorities, case studies and interactive CPD breakout sessions, along with an industry guest speaker to aid engagement and attraction to the event.

There is a gap in the market for a direct employer collaboratively hosted South West careers event. This is an excellent opportunity for us to come together and highlight the opportunities available to develop a career with one of our South West regional partners who will all be able to demonstrate the unique selling points and case studies within their teams.

It is vital that this does not become a one-off event where the message/impact is quickly lost, as such, all Local Authorities are committed to collaborative working and ensuring there is a toolkit of resources to keep the message live and insightful. We therefore propose to engage a marketing partner to produce video content and material that all LA's can host on their career websites after the event and on an ongoing basis- promoting a career in social care in the South West.

The South West regional group is committed to this programme of activity and will balance the timing of the event to reflect the external careers fairs hosted by key media partners during Sep/Oct (Community Care and Compass). This event will be held before March 2022 to address the key recruitment challenges felt across the South West and to take advantage of the expected movement in the market as individuals look to relocate or look for a different employer as we come out of the Covid restrictions.

A project manager will be identified to manage this activity; as such, it will be subject to project plan methodology, timescales and budget. A sub-group has been formed consisting of representatives from all Local Authorities and they will report into the wider South West regional group- to update on progress and be accountable for meeting project milestones.

**What is the sustainable impact of the activities above and how will you ensure activity is not reliant on any future DfE funding? (Please limit response to 750 words)**

The impact will be an increased and ongoing brand presence and engagement of a career in Social Care in the South West. The funding includes partnering with a marketing agency to produce a toolkit of resources and video content that keeps this message alive via wider promotion online from all Local Authorities, so that the message does not get lost after the event has taken place - this is key to ensure we achieve a sustainable impact from this funding.

We will report on the success of the event and related marketing materials using metrics such as engagement/attendance rate, follow up conversations with potential candidates at regular intervals, analysis of campaign material via our chosen media partners, hits/enquiries/applications to active Social Work vacancies and associated interviews/offers made.

It is vital that we continue to address significant market shortages in the South West of Experienced Social Workers and have an active, engaged "always on" brand presence across the careers websites of all Local Authorities in the region - this funding will help us achieve this. It will provide a joint collaborative platform to aid recruitment to address permanent skills shortages, as well as being used with agency partners and to share learning across the region.

## Regional response to strand 1 (Optional projects ): Summary of activities and costs

### Priority / focus area (e.g., Family law, placement sufficiency, workforce)

**Care Leavers:** building a core offer for the South West; sharing best practice across the region including DfE Innovations funded programmes such as staying close and Social Impact Bonds to deliver EET outcomes; providing support to LAs who wish to adopt or scale innovations and best practice approaches

This workstream is integral to enabling recovery for one of our most vulnerable groups, those who are care experienced and who are/will continue to be disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. By building a regional offer and supporting LAs to learn from each other / scale best practice and innovations, we will provide a region-wide safety and support network for young people, rather than one that operates on a differential local authority basis.

**Lead contact: Ann James, Bristol**

### Activities

#### 1. Ensure this work stream is co-constructed and co-led by care experienced young people

- appoint two care experienced officers to work across the region with the purpose of:
  - o Establishing a network of LA care leaver groups and ensuring a network of contributors to identify priorities and co-construct a regional offer
  - o Support activity to engage businesses and organisations across the region to make an offer as part of our corporate family
  - o Support best practice events ensuring the voice of care leavers are central throughout

#### 2. Develop and publish a core offer for the region:

- Bring together a regional group to learn from the Greater Manchester model and consider what's right for the South West and develop a detailed project plan for the 6 months who will drive the programme
- Appoint Project & Participation Officers to support the group to drive the project forward
- Deliver initial engagement (offer and ask) events that build a 'one region, corporate family' approach:
  - (i) for LAs and Leads Members, Combined Authorities
  - (ii) for businesses and organisations in the region (big employers and investors in the region with CSR)
  - o Hear from care leavers about what's needed, particularly hearing from those who have lived out of area in the south west
  - o Dispel myths and inspire
- Analyse each LA's offer similarities/differences

- Scope how best to enable access to a regional core offer – this may be hosted web pages with links to local and national offers made through the Care Leaver Covenant (or could be something else – depends what young people identify as most accessible)
  - o Procure what's needed
- Draft the offer
- Consult and publish with a launch event in March 2021

**3. Share Best Practice and Scale Up opportunities: Care Leavers into EET and Staying Close (Bristol & others)**

- Coordinate a regional learning and engagement event, with young people's experiences at its heart to:
  - o Share best practice and delivery of innovations funded or local programmes that are improving outcomes for care leavers
  - o Focus on the journey of improvement, not just the outcome
  - o Hear from third sector providers and partner agencies such as the Re-Boot Model supporting EET using Acceptance and Commitment Training – funded by DfE Innovations funding of a sub-regional social impact bond originally, it is now moving to a joint funded and commissioned provision with full efficacy trial. Generate discussion that includes other successful EET practice around the region from ringfenced apprenticeships to young directors and accessing DWP funding for EET specialist and/or navigators.
  - o Specialist input on developing social impact bonds and PBR models
  - o Consider how to bring Employment & Skills and Social Care approaches together to deliver improved outcomes
  - o Hear about the progress being made to develop a care leaver health offer (NHSE blue print project) and personalised budgets approach to supporting emotional and mental health (joint funding/co-commissioning)
  - o Learning from Staying Close pilot arrangements and time to consider reciprocal arrangements for young people moving on in the area they've grown up. An opportunity to think 'life course' and trauma informed, engaging Adult services colleagues in corporate parenting, learning from best practice
  - o Consider the impact of peer-on-peer abuse and exploitation and best practice in trauma recovery: drawing on the safeguarding adolescents strand, Contextual Safeguarding Scale Up Pilots and emerging approaches post 18 in BNSSG through Changing Futures to aid recovery for 18-25 year olds.
  - o Learn from each other and support participant LAs to decide which areas of improvement they wish to focus on
- Follow-on offer:
  - o Support LAs with their leaving care self-assessment (peer & young people model) to help tailor scale up or transferrable approaches
  - o 3 x consultation support from the LA / vol sector or agency partner to help take plans forward and transfer learning into delivery within each local authority who wishes to implement a new approach.

**Cost breakdown (provide full cost)**

**This bid is for £190,000 and the breakdown of costs is set out below:**

- Project/Participation Officer capacity to support the lead and participant LAs to achieve the above within 6 months - £120k

- Co-construction and participation leads (care experienced young people) x 2 co-construction funding - £30k
- Website design and build - £30k
- Commissioning, administration, conference and other costs - £10k

#### Success Measures (Include KPIs which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound)

- A published core offer for the region (March 2022)
- An established regional network of care leaver groups
- 1/3 local authorities in the region identify the best practice developments they will instate as a result of the best practice learning and development offer
- Young people report that they know how to access the regional, local and national offer
- Local partners report an understanding of and ability to combine resources to deliver improved outcomes across 3 key indicators for care leavers
- Sustainability: regional agreement to continue to develop/maintain the offer (hosted by one LA?)

#### How will you ensure delivery of the above activities before March 2022? (Please limit response to 750 words)

- **Project approach:** Detailed plan with key milestones in place by end September
- **Governance:** Steering group to be established with lead and participant LAs & young people – meet monthly
- Reporting into via monthly highlight report, the DCS SLI Group
- **Capacity:** resourced for 6 months to enable pace and traction in progressing the offer (potential leads are identified and will be ready to step into role as soon as funding is secured)
- **Buy-in:** LAs are engaged (Bristol, BANES, S Glos, Devon, Swindon as key participants, however we will take this wider through the learning and engagement events – an offer to the region).
- **Utilise** existing relationships, strategic and political structures to engage partners and business community. (There is appetite in the region amongst lead members to work more collaboratively and we will harness this to champion this work).
- **Building on strong foundations:** building on sub-regional relationships in care leaving services
- **Support:** from the National Adviser for Care Leavers and will engage with National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum to support us to build a sustainable model

#### What is the sustainable impact of the activities above and how will you ensure activity is not reliant on any future DfE funding? (Please limit response to 750 words)

- An improved and equitable core offer to care leavers across the region
- An accessible offer that care leavers and professionals know about
- Reduced bureaucratic burden and transactional costs when young people live out of area
- Capacity built through learning and support activities will equip LAs to focus on their individual journey of continual improvement and enable LAs to build a response for care leavers that has some resilience to the disproportionate impact of COVID on this group (supporting recovery)

