

SUPPORTING FAMILIES: INVESTING IN PRACTICE

Open call for an organisation to develop interventions to increase families' engagement with Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC)

How will the programme work

The Supporting Families: Investing in Practice programme is a £15m initiative run jointly with the Department for Education (DfE) that is working to scale-up and evaluate three targeted projects with promising emerging evidence of impact from the DfE's Innovation Programme:

- Family Group Conferencing (FGC);
- Family Drug and Alcohol Courts (FDAC);
- Mockingbird Family Model.

The programme aims to support the Strengthening Families and Protecting Children (SFPC) programme to help safely keep children at home with their parents.

Following an open application process and thorough assessment, 58 local authority partners across the country were announced to participate in the three programmes. For FDAC, a further 15 sites, comprised of 32 local authorities total, will now be funded to implement a new FDAC (7 sites), or expand their existing courts (8 sites). The FDAC National Partnership at the Centre for Justice Innovation (CJI) will provide training and support to these sites to ensure effective delivery and implementation of the model. The evaluation of the programme will be overseen by What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC).

Background to the project

Family Drug and Alcohol Courts (FDAC) bring together substance misuse specialists, domestic violence experts, mental health professionals and social workers, to carry out an early assessment, and agree upon an intervention plan with parents who come before the court in care proceedings. Parents then begin a "trial for change", with regular review meetings with the judge, to ensure progress is being made.

NatCen has already been appointed to carry out an independent evaluation of FDAC. The approach to this trial has changed since its conception, and will now involve a quasi-experimental evaluation to understand the impact of FDAC compared to standard practice. This is considered to be particularly important in light of changes made to the Children's Act in 2014, which were introduced after the UK evaluation led by Professor Judith Harwin had concluded.

A second strand of work will also be funded to help answer some further questions with regards to variations of the standard FDAC model that are already in operation in certain local authorities.

Current project expectations

A third and final strand of work is now being proposed to attempt to test interventions that increase the effectiveness, and hence value for money, of FDAC. In particular, these interventions will focus on light-touch support to increase families' engagement with the FDAC programme.

Given that the existing evidence base suggests that FDAC improves outcomes for families, it follows that increased uptake and engagement with services might mean that a greater number of families gain access to the range of support offered throughout the FDAC programme. Greater engagement with services might render the support families receive more impactful, leading to better outcomes.

WWCSC is looking to commission one organisation to develop a series of light-touch interventions to increase participating FDAC families' engagement with the programme, and with the various services offered as part of FDAC.

The organisation will be expected to develop interventions, that will then be piloted in selected local authorities that are already part of the Supporting Families: Investing in Practice programme. These interventions will be evaluated by an independent evaluator, who will be selected to determine the effectiveness of the proposed interventions.

Below please find a timetable outlining the activities and estimated time frames that evaluators can use as a guide. Note that these are indicative only, and are subject to change.

Activity	Duration
Longlist of interventions developed & submitted	Early February 2020
Final interventions agreed with stakeholders	Late February 2020
Interventions manualised and ready to launch	End of March 2020
Trial protocols finalised (evaluator)	April 2020
Trials launched in pilot LAs	May 2020
Trials concluded	May 2022
Reporting (evaluator)	November 2022

Expectation of the successful organisation:

We expect the successful organisation to:

- Attend set-up meetings with What Works for Children's Social Care, the Centre for Justice Innovation, and possibly the participating local authorities;

- Work with WWCS and CJI to develop an understanding of the challenges around participation and engagement within FDAC;
- Develop several interventions, and propose these to the partner organisations;
- Once an independent evaluator has been appointed, to work with this organisation to develop an evaluation plan;
- Attend an evaluation kick-off meeting;
- Work with selected LAs to implement and pilot these interventions.

Budget

The proposed budget for the project is approx. £70,000, exclusive of VAT, including expenses and travel costs.

Indicative timetable for decision

Set out below is the proposed timeline for selection of the successful organisation. This is intended as a guide only:

Activity	Dates
Opportunity disseminated	Monday, November 4th, 2019
Deadline to submit by emailing wwcprogrammes@nesta.org.uk	Midnight, December 2nd, 2019
Clarification conversations, if necessary	w/c December 9th, 2019
Successful organisation appointed and notified	w/c December 18th, 2019

How to apply

Please answer all questions in [Annex 1](#) below.

Your response(s) should be emailed to wwcprogrammes@nesta.org.uk by no later than **midnight on Monday, December 2nd, 2019**.

If you have any questions not answered in either the above or in the Annex, please email us at wwcprogrammes@nesta.org.uk

Selection criteria

Applicants should be able to demonstrate several of the following in their applications:

- Expertise in developing light-touch interventions focused on behavioural change, or increasing engagement;
- Familiarity with UK children's social care system;
- Experience working with local authorities to deliver programmes, or for research purposes;
- Experience with service design and/or optimisation of existing services;



- Ability to support implementation;
- Experience in making clear, accessible and concise recommendations to non-experts;
- Good value for money;
- Experience working alongside independent evaluators, and of research processes.

Annex 1: Application questions

Please answer all the questions below:

1. Describe your approach to the role, including how you would engage with key stakeholders, and how you might develop, manualise and support the implementation of the interventions you develop [max 800 words].
2. Please describe the project team, including relevant experience and describing the anticipated roles of each key individual listed on the project. Please feel free to attach CVs of project leads (3 pages max).
In this answer, please ensure that you describe relevant experience related to the following:
 - Development of similar interventions;
 - Service design, or optimisation of existing services (particularly as related to social care, health, education, mental health...)
 - Working with and/or co-producing with a range of stakeholders[max 400 words]
3. Describe any logistical or practical concerns you might have designing or implementing the interventions, and how you will aim to overcome them [max 250 words].
4. Please provide a full breakdown of your proposed budget, including day rates or FEC equivalents, and the amount of time each team member is likely to spend on the project.
5. Please confirm if you are aware of any potential or actual conflicts of interest. If you consider a conflict may exist, please provide details.