

The Parenting Fund

Proposals for consultation

July 2003



HM TREASURY

department for
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FOREWORD BY THE RT HON PAUL BOATENG MP AND THE RT HON MARGARET HODGE MBE MP

The 1998 Supporting Families Consultation Document stated that:

“Families are at the heart of our society. Most of us live in families and we value them because they provide love and support and care. They educate us and they teach us right from wrong. Our future depends on their success in bringing up children. That is why we are committed to strengthening family life.”

Strengthening family life is not about telling parents and carers how to bring up children. The proper role for Government is to create a framework which enables parents and carers to access the support, help and advice that will make a real difference to the life outcomes of children. As well as effective statutory and local services this requires robust voluntary and community organisations offering help and support to families raising children in a changed and changing world. The voluntary and community sector can bring a unique perspective and dimension to service delivery – a value that should be respected, supported and strengthened.

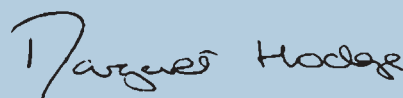
The Parenting Fund, announced by the Chancellor in the 2002 Spending Review, aims to harness the very skills and expertise of the voluntary and community sector that make it best at what it does. The Fund aims to increase the resources available to families, especially those that are struggling. Proposals for use of the Fund have been designed with the sector, for the sector. They aim to direct additional funds to voluntary and community organisations in a new and innovative way, paving the way for the long-term sustainability and success of the sector.

In doing this, we seek to build on both existing Government policy for supporting children and families, and ways of working with the voluntary and community sector. The White Paper “Respect and Responsibility – taking a stand against anti-social behaviour” and the Green Paper on Children at Risk to be published this autumn both emphasise the vital role family and parenting support can play in reducing risk of anti-social behaviour and building resilience in children and families. We recognise the importance of linking with the other work on the voluntary and community sector that is currently being undertaken across Government including *futurebuilders*; the work resulting from the cross cutting review of the role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery; the capacity building and outreach work on the Local Network Fund; and other funding streams like the Home Office Family Support Grants.

The proposals for the use of the Fund have been worked up through a very innovative working relationship between Government and the voluntary and community sector – a manner of working which has been described as a catalytic process. Indeed, this is an exciting process for the parenting sector, the wider voluntary and community sector, and for Government, and we hope that many interested parties will respond to this consultation. Your views are vital if we are to strengthen support available to parents and ensure that the money in the Parenting Fund is used to best effect.



The Rt Hon PAUL BOATENG MP,
Chief Secretary to the Treasury



The Rt Hon MARGARET HODGE MBE MP,
Minister of State for Children

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Parents and carers are the key players in ensuring the healthy physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of a child.¹ They are at the heart of a child's life, the constant presence and primary source of support. But there are other influences on family life, and other people who can provide support to parents as they strive to do the best for their children. Some parents rely upon informal sources of help, such as extended family, friends and other parents. Others turn to voluntary and community organisations, or professionals such as midwives and health visitors, social workers, teachers and doctors.

1.2 The Government believes that society as a whole benefits if parents, carers and families have access to the help and support they may need in bringing up their children. The right kind of support can help parents to do as well as possible, and in many cases can help to prevent crises and problems from developing.

1.3 Different parents have different needs, and these needs change over time. The kind of support that will help someone adapting to life with a new baby is not the same as that needed when parenting a demanding toddler, a child just starting school, an older child, or a teenager. Often, the best source of help is a friend or relative who can share their own experiences and ways of coping. But sometimes it is easier to talk to someone less close.

1.4 Recognising the diversity of their needs and experiences, many different types of support have evolved to assist parents. Some are provided by government, some by local statutory organisations, and some by voluntary and community organisations. The Government believes that the voluntary and community sector adds distinctive value to the quality, accessibility and diversity of parenting support.

1.5 The Government has invested in parenting support provided by both statutory and voluntary and community organisations through local government including social services and education, the National Health Service, Youth Offending Teams, the Family Support Grant, Sure Start and the Children's Fund.² Yet, in many areas parents are still unable to access the kinds of support that could make a big difference to their lives. The National Family and Parenting Institute (NFPI) in its 2001 mapping study of family support services found that there are geographical variations as well as gaps in provision of parenting support at a local level.³

1.6 The Parenting Education and Support Forum (PESF) carried out a survey of parenting providers for the Home Office⁴ which indicated that there are particular needs among black and minority ethnic communities, lone parents, fathers and relatively underdeveloped support for parents of teenage children. Also there is highly fragmented local provision, with variable capacity to expand and variable levels of training, and a very diverse range of funding streams. It also indicated the need to better support the development of national services, such as telephone helplines, as well as local services, and to build the capacity of specialist providers of parenting support to particular groups, such as those with mental health difficulties.