- Longer term, this should deliver improved outcomes and reduced inequality – longer term, improvements in health, education, employment and training, accommodation and relationship will reduce spend across the life-course
- Maintenance of the offer will require less resource than this initial project phase, perhaps one or half a post which could be funded by a small contribution from each LA and hosted by one LA
- Participant LAs have described their ambition for care leavers and how progressing this workstream will fit with their future operating model, transformation plans and strategic ambition. This gives confidence that progress made will be adopted as business as usual and sustained.
- Additionally, this workstream fits with other strategic work, including delivery of the revised National Transfer Scheme. The region will be welcoming more unaccompanied children and is committed to doing this in as child/young person centred a way as possible. An equitable and easily understood core offer and a regional network supporting care leavers will enable and improve our ability to respond to the needs of unaccompanied young people as they enter adulthood wherever they live in our region

**LA contacts:**

**Bristol:**

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## Regional response to strand 1 (Optional projects): Summary of activities and costs

### Priority / focus area (e.g., Family law, placement sufficiency, workforce)

Workforce - scope and develop a blueprint for a Systemic Social Work Practice Centre of Excellence in the South West

**Lead contact: Ann James, Bristol**

### Activities

- Event to engage Practice Leaders and Directors of Children's Services in potential for a regional or sub-regional Centre of Excellence
- Initial scoping of what Leaders would like to see: SWOT analysis and initial cost benefit analysis
- Input from LGA, DfE and Centre for Systemic Social Work to explore possibilities and evaluate different models
- Blueprint developed (costed, timed, outcomes articulated) of our preferred model based on our ambition as a region/sub-region and steps required to progress preferred model
- Develop a shared funding model and commissioning approach
- Engage local universities
- Set out additional benefits and value that can be added by creating a regional or sub regional Centre of Excellence (see potential benefits of such an approach set out below)

### Cost breakdown (provide full cost)

**This bid is for £10,000 and the breakdown of costs is set out below:**

- £5k to cover the costs of officer time to coordinate the engagement and develop the blueprint = product and options paper with recommendations
- £5k specialist input to help us shape the model (up to 10 days at £500 per day)

**Success Measures (Include KPIs which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound)**

**For this element of funding, success is:**

- LAs are engaged
- LAs are better informed about systemic practice and have considered the cost/benefits of establishing a regional centre of excellence
- scope of the centre and options for delivery are analysed and a recommendation agreed by participating LAs
- blueprint drafted
- project plan developed
- costings clear/funding model set out
- expected outcomes set
- core offer outlined

We envisage the above would form the basis for a memorandum of understanding or partnership agreement amongst participant LAs that would lead to the establishment of a regional Centre of Excellence in 2021/22.

**How will you ensure delivery of the above activities before March 2022? (Please limit response to 750 words)**

This is a relatively small project to deliver within 6 months as it is a bid to engage regional leads in the potential of a centre of excellence focussed on delivering systemic social work (possibly other strengths based and trauma informed approaches)

This initial phase will scope what that would cost, look like and deliver. It is the first stage of developing such a centre and as such, it is not overly ambitious for delivery within 6 months, indeed we would hope that the resource asked for here will enable us to deliver the products before March 2022 and be ready to progress implementation from April 2022.

It does however, have a potentially huge impact for the region or sub-region in terms of outcomes for children and families and developing, retaining and attracting a highly skilled workforce. It will add to the strengths in our region that will help us to be/maintain a position as social work employers of choice for excellent social workers who seek the conditions to deliver for children and families.

The ultimate beneficiaries are children and families, and it is therefore incumbent upon us to take the time to think through what a regional centre of excellence should look and feel like, why and how it will beat individual local authority arrangements. Bristol, BANES and South

Gloucestershire are committed to the benefits we believe it can deliver (see below); however, we want to share and improve upon our thinking by engaging colleagues across the region. BCP, Wiltshire, Swindon and Somerset have declared their interest and support this bid, whilst other LAs have previously shown interest in developing our practice approach as a region.

We also have positive initial responses from our DfE adviser, Genevieve Cox; LGA Advisor, Clare Burgess; CfSSW Clinical Director, Caroline Pipe; and former Director of CfSSW and ex-DCS, Clare Chamberlain, who are all willing and able to support us in developing our proposals.

This funding would enable us to take these next steps and reach a proposal stage that will be clearer about scale, cost and benefits and will ensure we are ready to progress.

**What is the sustainable impact of the activities above and how will you ensure activity is not reliant on any future DfE funding?**  
*(Please limit response to 750 words)*

**Potential sustainable benefits that a centre of excellence would / could deliver following this scoping and design phase:**

- Support the development of skilled and purposeful practice at all levels – improving outcomes for children and families
- Improve recruitment and retention in the region – part of an attractive offer of employment
- Support leadership development and succession planning across the region (could link well to the current leadership programmes)
- Enable cross authority career progression and portability of skills and approach
- Focussed on enabling SWs to do what they came into the job for
- Enable more cost-effective training and improved coordination of a regional / sub-regional training and development offer: economy of scale and standardised approaches (will benefit from past year's learning and ability to deliver digitally as well as in person, breaking down distance barriers across the southwest)
- Enable more to access the training by providing it locally – possibly through a hub and spoke approach with CfSSW
- Support to embed learning from systemic courses thereby improving impact of training
- Peer support and supervision – reflection and action learning sets will not be limited to a single LA and will support reinforce our sector led improvement
- Provide coordination and dissemination of further systemic/strengths-based learning and approaches (potential toolkit/knowledge hub development)

- Could support local universities through a mutually beneficial partnering arrangements and could support future developments such as teaching partnerships
- Well placed to test and develop innovative approaches, attract further funding to the region and improve outcomes
- Well placed to support the regional response to the Care Review
- Well placed to support other strands of regional recovery work such as the development of Family Hubs, Adolescent Safeguarding, Infant Safeguarding etc. and as such will contribute to the scaling and sustainability of those programmes in delivering sector led improvement
- ASYE induction, support and graduation – better supported and part of a regional professional network
- PSW support and development
- Regional engagement/partnership with training agencies like frontline, stepping up and regional leadership programmes

**Future proofing:** now more than ever, we need to work closely with regional partners to continue to build a highly skilled workforce that can help mitigate the worst impacts of the pandemic and begin a recovery builds our resilience. A regional centre of excellence focused on delivery of a practice methodology that is evidence based will deliver:

- **skilled and timely interventions that reduce demand on specialist and care services = costs contained/avoided + outcomes improved**

Local authority contacts for interest authorities:

**Bristol:**

Ann James [ann.james@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:ann.james@bristol.gov.uk) Director

Becky Lewis [becky.lewis@bristol.goc.uk](mailto:becky.lewis@bristol.goc.uk) Service Lead

Graham Wilkie [graham.wilkie@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:graham.wilkie@bristol.gov.uk) Policy and Performance

**BANES:**

Mary Kearney-Knowles [Mary\\_Kearney-Knowles@BATHNES.GOV.UK](mailto:Mary_Kearney-Knowles@BATHNES.GOV.UK) Director

**BCP**

Elaine Redding [elaine.redding@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.redding@bcpcouncil.gov.uk) Director

**Wiltshire**

Townsend, Lucy [Lucy.Townsend@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Lucy.Townsend@wiltshire.gov.uk) Director

**South Gloucestershire:**

Jo Cross [Jo.Cross@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:Jo.Cross@southglos.gov.uk) AD Head of Service

Chris Sivers [chris.sivers@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:chris.sivers@bristol.gov.uk) Director

**Swindon**

Parmjit Chahal [PChahal@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:PChahal@swindon.gov.uk)

David Haley [DHaley@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:DHaley@swindon.gov.uk) Director

**Somerset**

Julian Wooster [JWooster@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:JWooster@somerset.gov.uk) Director

