



# Project Support Funding Guidance

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Information for Local Authorities on the project support funding available to them in order to facilitate the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified project managers	

## **Project Support Funding Guidance**

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), through Partnerships for Schools (PfS), is making financial support available to all local authorities within the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, to facilitate the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified project managers. This funding is in addition to that provisionally allocated for their projects and details are set out in this guidance note.

- **Our commitment to you:** a contribution of up to 50% of the total cost (including on-costs) of a Project Manager's salary or a project management contract, to a maximum of £50k per annum, for two years. This funding will be provided as capital funding, and can therefore only be used to fund items that can be capitalised.
- **Your commitment to us:** PfS and each LA are, quite reasonably, required to demonstrate to the DCSF that we have jointly:
  - made the best use of all available resources;
  - achieved value for money; and
  - secured the best possible quality of resources available to support the project at a local level, and to further the overall objectives of the BSF programme.

We will work together to achieve these objectives.

### **Why is this funding being offered?**

Many local authorities have in the past recognised the need to recruit suitably skilled and experienced Project Managers to run their most complex and large-scale projects. Funding such posts has often been problematic, as many local authorities (LAs) were unable to offer a salary that would attract the quality of applicant needed. In addition, given that every LA in England will ultimately be involved in BSF, it was considered essential to provide practical assistance to give all LAs an equal opportunity to recruit such an individual.

Experience of schools PFI has shown that, where an LA took the decision to recruit an experienced Project Manager, the project enjoyed a smoother, quicker and a better value for money procurement. Furthermore, the BSF Pathfinder and Wave 1 projects showed that full-time project management is essential for the successful delivery of such a complex and time-consuming programme. In our discussions with the 4ps, it is evident that this funding initiative does have a high-level of LA support.

The BSF programme increases the need for effective project management by its sheer scale and longevity, as several LAs have already acknowledged in discussions with PfS.

## What will be funded?

- **Full Time Project Management Costs:** 50% of the salary of a suitably qualified dedicated Project Manager appointed in consultation with PfS Project Director to a maximum of £50k per annum for two years.

If an LA has already designated an individual to lead their BSF project team and this is working well, the LA can propose alternative uses for the Project Support Funding. Those most likely to be acceptable are detailed below:

- **Support for existing salary costs:** where a Project Manager is already in place or their work load is being increased from part to full time responsibility, the LA may use this funding towards the existing salary costs of the incumbent to a maximum of £50k per annum or 50% of the cost, whichever is smaller.
- **Overall project team capacity:** where a particular set of skills is missing from the existing project team (and a full-time Project Manager is already in place), the LA could consider recruiting or seconding these in. Again, 50% of the value of this could be met by the project support funding to a maximum of £50k per annum.
- **Training:** could be funded for all or part of the project team where it could be shown that it would demonstrably improve its capacity and or effectiveness, to a maximum of £50k per annum or 50% of the cost, whichever is smaller.
- **External Project Management Support:** it could be used to part-fund (up to 50%) a long-term project management contract (i.e. for the duration of the initial project development and procurement) with an external service provider. It is not envisaged that this funding be used to fund a “stopgap” short-term project management contract with a consultancy (rather than recruiting a directly employed Project Manager), except where there are clearly demonstrable extenuating circumstances.

Project Support Funding is available to LAs for their first wave of BSF investment only. For subsequent waves, it is expected that sufficient capacity should already have been developed as a result of receiving this funding.

The funding may not be used to pay for “standard” external advisory support, i.e. financial, legal and technical support to the project team.

## How do we apply for funding?

A formal application to DCSF is not needed, however, all requests for funding must be supported by PfS. To secure the funding available you should, therefore, contact your nominated PfS Project Director as soon as possible. The PfS Project Director can provide practical assistance in recruiting the best possible applicant and/or in securing funding for other costs. You may also like to contact your 4ps BSF representative, where applicable, who can help you reflect on your overall resource requirements.

If the LA is recruiting a BSF Project Manager, the PfS Project Director can supply an outline person specification and job description. This can be used to agree a locally tailored version, advertisement copy and suitable recruitment process.

Where a full-time Project Manager is already in situ, the LA should discuss with its PfS Project Director any alternative proposals for using this funding to strengthen its capacity.

Project Support Funding will be confirmed when a letter outlining the arrangements agreed with the PfS Project Director is sent by the LA's Project Sponsor to the Director of Education and Planning at Partnerships for Schools (see example at Appendix 1).

If there are any changes to the arrangements on which the approval of funding is made (e.g. Project Manager resigns) then the PfS Project Director should be notified to discuss whether or how the change impacts on the funding.

### **How will the impact of this funding be measured?**

The DCSF will wish to assess the impact of this funding to ensure it delivers value for money and to evaluate the efficacy of the approach compared to alternatives. This assessment will not be used to assess the viability of a given project, but to determine whether the funding has added value to the programme as a whole. The following KPIs will be used in the assessment:

- Length of procurement:
  - With milestones identified throughout
    - Start to completion of OBC
    - Publication of OJEU notice to contract close
- Cost of procurement:
  - Internal project management costs; and
  - External advisors

Whilst the milestones are easily identified and recorded, the assessment of internal project management costs may be less straightforward. Please discuss any concerns you may have regarding the gathering of such data with your PfS Project Director.

### **Who should we contact with any queries?**

In the first instance, please contact your nominated PfS Project Director, who will field questions to the relevant individuals within PfS as necessary. If you do not know who this is, please contact one of the Strategic Directors.

Anthony Walker (North)  
07720 440120

Stuart Lindeman (South)  
07917 423173

## **Project Support Funding**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Letter of Commitment for Project Support Funding**

Director of Childrens' Services  
Anytown Council  
Anytown  
AT0 WN

Date

Dear Mr Andrews

#### **BSF Project Support Funding**

I am writing to confirm that Anytown Council wishes to receive BSF Project Support Funding for its Wave ( ) BSF project.

Anytown Council has agreed (the appointment of [NAME] as BSF Project Manager, details of costs attached) / (the attached proposal for permissible use of funding) with the PfS Project Director (NAME).

This decision has been taken with the delegated authority provided to me by Anytown Council's Executive on [insert date]<sup>1</sup>.

We understand that the funding will be released once (NAME) has been appointed/ arrangements have been put into place.

Yours sincerely

Jane Smith  
Director of Childrens' Services

cc: PfS Project Director

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<sup>1</sup> If this decision requires the formal agreement of the Council's Executive, this letter should only be provided once that is in place. Please quote the date the decision was taken, in what forum, and provide a copy of the minute.