¹ This consultation document uses the terms 'parent' and 'family' to be inclusive of relationships such as carers and sibling carers.

² Youth Offending Teams work with parents on parenting orders and the Home Office has funded parenting support in the voluntary and community sector through its Family Support Grant now transferred to DfES. Parenting support through the voluntary sector has also been supported locally by the Government's Sure Start programmes and the Children's Fund, as well as by mainstream local government services.

³ NFPI National Mapping of Family Support Services in England and Wales (2001), available on the NFPI website at: www.nfpi.org. The National Family and Parenting Institute was set up in 1999 following the publication of the 1998 Supporting Families Consultation Document. It is supported by Government to map and disseminate information about services and to develop and improve support for parents.

⁴ An unpublished 2003 survey.

I.7 Over the past few months, the Government and representatives from the voluntary and community sector have joined together in a unique way to build upon this evidence and identify gaps between what each provides in terms of parenting support. The voluntary and community sector is well placed to help plan, design and deliver services such as those to parents in difficulty and the Government wants to harness these skills and build on what the sector is already doing.

THE PARENTING FUND

Aims I.8 In the 2002 Spending Review the Government announced the creation of a new Parenting Fund, worth £25 million over the three years of the 2002 Spending Review (that is, the financial years 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06), to develop parenting support. This new money aims to build on existing support for parenting. Uniquely it will go directly to the voluntary and community sector to support parenting and parenting organisations. It will be complementary to, but not a substitute for, other Government programmes. The Parenting Fund is for England only. The devolved administrations received Barnett Consequentials in Budget 2003.

I.9 The Parenting Fund provides an opportunity for the Government and the voluntary and community sector to continue to develop constructive approaches to working together. It is also a mechanism to create a step change in the capacity of the sector through providing seed funding for an expansion in parenting support. This as a significant step towards strengthening the parenting sector and ultimately improving outcomes for service users.

ISSUES FOR CONSULTATION

I.10 This consultation document outlines the proposed approach to allocating the Parenting Fund money and seeks your comments. It has been prepared in accordance with the principles set out in the Compact on relations between government and the voluntary and community sector, launched in November 1998.⁵

Design I.11 The Government and the voluntary and community sector are working together to design the Parenting Fund and share ownership of the results. The approach, based on research evidence of parents' needs and gaps in service provision, has been developed in conjunction with the advisory group of parenting and children's organisations convened by the National Family and Parenting Institute. This group comprised:

Barnardos	Alan Coombe Liz Garrett
Family Service Units	Phillipa Gitlin Mark Stogden
Family Welfare Association	Helen Dent Honor Rhodes
Fathers Direct	Duncan Fisher
HomeStart	Brian Waller Sue Everett
National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations	Erica De'Ath Ian Vallender Barbara Kissman

⁵ The Compact is available on the Compact Working Group website at: www.thecompact.org.uk

National Family and Parenting Institute	Mary MacLeod Vicki Shotbolt
NCH Action for Children	Caroline Abrahams
One Parent Families	Andy Keen Downes Kate Green
Parenting Education and Support Forum	Mary Crowley Debbie Cowley
Parentline Plus	Dorit Braun
REU	Jabeer Butt
Trust for the Study of Adolescence	John Coleman

Who I.12 The views of a wider audience, in particular the parenting sector, but also the wider voluntary and community sector stakeholders and service users, are now sought before final decisions are made.

What I.13 There are twelve questions for consultation throughout the consultation document, set in blue boxes. Chapter 2 sets out the proposed priorities for the Parenting Fund, on which responses are invited. Chapter 3 sets out the funding arrangements and process for selecting a Fundholder to administer the Fund. Separate and more detailed work is being undertaken on this, however suggestions for credible fundholders are also welcome. Chapter 4 outlines how the Parenting Fund might be evaluated, on which responses are invited.

When I.14 Responses are requested by **Monday 3 November 2003**.

How I.15 Written comments should be sent to:

The Family Policy Unit (marked PF Consultation)
Department for Education and Skills
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Comments can also be sent by email to: ParentingFund.consultation@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

I.16 Further copies of the consultation document can be obtained from:

Public Enquiry Unit
Department for Education and Skills
PO Box 12
Runcorn
WA7 2GT

Tel: 0870 000 2288

Fax: 01928 794248

The consultation document is also available electronically on the Treasury and DFES websites at:

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk and www.dfes.gov.uk

RIA 1.17 A Regulatory Impact Assessment is being carried out in accordance with Cabinet Office Guidelines and will be made available on the Treasury and DfES websites.⁶

After consultation 1.18 Following the consultation period, responses will be studied and the proposals and evaluation process refined. A summary of responses will be made available on both websites. Arrangements for the distribution of the second and third year funding will follow the analysis of responses and the appointment of the Fundholder. Arrangements for the first year are addressed in paragraph 3.4 of this document.