## Strand 2: Practice Solution recovery projects

### Regional response to strand 2: LAs proposed for participation in Practice Solution Projects.

Select which Practice Solution Project this table relates to;	Local Authority(s) (where one LA will act as lead for a group, please state this and list all LAs)
<input type="checkbox"/> Project 1: Accelerate the opening of more family hubs (Option A) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 1: Accelerate the opening of more family hubs (Option B) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project 2: Protect adolescents against harms outside of the home. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 3: Safeguard children and young people from FGM abuse. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 4: Safeguard infants. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 5: Reduce court backlogs. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6a) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6b) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6c) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6d)	Wiltshire (Lead) Swindon Dorset
<b>Total amount of funding requested:</b>	<b>£250,000</b>
<b>SECTION A: Please outline (in no more than 1000 words) how the LA(s) is suited to undertake this Practice Solution Project, and demonstrate how they meet or exceed the listed eligibility criteria for the project</b>	
<p>Wiltshire, Swindon and Dorset LAs share an established commitment and approach to safeguarding adolescents from EFH. Wiltshire is part of the Contextual Safeguarding (CS) national scale up project with the University of Bedfordshire and are currently in the piloting phase of the project with an emphasis on strategic priorities and operational practice change across education provisions up to child protection processes, where a new CP category is currently being piloted. Swindon are working with the CS team as part of the national Local Area Interest Network, are part of the Tacking Child Exploitation work with Research in Practice and work closely with Wiltshire under the pan-Wiltshire Child Exploitation and Missing subgroup to ensure a joined up strategic approach to EFH. Dorset Council has a well-established multi-agency partnership approach to Contextual Safeguarding, underpinned by the evidence base from Bedfordshire and are one year into the delivery of our strategy. This work is informed by the evidence base being developed by Dr Firmin and her team and uses a trauma informed, restorative, strengths-based model to safeguard adolescents at risk of EFH.</p> <p>The joint proposal is to establish a CS in Schools co-ordinator role, supported by CS co-ordinators proposed within Swindon and Wiltshire. The co-ordinator will lead on a project of learning and development with schools and alternative provisions across the three LAs, including the development of a bespoke training package for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) within identified provision. Upskilling DSLs within school Senior Leadership Teams will support schools to build a strategic response to EFH and peer on peer abuse and inform curriculum development within PHSE. The coordinator will support the DSLs to use a bespoke version of</p>	

the Bedfordshire's Beyond Referrals toolkit to complete a self-assessment and identify areas to improve. DSLs can then promote and embed an understanding of, and clear policies around, the use of exclusions and the impact on vulnerability to EFH. Pastoral staff will also be trained to deliver on the ground interventions and support around EFH, as 'teachable moments' responding at critical points such as exclusions. A forum for engaging with student's views on EFH and what they need from schools will be developed across each area. Outcomes will be measured through monitoring an identified cohort and measuring impact. Learning from these three areas can be scaled up across the region via the ADCS and monitored at scale. Positive impacts will indicate an improvement across the region which is self-sustaining through the training and policy framework being embedded.

Alongside this joint project, the areas propose development within their localities as follows, with the commitment to share learning and tools from each theme:

#### Wiltshire

- CS co-ordinator role – to lead on strategic priorities and develop practice across the LA and multi-agency partners. System to identify vulnerable children through education provision in place and can be expanded.
- CS co-ordinator will work to develop a peer support network for families affected by EFH. This will assist in increasing engagement rates with parents affected by EFH.
- Custody interventions - Wiltshire are currently piloting a project where intervention is offered in custody when there are concerns young person is being criminally exploited. Outcomes have so far been positive. This will be expanded and scaled up so that workers are available to support every young person who meets criteria, at whatever time they are brought in.

#### Dorset

During the pandemic we have developed data capability to support the identification of vulnerable children and developed strong partnerships with schools to respond to those at risk of exclusion or excluded to enable them to be supported to participate in education.

Through this project we will further develop our approach to **Education as Protection** through:

- Working with mainstream schools (as commissioners of Alternative Provision) and providers of Alternative Provision (AP) to increase understanding of the risks and further develop and embed risk assessments for schools to make decisions about appropriate responses to individual children
- Development of a safeguarding self-assessment and external quality assurance approach for AP providers to better understand and address the risks associated with EFH.
- Offer additional group work interventions from our targeted youth workers and VCS providers to support reengagement for those that are at risk. These interventions will be accessed through well-established locality 'Youth at Risk' meetings and will seek to increase re-engagement in education and support greater engagement with parents.
- Learning will be shared across the region and evaluation of impact will include case studies to illustrate where complex education issues have been resolved so the child experiences a stable and appropriate education place alongside parental engagement.

## Swindon

During the pandemic, Swindon has developed an including children in education group and a schools and police panel, which has overseen EFH and identification of children.

- The school and Police Panel has developed a Swindon Education Child Exploitation Assessment toolkit, includes a risk assessment. The coordinator post will support the implementation of the toolkit and the CS Swindon package of multi-agency resources
- The coordinator post will support the implementation of the toolkit and the CS Swindon package of multi-agency resources
- Parents groups - the coordinator will work alongside parents already involved develop support groups. This will lead onto further engagement work within the communities
- Extending the Family Group Conference model to school and Youth Justice Service at those teachable moments for parents
- Developing community group conference model to move from individual children to peer groups or incidents within the community
- Parenting/sessional Practitioners to attend Youth Court to engage with parents- teachable moments
- Co-ordinator to attend daily multi-agency intelligence meetings, to ensure able to respond in timely way
- Focus work from mentoring service to work with fathers using gym and other activities to support them in building relationships with their children

### SECTION B: Please provide a full cost breakdown including staffing, any (named) subcontractors. Please expend the table as needed.

Amount	Service activity
£33,900	0.6 FTE Schools Coordinator (CS) post funded until 31.03.21 across Wiltshire, Swindon and Dorset
£22,850	Supply costs for training DSLs and pastoral staff across Wiltshire, Swindon and Dorset, including developing sustainable training package
£28,250	Contextual Safeguarding coordinator role (Wiltshire)
£4,000	Support groups for parents (Swindon)
£9,000	Family Group Conference – Linked to Child Exploitation and schools (£900 per Conference) (Swindon)
£19,700	Investment in development of peer support network for parents in Wiltshire, including evaluation and impact (Wiltshire)
£14,000	Expanding capacity of in custody interventions through use of trained sessional workers, including evaluation and impact (Wiltshire)
£1,000	Regional learning event and publication of tools (Wiltshire)
£10,000	Expand Power BI data capability to include additional vulnerability markers for children at risk of exclusion from school and increase number of signatories to data sharing agreement (Dorset)
£10,000	Develop and pilot risk assessment tool with schools and embed use through our Inclusion Officers and In-Year Fair Access processes (Dorset)

£23,000	Increase capacity in our safeguarding schools advisory service to work with AP providers to improve understanding of and response to EFH, including development of safeguarding self-assessment to better respond to EFH and quality assurance of approaches (Dorset)
£21,000	Increase capacity for evidence based/multi-agency group work interventions by Targeted Youth Workers to support young people to reengage in education and reduce the risks associated by EFH (Dorset)
£1,000	Regional learning event and publication of tools (Dorset)
£18,800	Secondment practitioners/sessional workers to provide capacity, for teachable moments. Engagement with parents (Swindon)
£31,500	0.5 FTE Contextual Safeguarding Coordinator (Swindon)
£2,000	Produce Swindon coordinated package of Contextual safeguarding resources (Swindon)
<b>Project contact details</b>	
Name: Iona Payne Email: Iona.Payne@wiltshire.gov.uk	

<b>Select which Practice Solution Project this table relates to;</b>	<b>Local Authority(s)</b> <i>(where one LA will act as lead for a group, please state this and list all LAs)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Project 1: Accelerate the opening of more family hubs (Option A) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 1: Accelerate the opening of more family hubs (Option B) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 2: Protect adolescents against harms outside of the home. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 3: Safeguard children and young people from FGM abuse. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project 4: Safeguard infants. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 5: Reduce court backlogs. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6a) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6b) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6c) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6d)	Wiltshire Council (lead authority) and Bath and North East Somerset (BANES)
<b>Total amount of funding requested:</b>	<b>£80,000</b>
<b>SECTION A: Please outline (in no more than 1000 words) how the LA(s) is suited to undertake this Practice Solution Project, and demonstrate how they meet or exceed the listed eligibility criteria for the project</b>	
<p>Wiltshire and BANES wish to collaborate on this project to test practice approaches agreed with the existing 'Born into Care' project. Wiltshire is a Sector led Improvement partner, with the DCS being the sector led improvement lead for the region. BANES are an authority rated 'good', albeit not in all sub areas and thus cannot make this bid in their own right. Wiltshire and BANES make this joint bid to enhance learning and practice improvement across the South West as a whole, believing this will be more impactful as a combined endeavour. We also share one of the main hospitals (Royal United Hospital, Bath) and a number of health and community health services, such as Health Visiting services meaning our health colleagues working within maternity services are one and the same. This leads to obvious advantages of shaping practice with our partners. Wiltshire is appointing a Head of Sector Led Improvement who will have capacity to work on this project and provide the ability to 'hit the ground running'.</p> <p>These are some examples, across both authorities, of work already undertaken or planned, that evidence our ability to commit to a project of this nature and take forward learning that will impact on the research found so far:</p> <p>Wiltshire has a dedicated assessment team that undertakes pre-birth assessments within pre and care proceedings; this is a team who receive high praise from the judiciary in terms of the quality of their independent assessments. The PAMs element is delivered in house via this team, as early as Child Protection, recognising the benefits of using it earlier. BANES also utilise the PAMs model and provide this in house.</p>	

