



Department
for Education

Cross-sector partnerships grant

Programme specification

October 2019

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Part 1: Context

Policy context

In May 2018, the Department for Education ('the department') published a response to the *Schools that work for everyone* (SWE) consultation. It details a package of measures which are intended to foster cross-sector collaboration in order to improve outcomes for pupils across the education system and create new good school places that are accessible to children of all backgrounds. Alongside SWE, we have agreed a joint understanding with the Independent Schools Council that commits us to work together to support these objectives, and in particular, to consider how pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds can benefit from cross-sector partnerships.

The basis of SWE is the objective of harnessing the resources and expertise of schools and universities in all sectors, to form partnerships that are sustainable, have measurable impact and are mutually beneficial for all partners. We encourage a range of partnership activities within four key priority areas – teaching, curriculum, leadership, and school improvement (outlined below) – delivering high-impact outcomes for the benefit of pupils and teachers.

We know that many institutions are already involved in partnerships that support these objectives and are working closely with other schools. Through this grant, we want to see this good practice adopted more widely, and raise the ambition for what can be achieved.

Activity areas and principles

In forming cross-sector partnerships, schools and institutions are encouraged to undertake activities that fall into at least one of the following areas:

- **Leadership and governance** – such as by taking an active role on the governing body or Trust Board of a school or academy, or providing senior support and strategic leadership.
- **Teaching quality and capacity** – participating in initiatives with national impact, such as training STEM or foreign language teachers, delivering joint CPD programmes, participating in Teaching School Alliances, sharing lesson plans and resources.
- **Curriculum development** – working with schools on curriculum design and delivery, such as by providing broader curriculum opportunities for pupils by seconding teachers, holding mixed classes on shortage subjects, or sharing lesson plans and other materials.
- **Other targeted school improvement activity** – facilitating direct support targeted at another school's specific needs. This is not limited to academic areas, but can also include working together on school finances, joint procurement, HR, or back office systems.

Evidence provided to us by schools and stakeholders suggests that there are three key principles that guide high-quality partnerships: **sustainability**, **impact**, and **mutual benefit**. These will therefore be used as the criteria by which we award grant funding, alongside consideration on how support can be targeted to **children from disadvantaged backgrounds**.

Part 2: Programme specification

Programme objectives

The objectives of the *Cross-sector partnerships grant* programme are listed below.

1) Deliver new high-impact partnerships and support the expansion of established ones

There are two categories of grant. Further information on each is listed below.

a. Seed funding grant (up to £5,000 of department funding) – to deliver new high-impact partnerships

This grant will award seed funding to new partnerships to help them get off the ground. Partnerships under this category will be eligible to bid for a one-off payment of up to £5,000. This type of grant does not require match funding. Should a new partnership wish to bid for an amount greater than £5,000, they may bid for expansion grant, but would need to meet all requirements for that grant, including the provision of match funding.

b. Expansion grant (£5,001 to £20,000 of department funding) – to support the expansion of established partnerships

This grant will support existing partnerships by providing an injection of funding to build on existing arrangements, expand their programme of activities, and deliver a boost to their overall impact. We encourage established partnerships to bid for amounts from £5,001 and up to £20,000. This type of grant will require partners to match the department's contribution. Partnerships may wish to contribute more, but will need to at least match the amount funded by the department.

2) Support educational priorities of national importance

a. Support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds

Disadvantage continues to lead to poorer outcomes that need to be confronted head-on. A key departmental priority is to provide more opportunities for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

b. Teaching and curriculum support in shortage subjects

This programme is designed to support priority and shortage subjects wherever possible.

3) Provide evidence of what works

As part of the programme, the department requires the Grant Holder to conduct an impact evaluation on their partnership in accordance with *Appendix A to the specification (partnership proposal)*, and to share findings and data with the department to contribute to a programme-wide impact evaluation.

4) Remove barriers to schools working in partnership

Evidence suggests that financial barriers to the establishment of new partnerships or expansion of existing ones, can be overcome with even a modest amount of funding. The grant programme is designed to remove this barrier.

The department will measure the programme's success against these objectives through the impact evaluation exercise described in *Objective 3* above, and by reviewing feedback from participants.