⁶ A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) is a tool that informs policy decisions. Further detail on RIAs is available on the Cabinet Office website at: www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation

2

PRIORITIES FOR THE PARENTING FUND

2.1 While £25 million is a significant amount of money to be dedicated to this important area, it is not sufficient to provide support to every possible parenting service, and nor will it enable us to fill all the gaps that have been identified. It will be important to prioritise and to ensure that the fund builds capacity; supports services that are replicable and sustainable; levers in additional resources where possible (for example, by organisations working with others or in different ways); complements existing Government and voluntary and community sector support; and prioritises greatest needs so that more and better services can be delivered.

Priorities 2.2 The Fund can make a real difference by:

1. increasing some elements of **universal provision**;
2. increasing **provision for some groups** of parents in difficult circumstances who have less access to services at present – for example, parents who have children or adolescents with behavioural difficulties, with antisocial behaviour difficulties such as drugs misuse, or with mental health problems (this is not intended to be an exhaustive list);
3. adopting a more **concentrated approach in some geographical areas** in order to establish a replicable model that can increase provision for families raising children in challenging circumstances in a way that complements statutory provision; and
4. increasing the **capacity of parenting organisations** to grow and develop services through support for training and a small grants programme for small parenting organisations.

Types of provision 2.3 It is envisaged that organisations receiving funds would deliver parenting support through a range of different types of provision, including:

- helplines;
- parenting workshops which take place from time to time and are based in accessible local facilities such as schools, clinics, or other local centres;
- parent support groups and parenting skills groups providing a regular point of contact; and
- home visiting by volunteers and professionals giving family assistance.

2.4 Part of the Fund could be used to develop options to include intensive family support (as outlined in the Anti-Social Behaviour White Paper¹) to help parents where their child's behaviour is beyond what can be coped with in the home. This could include residential parenting, respite care and intensive fostering.

Questions for consultation:

1. Are the four priorities for the Parenting Fund the right ones to be targeting?
2. Are there other priorities that should be included?
3. Which are the two most important priorities?

¹ Available on the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk

i. UNIVERSAL SUPPORT

Helpline services 2.5 Helpline services provide easy access to anyone anywhere who has a problem they want to talk about. Increasing the availability of helpline provision would ensure an improvement to the national provision of parenting support. To achieve this, a proportion of the Fund could be allocated to promote and further develop some existing universal services. This funding could be used to increase the sector's capacity to work with families facing serious difficulty.

Questions for consultation:

4. Are helpline services the best way to ensure an improvement to the national provision of parenting support?
5. Are there other important types of universal services that could improve outcomes for service users more effectively? Please give examples.

ii. SERVICES FOR GROUPS WHO RECEIVE LESS ACCESS AT PRESENT

Parents of older children 2.6 Research has shown that certain groups are not well served by established programmes. The National Family and Parenting Institutes' National Mapping Study (2001) found that there is a concentration of resources on parents of children under five years old, and a real lack of services for families of older children. The study also found that few services are specifically targeted at minority ethnic groups (two per cent) and fathers (one per cent). The Parenting Fund could address this disparity in the current provision of parenting services in two ways:

- by assisting organisations providing services to both parents currently getting few services and high need groups of parents, including black and minority ethnic families, fathers, and parents of adolescents; and
- by increasing the capacity of organisations to deliver appropriate provision through supporting training and knowledge sharing.

BME parents 2.7 Because services to black and minority ethnic (BME) families have less access to provision, it is proposed a specific portion of the fund be allocated to services for black and minority ethnic parents. Working through both current BME programmes delivered by organisations specifically targeting BME families and those organisations delivering services to BME families as part of their overall provision, the aim would be to increase the diversity of services provided, to embed and promote existing services, and to build and expand capacity.

2.8 It would be important for the Fundholder (see Chapter 3 for more detail on the Fundholder) to work alongside BME organisations and those serving BME families to develop mechanisms to support this activity, adhering to the principles outlined in the Compact and associated Code on Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organisations. In taking forward this proposal, the Fundholder would also need to work closely with the Home Office's Community Cohesion Unit, to ensure that this part of the fund is sensitively targeted and administered, in line with their guidance regarding area-based initiatives and community cohesion, and that it learns lessons from the elements of the Family Support Grant Programme currently targeted to BME groups.

Fathers 2.9 Organisations supported by the Fund would be expected to develop their capacity to work with fathers, including non-resident fathers. It would be important for the Fundholder

to draw together and make connections between organisations and networks seeking to serve parents' needs in all their diversity, recognising that parents, as the users of services, should be the drivers of service design and delivery.