The partnership in Wiltshire has a well embedded pre-birth protocol. Within audits the use of this multi-agency tool is a significant factor in those assessments receiving a good rating. There is also a multi-agency 'responding to bruising and injuries to non-mobile babies and children' protocol in place which is well used. Routine monthly audits of pre-birth and under 1 assessments are undertaken within teams, as well as the specialist team providing quarterly audits to enable further independent scrutiny. The Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership published a Thematic Review into Significant Physical Abuse in Children Under 1 in November 2019. This report pulls together the knowledge from the recent Wiltshire cases of injuries to children under 1. It sets out the risk factors and circumstances of children under 1 year who suffer significant or fatal physical injuries and the improvements and changes required for us to be more confident that we have collectively worked together to minimise those risk factors and reduced harm to babies. The partnership is committed to working together to ensure strong practice with this vulnerable group.

BANES have a 'Babies 1st Video Interactive Guidance', this provides intensive training in Video Interaction Guidance over 13 months to up-skill Social Work Practitioners who work with mothers who have had their children removed from their care within care proceedings. The aim is to help parents keep their babies rather than have them removed from their care.

Wiltshire is in the process of launching a 'Dads Matter Too' project and will include a project group of multi-agency professionals including Midwifery, Health Visiting and Substance Misuse Services; providing an enhanced service to father's and male partners of unborn children and under 1's with a focus group of fathers devising an inclusive assessment model to improve their participation in assessment and service planning across the partnership. This project is being evaluated by the Institute of Public Care, Oxford Brookes University. Wiltshire has commissioned this institute previously in 2018 to review the new Support Service which demonstrates our on-going commitment to evaluation of services to ensure maximum impact on the outcomes for our families.

Wiltshire and BANES have a strong Family Group Conference (FGC) record, with FGC's being part of routine practice and used within CIN (Children In Need) and Child Protection as well as pre-proceedings. BANES are currently part of the Department for Education; Supporting Families: Investing in Practice initiative.

Family Nurse Partnership works with our young vulnerable parents and evidence improved outcomes from their involvement across both authorities.

Wiltshire's PAUSE Project has been running since 2017, with a high success rate. 33 women graduated from the Pause programme (completed 12+ months). These 33 women have had 111 children removed between them. An average of 3.4 children each with the highest number of children removed from an individual woman being 9 and the lowest 2. Where there is a Pause practice, an average of 14 babies and hence removals are avoided each year so where Pause Wiltshire have been in existence for 4 year, the practice has avoided an average of 42 babies being taken into care. BANES have an in-house programme.

We are working with the University of Bedfordshire to deliver our Contextual Safeguarding model alongside our new integrated Young People's Service (which incorporates a No Wrong Door model).

BANES have funding from the What Works Centre and are providing a Supporting Parents Group. BANES Local Authority will lead the delivery component and the Anna Freud Centre will lead an independent evaluation. The project will be delivered within 6 Local Authorities across England. BANES are also involved in a collaborative project with Bath University and local parents to consider what good family support should look like. It is hoped that this project will help shape and redefine what support services should be for our families.

**Key objectives for this project:**

- To work collaboratively with Born to Care project and commit to shared learning events
- To reduce the number of infants entering care proceedings, and to identify earlier partnership interventions that could facilitate this
- To ensure all families have the opportunity to engage with an FGC
- To holistically assess the parents needs in relation to how best agencies can engage them to effect change i.e. a need for additional family support intervention or therapeutic support (e.g. model applied through FDAC which Wiltshire are in the process of setting up/multi-disciplinary teams)
- Evaluate findings; share regionally and nationally to embed and sustain outstanding practice

**SECTION B: Please provide a full cost breakdown including staffing, any (named) subcontractors. Please expand the table as needed.**

Amount	Service activity
£50,000	Staffing costs (Wiltshire and BANES)
£10,000	Family Group Conferences (Wiltshire and BANES)
£15,000	Therapeutic services (Wiltshire and BANES)
£5,000	Non staff costs incl equipment/tools (Wiltshire and BANES)

**Project contact details**

Name: Jen Salter  
Email: jen.salter@wiltshire.gov.uk

<b>Select which Practice Solution Project this table relates to;</b>	<b>Local Authority(s)</b> <i>(where one LA will act as lead for a group, please state this and list all LAs)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Project 1: Accelerate the opening of more family hubs (Option A) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 1: Accelerate the opening of more family hubs (Option B) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 2: Protect adolescents against harms outside of the home. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 3: Safeguard children and young people from FGM abuse. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 4: Safeguard infants. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 5: Reduce court backlogs. <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6a) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6b) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6c) <input type="checkbox"/> Project 6 Improve digital capacity in the system. (Option 6d)	Wiltshire - Lead Swindon – Support Authority Dorset Bristol
<b>Total amount of funding requested:</b>	<b>£48,000</b>
<b>SECTION A: Please outline (in no more than 1000 words) how the LA(s) is suited to undertake this Practice Solution Project, and demonstrate how they meet or exceed the listed eligibility criteria for the project</b>	
<p>Swindon and Wiltshire implemented rapid remote working during March 2020 as the first national lockdown commenced. The IT response was swift and staff were trained in the use of SKYPE and Microsoft Teams in order to ensure maintained contact with families and professionals and to continue with the protection of vulnerable children. There are benefits as well as risks associated with remote delivery methods, but the facts remain local authorities and partner agencies have had to rapidly adapt to the constraints on delivery imposed by widespread social distancing and lockdown.</p> <p>Both Swindon and Wiltshire have had to adapt provision to be available virtually or digitally; examples of remotely delivered interventions include one-to-one and group-based therapy or support provided by phone, messaging or videoconferencing, through to self-guided interventions such as online quizzes, apps and games as well as Easter treasure hunts. Socially distanced garden visits for face-to-face activity for children on child protection plans were established and Swindon managed to maintain a high level of face to face contact for those children using risk assessments and creative thinking.</p> <p>Positive changes have emerged as a result of Covid-19 that should be retained in the future, including improved partnership working within local systems and an increase in parental help-seeking behaviour.</p> <p>Our learning has enabled us to develop some key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing plans to address the challenges we identify, such as issues of staff retention and getting vulnerable children and young people to engage with services</li> <li>• Focusing on the importance of contact between participants and practitioners</li> <li>• Clearly identifying the core components of an intervention that must be maintained in any adaptation from face-to-face to virtual and digital delivery</li> </ul>	

- Working collaboratively to design evaluations which will improve the evidence base on effective approaches to virtual and digital delivery of interventions for children and young people.
- The use of data to track vulnerable children and engagement with schools

Swindon and Wiltshire have already been undertaking initial analysis of the learning from increased use of technology during the pandemic to support remote working. This learning is being applied to the development of the future remote working opportunities and the development of a hybrid working approach where work activity is considered in terms of the best fit for method of working (remote/face to face). This will be assessment in terms of the impact on improving the children and families user experience of service as well as the staff workforce efficiency factors. Partnership working is a key consideration as initial findings demonstrate that multi agency activity has benefited in terms of increased attendance at key child protection and children looked after conferences/meetings as agencies can join virtually.

In response to the eligibility criteria required for this bid Swindon has good links with the South West Performance Leads meeting which would be used as an engagement route to secure the participation of LA's in research and learning activity in order to build a regional picture of what has worked well and the challenges faced during the government lockdown periods. The Principal Social Worker's south west regional network would also be used to gather insight into regional experience. In addition to Swindon and Wiltshire, Dorset and Bristol have also committed to support for this project.

The proposed approach for this project consists of Swindon and Wiltshire joint funding a research co-ordinator whose work would be directed by Swindon and would include scoping the activity, undertaking surveys, workshops and 1-1 interviews across the regional authorities to gather insight and evidence about the experiences of families in receipt of social care and the workforce delivering services.