Responsibilities of Grant Holders

The term 'Grant Holder' refers to the lead school/institution or entity that is awarded the grant on behalf of that partnership. The key responsibilities of Grant Holders are summarised below.

1) Design of a cross-sector partnership

The Grant Holder shall:

- a. Work with partners to establish a workable model for collaboration between schools and/or higher education providers.
- b. Involve a minimum of two schools/higher education providers.
- c. Involve a minimum of one school/institution from an educational sector different to the Grant Holder's sector. For the purposes of this programme, the sectors are defined as:
 - i. Independent schools
 - ii. State-funded schools (either central government or local authority-funded)
 - iii. Higher education or further education institutions
- d. Ensure that all activities are delivered in accordance with *Appendix A to the specification (partnership proposal)*.
- e. Commit to formalising the partnership, such as through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed off by all partners, or any other method agreed with the department.
- f. Establish governance arrangements to ensure that the work is taken forward with appropriate oversight and direction from all partners in accordance with *Appendix A to the specification (partnership proposal)*.
- g. Provide named individuals from each partner school/institution responsible for taking work forward.
- h. For expansion grant only, the Grant Holder shall ensure the provision of match funding subject to *Annex A to the Terms and Conditions*.

2) Provision of financial information

The Grant Holder shall:

- a. Provide evidence of expenditure (which may include but not be limited to invoices or receipts) to show that funding has been used in line with the purchase and spending plan and grant agreement.
- b. Comply with audit checks where required in accordance with the grant offer letter Terms and Conditions.

3) Provision of impact evaluation information

The Grant Holder shall:

- a. Provide impact evaluation information to the department (or appointed third party). The information to be provided will be outlined in the partnership's impact evaluation plan, in accordance with *Appendix A to the specification (partnership proposal)*.
- b. The Grant Holder shall work with the DfE as reasonably required to communicate positive outcomes, which the department may share as a case study and/or best practice example.

[Use of grant](#)

The terms and conditions lists the several items that grant payments cannot be used for. These include the following:

- Residential care services or facilities.
- To make capital purchases (e.g. relating to school buildings). This is not to be confused with specialist equipment, such as equipment needed for science experiments.
- To pay staff salaries. However, staff salaries will be accepted as an in-kind payment for match funding, where it applies.
- Any other cost reasonably rejected by the department that does not contribute to the purpose or objectives of the programme.

Part 3: Grant deliverables

Deliverables and progress reporting

The department will review progress against each of the below deliverables at meetings to be agreed with successful bidders. These meetings can be held either at the department's London office (Sanctuary Buildings, Westminster) or remotely (via phone or online conferencing) if more appropriate.

Please see the table below for more details on deliverables.

Table: Partnership deliverables

Phase ref.	Phase	Description	Timing
1	Advanced planning and refinement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provide the department with detailed plans, as already outlined in submitted documents. This must include any necessary refinements to proposals. It must also include final details or advanced timeframes for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- finalising the partnership model and governance arrangements- drafting and ratifying a partnership agreement (e.g. a MOU)- final planning of partnership activities- KPIs- commencement of partnership activities- impact evaluation	February to early-March 2020 (prior to payment)
2	Commencement of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provide the department with details and timings of the commencement of partnership activities, including of any launch events▪ If appropriate, to discuss whether there are opportunities to promote/communicate the work of the partnership more widely	At commencement of activities funded by grant
3	Progress reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provide the department with an objective assessment of progress against the partnership's objectives and KPIs in accordance with the KPIs at <i>Annex A to the Terms and Conditions</i>. It must include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- activities/areas that are on track	Termly

		- activities/areas that are not on track, detailing what will be done to ensure delivery	
4	Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The department may visit the partnership to observe activities in practice (or make multiple visits). Should a visit/s be appropriate, we will hold a meeting/s to agree timings and outline objectives for the visit/s 	Within 6 months of commencement of activities
5	Impact evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide the department or its appointed third party with impact evaluation information, as outlined in the partnership's impact evaluation plan at <i>Appendix A to the specification (partnership proposal)</i> 	1 year after commencement of activities
6	Sharing best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss with the department whether there are opportunities to communicate positive outcomes, for example, to be shared as a case study and/or a best practice 	1 year after commencement of activities