Swindon has an established business improvement function who are well rehearsed in planning and delivery within discovery phases of work which would be a good fit for a project such as this. The Business improvement team has a number of specialist staff who can guide the researcher in the scoping and methodology for the project. The team works at pace and is experienced in undertaking surveys and interviews with staff and would be able to support the research co-ordinator in the planning and delivery aspects of the project.

The guidance will cover activity within the Early Help and Social Care Arena as well as cross working across the broader range of children services and consideration of the benefits and challenges faced during the pandemic. The establishment of major incident structures within local authorities and how these have supported a council wide approach to strategic decision making and the benefits from this will be explored highlighting good practice examples of operating models that would benefit continuing in business as usual structures.

Proposed Key areas to be covered (list not exhaustive) in the research:

#### **Experience and Outcomes for Children and Families:**

- Child Protection Processes (Virtual Child Protection Conferences/Core groups/Visits)
- Children Looked After Processes – (Virtual Contact with Parents/Social Workers/CLA Reviews)
- Care Leavers – Virtual Contact, impact of use of technology on personal advisor frequency of contact
- Quality of Direct Work with Children and Families
- Use of social media to engage and remain in contact and risks and benefits
- Technology to support family feedback

**Workforce**

- Staff supervision – impact of remote technology on quality of supervision
- Partnership Working – The use of remote teams meeting and impact on the quality and timeliness of statutory social care processes
- Efficiency of Workforce – Areas of benefit and challenge in terms of service activity from the workforce perspective
- Management Grip – Visibility of activity and performance management of staff
- Remote OFSTED Inspections – LA learning experiences
- Broader Children Services Operating Models during pandemic and review of benefits and challenges
- Authorities increased use of data for the purposes of tracking vulnerable children and engage in conversations with schools
- Tools for the workforce – device suitability and variability of use

The findings from the research will be documented and will include the production of Best Practice guidance which can support authorities in shaping the future methods of service delivery and have a clear understanding of where digital solutions offer or exceed the status quo method of delivery.

**SECTION B: Please provide a full cost breakdown including staffing, any (named) subcontractors. Please expand the table as needed.**

Amount	Service activity
£48,000	Recruitment of a Regional Research Co-Ordinator (Wiltshire and Swindon)

**Project contact details**

Name: Jo Ash/Tamsin Stone

Email: [jash@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jash@swindon.gov.uk) [Tamsin.stone@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Tamsin.stone@wiltshire.gov.uk)

### Strand 3: Scale and spread of Innovation Projects.

Name of project to be pump prime funded:	The Mockingbird Family Model Programme
Name of lead LA / third sector provider:	North Somerset Council (Helen Caldwell Strategy and Policy Development Officer) helen.caldwell@n-somerset.gov.uk
<p>Please outline the theory of change explaining how the scale and spread of the above Innovation Project will support recovery in the region (max 750 words):</p>	
<p>North Somerset is currently the only local authority in the South West to have implemented the Fostering Network’s Mockingbird programme, having successfully bid for Home Office Trusted Relationships funding to deliver this.</p> <p>The Mockingbird family model is an innovative method of foster care. It is an extended family model that provides sleepovers and short breaks, peer support, regular joint planning and training, and social activities. The programme improves the stability of fostering placements, supports foster carers through crisis points, and strengthens the relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families.</p> <p>Despite the challenges of COVID-19, North Somerset has been able to significantly reduce foster placement breakdown for children and young people, recruit more foster carers and improve foster carer retention by embedding the Mockingbird extended family model. North Somerset currently has three ‘constellations’ and are opening a further two in the next six months.</p> <p>Feedback from foster carers is consistently excellent – they report feeling genuinely well supported by their hub leaders and other families within the constellation. They can call on each other in times of need, 24 hours a day, to ensure the needs of children in their care are well met.</p> <p>Analysis of outcomes since North Somerset launched their first constellation is consistent with the national Mockingbird Programme update of 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 10% of carers would have resigned if they hadn’t been supported by the Mockingbird family model</li> <li>• 1 in 5 placements would have broken down if they hadn’t been supported by the Mockingbird programme</li> <li>• A significant number of placements in residential care have been avoided</li> </ul> <p>In addition to this the support available from the Mockingbird Family Hub model has proved attractive to new foster carers, leading to increased recruitment of excellent foster carers.</p> <p>Additional funding for the region will enable North Somerset and other authorities in the South West who use the Mockingbird programme to expand their programmes, and to realise the benefits of the approach. A collaborative local approach on both an operational and strategic level will provide consistency and increase quality of care in the region. This peer support will support LAs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce placement disruption</li> <li>• improve foster carer recruitment and retention</li> <li>• ensure a greater sense of identity and belonging for children and young people, by increasing the number of placements available within their local area</li> <li>• build successful permanency arrangements – with fewer placement disruptions and reduced re-entry into care</li> </ul>	

- offer authentic, valued peer support for foster carers within Mockingbird constellations
- provide a secure home and trusted adults which children and young people can call on – always
- reduce placement costs

The Mockingbird evaluation published in September 2020 demonstrated that children and young people felt that the programme was really important to them in making friends. During the last eighteen months in particular, children have been isolated from their peer groups and missed out hugely on the benefits which come from socialising and having fun. The expansion of Mockingbird in the South West will ensure there is a focus on facilitating opportunities for social interaction through a range of activities and experiences for children and young people of all ages.

*“It’s not creating or replicating activities that most children have, it’s actually kind of gone past that, and it’s creating such a kind of rich environment for these children that it’s significantly helping with overcoming the adversity that they’ve suffered in the past”*

LA Fostering manager, Mockingbird Evaluation 2020

North Somerset will take a lead and work with the Mockingbird Coach to support the accelerated development of three additional local authorities to adopt the Mockingbird family model. Dorset, Devon and South Gloucestershire. The learning and experiences of these LAs will be available to all LAs in the region should they wish to engage with the programme later.

**Please set out the evidence that pump prime funding the above innovation project will be an investment to save and or will reduce cost pressures (max 1000 words)**

The latest independent evaluation of 12 funded partners published by the Department for Education in 2020 found the Mockingbird programme to be a cost-effective, sustainable model of foster care, with more capacity to care for children and young people than existing fostering models, read the full report here.

[Mockingbird Fostering Network Evaluation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The report found that **for every £1 invested in the programme by a fostering service there has been a saving of 99 pence over three years,**

There are several reasons for this favourable return on investment, including savings due to children and young people spending fewer days in residential care and in the criminal justice system. In addition:

- the report found that **Mockingbird foster carers were 82% less likely to de-register** than households who did not participate
- Mockingbird **carers were 10% less likely to have unavailable places** due to requesting a break or considering resignation (34% vs 44%) than those not taking part
- 90% of foster carers rated the peer support they received as good or excellent, describing Mockingbird as being ‘*an extended family*’ and ‘*community*’
- As a result of joining these Mockingbird communities **almost all children and young people said that they had an adult who they trusted**, who helped them and who sticks by them no matter what (98% in 2018, and 97% in 2019).

Support from the Children’s Social Care Regional Recovery Fund will enable three new local authorities to accelerate the pace of implementing the Mockingbird family model by several months. They will also benefit from additional support and practical experience from North Somerset, who are two years into the programme. The three new LAs will benefit from lessons learned by the North Somerset implementation team and will form a networking hub for in the

South West region which will support other local authorities in the region who are working to strengthen their offer to foster cares, or who take up the Mockingbird model later.

North Somerset Fostering Service has integrated Mockingbird into its policies and standard working practices, and these can be provided as resources to LAs, with support to adapt them to their local area. Information gathered through North Somerset's evaluation will also provide evidence and benchmarking for these partners.

- North Somerset's Mockingbird Programme has prevented at least 3 foster families from resigning or being deregistered and supported another to remain as a carer for a further 14 months
- 15.4% of the foster families within the programme have said they would have resigned or left if Mockingbird was not there to support them, with the Fostering Network average of 12%.
- 12 incidents of home breakdown involving 6 different children have been prevented.
- 16% of the placements within the programme would have broken down without the support of Mockingbird.

Data also highlights that any placement breakdowns which have occurred have allowed 100% of children to remain within the same Constellation, being supported by the same hub home carers and maintaining relationships with carers, children and young people within their constellation. This has offered stability, continuity and familiarity at a time of considerable uncertainty.

The Fostering Network have quantified the savings made by Mockingbird as below:

Retention of foster carers	£16,330 per family	<i>The Cost of Foster Care (Tapsfield and Collier, 2005) adjusted in line with GDP changes</i>
Improved placement stability	£875	<i>Estimated cost of placement changes range from £250 to £1500 per change (Ward, Holmes and Soper, 2008). Median value has been applied</i>
Prevention of entry into residential	£177,464	<i>Annual cost of residential minus annual cost of foster care (Personal Social Service Research Unit: Unit Costs of Health and Social Care)</i>

Applying these measures to local data, North Somerset is predicted to have made the following savings:

Retention of foster carers	4 x £16,330	£65,320
Improved placement stability	12 x £875	£10,500
<b>Total savings</b>		<b>£75,820</b>

As the programme expands in North Somerset and LAs join the programme over the next six months, evidence indicate that cost savings will be significant and that outcomes will improve for children and young people who will have access to skilled and supported Foster Carers.

**What will the project deliver by the end of 2021-22? (max 750 words):**

In response to the hardships and challenges caused by COVID-19 and to support our regional recovery plan, the following will have been achieved by the end of 2021/22:

### **Growth of the Mockingbird Family Model**

- The South West region will have four local authorities delivering the Mockingbird programme, rather than just one
- North Somerset currently have three fully functioning 'constellations' and are on target to achieve five by the end of the year
- This funding will enable Dorset, Devon and South Gloucestershire to launch their first Mockingbird constellations over the next six months.

Thus, the South West region will expand from three to eight mockingbird constellations across the region in a six-month timescale with a strong foundation for continued growth.

### **Shared Learning**

- This expansion will create a strong regional learning environment in an area identified by South West strategic leaders as a priority for development
- Regional Network meetings will have become established across the four local authorities. This will encourage and enable shared learning across the region, saving time and developing good practice. North Somerset will take a lead in this network, working closely with the Mockingbird coach.
- This will also enable other local authorities in the region who are considering this approach to join the network if they are considering implementing this model, or to learn from the good practice principles.

### **Launch events**

- Launch events will have been planned in Dorset, Devon and South Gloucestershire to highlight this innovative way of working. This will provide an opportunity to share the good practice principles highlighted by Mockingbird family model to a wide range of stakeholders

### **Recruitment of Foster carers and Hub leaders**

- North Somerset will have delivered a recruitment drive to recruit additional Mockingbird Hub leaders and increase their number of internal foster carers within the Mockingbird model. This will ensure North Somerset maintain the growth of the model at pace so they can continue to share their development and learning from a sustained base across the region

### **Focus on Fun**

- Recruitment and engagement activity will concentrate on socialising and will include a wide range of activities for children, young people and carers. The provision of activities, short breaks and opportunities for social contact are a key element of Covid-19 recovery in the region
- Social events will be designed to support children's friendships, physical and emotional wellbeing, confidence and to offer a range of new experiences. They will also enable opportunities for foster families to have fun together, creating joy and shared memories which strengthen networks of carers

### **Peer support for Foster Carers**

- In the interviews with foster carers undertaken for the 2020 Mockingbird evaluation, retention was seen to have improved through the support, friendships, and community created through the programme.
- There have been considerable additional pressures on foster carers during Covid-19, and evidence shows that Mockingbird model of peer support will have supported a significant number of foster carers through extraordinarily challenging times

### **Family focus**

- The Evaluation shows that Constellations provide more opportunities for siblings who are living apart to meet, by offering sleepovers at the hub carers home for example. A significant increase in constellations across the region will ensure the foundations are in place to support and increase children's family time, without additional expectations on carers.

### **Greater stability for children and young people**

- In North Somerset, there have been several situations over the last two years, where without the Mockingbird model being in place, young people would have experienced a change of placement. On these occasions, the hub carers have been able to step in and offer emotional, practical and direct support preventing this from happening. Each new constellation across the region will expand the effect of this support, and will have a significant impact on stability for children and young people

### **Improved wellbeing for children and young people and carers**

- Children, young people and foster cares reported that Mockingbird improved their wellbeing in the 2020 evaluation report. Given the physical and emotional challenges of the pandemic, this is very significant.

### **Increased workforce stability**

- There is strong evidence that the Mockingbird programme improved foster carer retention. Fewer foster carers who took part in the Mockingbird programme de-registered compared to those of a similar background who did not take part in Mockingbird. Foster carer peer support was seen as a fundamental part of the Mockingbird constellations.

### **How will the project be delivered? (max 750 words):**

Improving placement stability for children in our care has been identified as a priority across the region. The Director of Children's Services in North Somerset is the chair of the regular regional network meetings for Directors in the South West and will ensure that recovery and support for foster families remains a priority over the next year.

The region will be able to learn from a central core of four local authorities who are working collaboratively to both implement and grow the innovative Mockingbird family model. In addition to this support for strategic leadership, North Somerset will act as a lead local authority at an operational level using its expertise to support and fast track the development of constellations across the region.

Regional Recovery Funding will pump prime phase one of the implementation of the Mockingbird Family Model for three new additional local authorities in the South West region, Devon, Dorset and South Gloucestershire. This will enable the LAs to dedicate time and

resource to working together, with the support and experience of North Somerset in launching the programme across the region.

The Mockingbird Implementation package will provide the fostering service in each local authority with guidance, tools, an evidence base and resources to fully implement and embed the programme.

The three new LAs will receive dedicated support from a Mockingbird coach who will support them to develop a deep understanding of the extended family model and tailor it to meet local needs while maintaining fidelity with the programme. The region will work with the same coach who has supported North Somerset to ensure there is a consistent approach.

In the 2020 evaluation of Mockingbird, staff interviews consistently emphasised the importance of 'laying the groundwork' including hiring a liaison worker, engaging stakeholders, recruiting a skilled hub carer and having the right mix of carers to form constellations, managing carers' expectations, maintaining model fidelity, gaining buy-in from across the service and leadership and building enthusiasm from staff and foster carers. The learning from implementing Mockingbird in North Somerset will offer practical approaches to these foundational activities to the LAs joining the programme:

- The three new local authorities will allocate a liaison worker to focus on developing and implementing the mockingbird model locally.
- North Somerset will increase liaison worker resource to coordinate and support learning across the region
- North Somerset will also allocate an officer to facilitate engagement and shared learning across the region
- There will be a key focus on engaging a wide range of stakeholders - North Somerset will lead bi-monthly networking events in the first six months, which will then become quarterly. The networking events will support the areas outlined in the key findings via the staff interviews in the evaluation
- All local authorities will plan a launch event for March/April 2022 which will celebrate the launch of their first constellation, and also begin building towards a second constellation so that the pace of implementation is maintained over the year.
- North Somerset and the three LAs will launch a joint recruitment campaign for Foster Carers, aiming to find new hub carers and additional foster carers to maintain the pace of rollout of new constellations.
- Engagement and recruitment of Foster carers for the constellations will focus on a range of activities for foster families to meet and socialise together.
- There will be a strong focus on regular social activities – children and families have missed out on friendships and fun. Foster carers have missed out on face-to-face peer support.
- There will be adequate back-office support to facilitate the pace of change and development, and to ensure that a Regional evidence base is established for Mockingbird

**If this proposal involves a third sector provider, please outline assurances you have that they have capacity to deliver (max 750 words):**

We have been working closely with the Mockingbird programme team to agree a testing but realistic expansion of the Mockingbird programme in the South West. Mockingbird have confirmed they have capacity to work with us on the following basis:

- Continue work as planned to open two further constellations in North Somerset by end of the year
- Support a campaign to recruit suitable hub leaders to expand the number of constellations at pace, ensuring continued growth of the model

- Support North Somerset as Lead local Authority in the South West, through regular regional networking events
- Support an additional three LAs to embed the Mockingbird programme within their fostering teams - Dorset, Devon and South Gloucestershire

### **Phase 1**

Mockingbird anticipate this work can be done in the funded period. Phase two will continue outside of the funded period

The implementation process up to the point of launch for the first constellation, supported by dedicated Mockingbird coach will include:

- Early project planning and communication strategy
- Implementation working group formation
- Define, recruit and train key Mockingbird roles
- Constellation planning and development
- Pre-launch fidelity check

### **Phase 2**

Given the timeframe, Mockingbird feel it is unlikely any service will enter and complete Phase 2 by March 2022, this support will continue with funding provided by individual local authorities:

- Constellations launch and community building
- Service enters fidelity process
- Service starts monitoring and receives support from monitoring and evaluation analyst and access to the national data set
- Service gains access to local and national shared learning events for project leads, hub home carers and liaison workers
- Coach supported ongoing fidelity process
- Coach supports use of learning from constellation one to build stronger additional constellations
- Mockingbird licence fee to cover constellations
- Use of the Mockingbird name to support publicity, promotion and recruitment and retention activities.

### **Mockingbird Community Package**

- Service granted access to local and national shared learning events for project leads, hub home carers and liaison workers
- Coach-supported, ongoing fidelity process with a focus on sustainability and growth
- Access to national data set and monitoring and evaluation
- Mockingbird licence fee to cover constellations
- Use of the Mockingbird name to support publicity, promotion and recruitment and retention activities.

This is accessed via an annual fee payable once a service has completed the Implementation Package

**Please set out your financial plan** including:

- Any LA / third sector provider which will be awarded the funds to deliver
- Funding source beyond 2021-22
- Total cost
- Breakdown of costs (including staffing, sub-contractors etc)

**Cost of Mockingbird Phase 1**

The costs for each of the local authorities for Mockingbird are set out in the table below. The total cost of Phase 1 of the implementation package across three LAs will be £152,000. We are requesting funding for this from the Regional Recovery fund. Phase 1 will be completed within the timescale of the fund.

The costs set out for Phase 2 and the ongoing annual Community package to be part of Mockingbird will be met by participating local authorities and reflects their ongoing commitment to the Mockingbird Family Model. The LAs commitment to this ongoing investment will demonstrate the impact of the Regional Recovery Funding.

LA	No. fostering households	Membership status	Implementation Package		Community package
			Phase 1	Phase 2	
South Gloucestershire	105	Organisational membership and block foster carer membership	£32,000	£16,000	£7,000
Dorset	195	Organisational membership	£56,000	£28,000	£12,500
Devon	390	Organisational membership	£64,000	£32,000	£14,000
			<b>£152,000</b>	<b>£76,000</b>	<b>£31,500</b>

In addition to this, there are a range of initial setup costs which are being requested through the Children’s Social Care COVID-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better Fund (strand 3)

The following budget shows a breakdown of all of the costs associated with the project over the next year. It shows funding is requested by each of the local authorities from the Children’s Social Care COVID-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better Fund (Strand 3) until the end of 2021/22 and the individual local authority funding commitment to ongoing sustained funding after April 2022 to the Mockingbird model.

Please note:

- The individual local authority costs to Mockingbird are dependent on their membership to the Fostering Network and the size of the local authority, in relation to foster carers
- North Somerset is already receiving funding for the delivery of Mockingbird until November 2021. The funding requested by North Somerset is separate to what is currently being funded and will not conflict with this. The funding requested will support North Somerset’s development as a lead local authority and support our constellations to enhance their social activities and support friendships and peer support
- All of the funding requested will be allocated before April 2022

	South Gloucestershire	Devon	Dorset	North Somerset	Total

	Request	Self fund	Request	Self fund	Request	Self fund	Request	Self fund	Funded	Self fund
<b>Implementation costs</b>										
Mockingbird Phase 1	32,000		64,000		56,000				152,000	
Mockingbird Phase 2		16,000		32,000		28,000				76,000
Community Cost		7,000		14,000		12,500				33,500
<b>Networking and Engagement</b>										
Networking Expenses, Venues & Hospitality and Launch event	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	4,000	2,000	10,000	8,000
Recruitment Campaign							5,000		5,000	
<b>Staff Costs</b>										
Project Lead							30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Hub Liaison Worker	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000			75,000	75,000
Project Support	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	40,000	40,000
<b>Constellation activities</b>										
£500 per month per constellation	1,500		1,500		1,500		9,000		9,000	
<b>Supplies &amp; Services</b>										
IT/Mobile Equipment	1,500		1,500		1,500		1,500		6,000	
Mileage & Subsistence	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	2,000	2,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>72,500</b>	<b>60,500</b>	<b>104,500</b>	<b>83,500</b>	<b>96,500</b>	<b>78,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>	<b>42,500</b>	<b>329,000</b>	<b>264,500</b>

<b>Name of project to be pump prime funded:</b>	Pause
<b>Name of lead LA / third sector provider:</b>	Devon County Council, Dorset Council, Wiltshire Council and South Gloucestershire Council
<b>Please outline the theory of change explaining how the scale and spread of the above Innovation Project will support recovery in the region (max 750 words):</b>	
<p>Devon County Council, Wiltshire Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Dorset Council are committed to restorative and relationship models of Social Work intervention that work with families, keep children safe building resilience, and seek opportunities to work preventatively and innovatively to improve the experience of families that need our help.</p> <p>In Devon there is a significant pattern of repeat care proceedings, and removal of young children from vulnerable mothers – on average at least 23 mothers per year have repeat children removed from their care, and they will have on average three – five children. Dorset completed a needs</p>	

assessment with Pause and identified 51 mothers with repeat removals (with 60% having more than 6 children removed). South Gloucestershire completed an initial needs assessment and identified 10 women per year with one or more children removed from their care. Wiltshire established a Pause programme in 2017 with 33 women having completed the programme. Of these women a third were care experienced, analysis over an 18-month period has established that of women under 25yrs with one child removed, a third of these women are care experienced.

Studies have found that almost 1 in every 4 mothers in English family courts is likely to re-appear in a subsequent set of proceedings within seven years (Broadhurst et al 2015, 2016). A recent Lancaster University 2017 study found that four out of ten women who had multiple children removed had been in care themselves. Additional findings confirm that ‘the women are caught in a cycle of short interval pregnancies and subsequent proceedings, giving them little time to make or evidence changes in their lives’.

Women who have suffered multiple adverse life experiences require highly skilled, multi-disciplinary and caring support to enable them to move forward. At present, there is no co-ordinated service available to women in South Gloucestershire, Dorset or Devon following the removal of a child. Subsequent outcomes are poor which often leads to a deterioration of well-being, addiction, and homelessness.

The needs of this group have been compounded by the impact of the pandemic, often in the context of rural isolation – creating further risk and disadvantage. We have seen unprecedented levels of increasing need across the care and protection system, an increase in safeguarding concerns for young children, and higher numbers of infants coming into care.

*“The last contact with my son broke my heart. It was the worst thing in my life.... And the last court hearing was just awful.. To know your child’s gone and there’s nothing you can do. When you go through that, you have no-one, there’s no support put in place, there’s absolutely nothing... I had no-one and all I wanted to do was go and die... Support should be put in place as soon as social services get involved or as early into the pregnancy as possible. And 100% support needs to be support if baby does get removed. It’s a big thing, you carry that baby for nine months then that baby is ripped away from you. This happened to me 5 years ago and there’s still no support 5 years later for people. It shocks me” (Devon Care Leaver)*

For Wiltshire, additional practitioner time would enable targeted and focused work with these women as well as assisting Devon, South Gloucestershire and Dorset to work with Pause to emerge from the pandemic with a model of intervention that will address the impact of multiple disadvantages helping women to achieve better outcomes for themselves.

The Pause model is already well established in the South West, offering the opportunity for a cohesive approach across the region. Through the key worker relationship, mothers can be empowered to make change for the future. Providing targeted intervention and support to women whilst they have the space to address their difficulties will seek to increase the likelihood of them being able to parent more effectively for the future. The model also offers the following benefits:

- Being part of Pause allows women to feel part of something larger, part of a national service that comes with legitimacy, integrity with the voice of women at its core.
- Pause is a well-known, established, evidence-based innovation and reputable organisation.
- Pause is the leading model of delivery for working with repeat removals.
- Alignment with regional best practice and participating in regional community of practice which includes Wiltshire, Bristol, and Plymouth.
- Alignment with regional pandemic recovery priorities
- Enhanced safeguarding for infants and building on existing improvement priorities in Devon for vulnerable pregnancies, pre-birth practice and for care experienced young people.

**Please set out the evidence that pump prime funding the above innovation project will be an investment to save and or will reduce cost pressures (max 1000 words)**

This investment will provide a foundation for the implementation of a sustainable Pause project in Devon, launching in February 2022. Pump prime funding will enable the spread of this innovation model and will reduce cost pressures upon the Council by a reduction in the following costs by year end 2023.

- Reduction in statutory intervention leading to care proceedings
- Reduction in the number of specialist assessments required
- Reduction of number of children in care pending adoption
- Reduction in number of women requiring multiple interventions across the multi-agency partnership due to poor outcomes for vulnerable women in relation to adult mental health, sexual health, Police, and housing.
- Prevention of first-time removal for care-experienced young people

The mean yearly cost of a child in care across a range of placement types (excluding ongoing wider costs to social care associated with looked after children), plus other associated costs is estimated to be £57,102 ([New Economy](#) 2015).

Conservative estimates are that there on average there are 23 women in Devon per year who have had 2 or more children up to their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday taken into care and would be eligible for a recurrent care prevention programme. It can be estimated that those 23 women would have between 3-5 pregnancies each. It would be reasonable to assume that without intervention those children would end up in care, costing Devon more than £1.3 million per annum. Further potential cost savings from reductions in levels of domestic violence, harmful alcohol use, and Class A drug use are also identified. Therefore, the application of this innovation has considerable potential to enable the Council to re-invest resources to improve early help and intervention for children and families in a truly preventative way, rather than removing children in a reactive manner which is traumatic for all involved.

South Gloucestershire initial scoping estimates there are 10 women a year who have had one or more children removed from their care; further detailed analysis will inform the implementation of this innovation model. Discussions with Pause and partners to consider sustainable funding are presently in progress.

Similar timescales would be followed in Dorset and the return on investment of reducing the number of children in care and provision of support for other vulnerabilities would reduce cost pressures. Needs assessment work with PAUSE has already been completed and implementation of the project is a partner commitment in the Dorset Children, Young People and Families Plan. There were 51 women experiencing multiple removals at birth, with 41% having 2 children removed, 54% having between 3 and 5 children removed and 3 women having 6 children removed. Pump priming of this innovation would enable partners to accelerate delivery and so begin reaching vulnerable women sooner and see the return on investment sooner.

Needs assessment work within Wiltshire has already identified women under the age of 25yrs, including a third of these women as care experienced with one child removed who would benefit from the PAUSE model of intervention.

**What will the project deliver by the end of 2021-22? (max 750 words):**

In Devon the project will deliver:

1. Scoping exercise to include a needs analysis, cost benefit and cost reduction model, and design of an implementation plan which will be used to secure funding for sustainable funding from the Council.
2. Mobilisation of a project plan to deliver a County wide Pause project Pause from February 2022 – to be delivered by Pause
3. Membership fee

4. Establishment of operational and strategic governance structure – to be led internally
5. Presentation of a paper to the Council to secure sustainable funding for the project from 2022-2025 – to be led internally

In Dorset the project will deliver:

1. Mobilisation of a project plan to deliver a County wide Pause project from February 2022
2. Membership fee
3. Business Case to partners to secure sustainable funding for the project from 2023 and agree commissioning and delivery model

In South Gloucester the project will deliver:

1. Scoping exercise to include a needs analysis, cost benefit and cost reduction model, and design of implementation plan which will be used to secure funding for sustainable funding from the Council and partners.
2. Membership fee.

In Wiltshire the project would deliver:

1. Recruitment of one practitioner to broaden the scope of the Wiltshire PAUSE programme to work with carer experienced and young women under the age of 25yrs with one child removed.
2. Business case to partners to secure sustainable funding to development the Wiltshire PAUSE programme from 2023

In the region the project will deliver:

1. Support from Wiltshire Council to share best practice and learning in relation to implementation and development of the model, including prevention of first-time removals for the care experienced cohort
2. Delivery of a regional learning event to share best practice and knowledge in the South West in February 2022, to include partner agencies, CAF/CASS and the judiciary

#### How will the project be delivered? (max 750 words):

Phase one scoping and mobilisation in Devon will be delivered directly by Pause. Running alongside this, an interim internal project lead, with experience of delivering a Pause project in a different area, will be seconded from existing duties to establish internal governance for the project, to secure sustainable internal funding, and to engage multi-agency partners in the project at an early stage. Within this time frame sustainable Council funding will be secured to enable long term recruitment, and implementation of the multi-disciplinary approach by February 2022. The objectives of the project already enjoy cross Council support, as Devon was considering the Pause approach prior to the pandemic. This was set back by the challenges of business continuity and competing priorities for resources.

South Gloucestershire's initial scoping estimates there are 10 women a year who have had one or more children removed from their care; further detailed analysis will inform the implementation of this innovation model. Discussions with Pause and partners to consider sustainable funding are presently in progress

In Dorset, work with Pause on scoping has been completed and multi-agency partners are already signed up. The work of the project team is to accelerate implementation and finalise the commissioning model and funding contribution from partners to deliver a sustainable programme.

Devon, South Gloucestershire and Dorset will seek support from Wiltshire who have successfully embedded this model and are seeking to develop the approach further. This collaboration will support Devon in its development of good practice and enable the South west to take a regional approach. Dorset and Devon would collaborate and share learning and documentation.

**If this proposal involves a third sector provider, please outline assurances you have that they have capacity to deliver (max 750 words):**

Kate Tilley from Pause has confirmed that there is capacity to deliver this project in Devon, and to co-ordinate Pause as a regional approach through a shared learning and innovation event. This will improve access to services for women moving between areas and presents the opportunity to share and develop the intervention as a regional model of good practice. A costed estimate has been provided by Pause.

In Dorset, work with Pause is already underway, and resources will be used to accelerate the delivery of the model.

**Please set out your financial plan including:**

- Any LA / third sector provider which will be awarded the funds to deliver
- Funding source beyond 2021-22
- Total cost
- Breakdown of costs (including staffing, sub-contractors etc)

**The total cost of the bid is £204,100 as set out in the breakdown below:**

1. Needs Analysis in Devon and South Gloucestershire – £44,000 plus vat – delivered by Pause
2. Mobilisation and set up costs in Devon - £15,000 plus vat – delivered in partnership with Pause
3. Membership Fee – £75,000 (for Dorset, South Gloucestershire and Devon) – paid to Pause
4. Regional learning event - £3000 – delivered by Pause in partnership with Wiltshire CC on behalf of the SW region
5. 1 day a week Interim Project Lead based in Devon CC - £725 per day for 7 months (£20,300)
6. 1 day a week Interim Project Lead based in Dorset Council - £725 per day for 7 months (£20,300)
7. Recruitment of additional practitioner to Wiltshire Pause programme £26,500

Funding source beyond 21/22 in– cost benefit analysis to be presented to Devon Council for sustainable funding for 3 years from April 2022 – 2025 as part of a sustainability plan to improve services and based on a cost reduction model to both Children Services and partner agencies. On average the Pause programme will cost £450k to deliver to 23 women over a period of 18 months (i.e. £300k per annum). £169,400 staffing, £24,000 resources for women, £25,000 Pause membership fee, £1,000 comms, £2,000 clinical supervision, £2,350 travel to Pause training events. IT, travel, premises, local training etc would need to be determined. The scoping period would enable the Council to work with Pause to establish a corporate Business case to secure this sustainable funding.

In Dorset – participation by partners has been agreed in principle, and the work of the project would be to agree the commissioning model and level of partnership contributions to fund from 2022 and beyond.

## Declaration

**Note: Please ensure that a person who is appropriately authorised to act on behalf of the region completes the following declaration.**

I confirm that the information given in this application is true and complete and that, if successful, Wiltshire Council will be the grant recipient and administer any grant in accordance with the final version of the DfE's grant funding agreement.

I confirm that the region has an up-to-date Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which has been included alongside this response template, setting out;

- how all LAs will work together;
- how each LA will benefit from the funding provided by the DfE; and
- the payment process for ensuring LAs receive onward payment from the lead LA.

I understand that the information contained in this document, and the regional recovery plan, will be used to assess the region's ability to deliver proposals and the suitability of individual LAs, for strands 2 and 3, to work on the projects identified.

Name	 Lucy Townsend
Position (Job title)	<b>Corporate Director People</b>
Email address	lucy.townsend@wiltshire.gov.uk
Phone number	01225 718680
Date	<b>12/08/2021</b>

## Response Checklist

Please ensure you include the following when you submit your proposal:

- ❖ a **regional recovery plan** setting out all regional recovery priorities and associated costs
- ❖ a copy of **this document, completed on behalf of the region**. Please ensure you have completed the response table for strand 1, and strands 2 and 3 where applicable, including all costs and activities to cover the work set out in the recovery plan.
- ❖ An **up-to-date Memorandum of Understanding** for the region, that includes the information set out in the declaration above.