Questions for consultation:

6. Are families with older children, BME families and fathers the right groups to be targeting services at, on the basis that they have less access to parenting support at present?
7. Are there others?
8. Are there particular ways to ensure the Fundholder is able to reach these groups? Please give examples where possible.

iii. A CONCENTRATED APPROACH

2.10 The evidence is that a scattergun approach does not deliver as much benefit as the planned, focused delivery of a range of provision within an area.² It is proposed therefore that the money be spread deeply in a few areas, not thinly across many. Focus means economies of scale and experience, better throughput, better referral routes into more intensive support, greater likelihood of sustainability, embedding and spreading good practice, and better knowledge development.

2.11 In order to ensure that the Fund can make a real difference to outcomes, targeting support through providing programme assistance in a limited number of local authority areas is also being considered – for example, those experiencing high deprivation and unmet need in parenting support. It is possible that a commissioning process could be used, which requires organisations singly or working together to provide a menu of support, aimed at reaching families struggling with a range of difficulties.

Targeting 2.12 This strand of the Fund could be targeted by providing universal access to parenting sessions in schools or other community based facilities (such as health centres, libraries, community centres and children's centres) within the limited number of selected high-need areas. Schools or health centres could be used as the gateway for this provision.

2.13 Evidence suggests that some parents feel unsupported at key stages of their children's development in school. There is little universal provision for parents of school-aged children, whereas families with pre-school children have access to universal services such as health visitors. Many families of adolescents report feeling unsupported at a difficult period in their child's development, particularly where their children face specific challenges, like family separation, disability or loss.

2.14 It is proposed that areas with concentrations of high need would be selected using a range of indicators to ensure a reasonable geographical spread covering both rural and urban areas. Separate work would be undertaken to establish specifically which geographic areas could be selected. The selection process would ensure that areas with unmet need are reached. This could be, for example, areas that are not already well provided for through Sure Start, the Children's Fund and other statutory and voluntary provision and yet have services to which value can be added. Local preventative strategies have begun to be developed in all local authority areas. These have involved mapping local services, including parenting and family support, based on work done by the Children's Fund, Sure Start and Connexions. These mapping exercises could be drawn down to identify gaps in provision. Every local authority has a Children's Fund partnership and most have strategic partnerships. These partnerships

² Henricson, C., Katz, I., Mesi, J., Sandison, M. and Tunstill, J., National Mapping of Family Services in England and Wales, 2001: London: National Family and Parenting Institute.

are available to the voluntary and community sector to facilitate the development of services locally and help them link with other services in the area.

Areas 2.15 Initially, it is proposed that areas are targeted which:

- **already have initiatives, facilities and relevant services in place**, such as children's centres, family centres, school behaviour improvement programmes, extended schools and contact centres. This would enable the Fund to add value to existing formal provision, ensure high levels of accessibility, avoid incurring capital costs, and produce the concentration of services that has been shown to produce greatest impact;
- **have clear gaps in provision**, for example for parents of adolescents to address areas of high need as outlined above; and
- **already have some voluntary and community sector capacity locally or nearby**, since starting services completely from scratch would slow down impact.

2.16 During the lifetime of the Fund, work in no or very low capacity areas would be expanded.

2.17 The aim of these targeted parenting support schemes will be to achieve complementarity with existing initiatives and to add value to current Government programmes, together with those being planned through the additional 2002 Spending Review funding for mainstream services (which goes through to 2006). This would maximise impact and avoid both duplication and capital costs.

2.18 Those providing new parenting services would be encouraged to work closely with existing local voluntary and statutory sector providers. They would link closely with the Local Preventative Strategy and relevant local partnerships especially the local children's strategic partnership, to ensure that these new services join up effectively with existing provision for children and families, without duplication.³ The Local Preventative Strategy will have mapped the current service provision and identified gaps, and the local Children's Strategic Partnership (or equivalent group) will be in a position to know what services will meet the need in the identified area. This group would be closely involved in the selection and monitoring of services in their area. Links would also be made with the relevant Government Office Children's Group who would have further information about the local authority areas in their region, and who will be involved in monitoring and supporting government programmes in the region. There would need to be clear quality assurance measures for local delivery of parenting support, including the match with statutory provision.

2.19 Within each area, a menu of services available on referral to more vulnerable families could be used. Access to more intensive parenting support could be provided through groups, home-visiting and parenting courses for higher need families.

2.20 Support would be targeted towards families facing a range of difficulties, including severe or multiple difficulties, rather than targeting any single issue or risk factor. Evidence from research shows that families 'at risk' are likely to suffer many problems acting together to reduce the family's capacity to cope.⁴

³ Including the Government Office Children's Groups in the Regions with local authorities, schools and so on in the areas they target.

⁴ Werner, E.E. and Smith, R. S.: *Overcoming the Odds: High-Risk Children from Birth to Adulthood*, 1992, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

2.21 Support would also contribute to more open access for parents in the area to the more intensive services. It will be essential to have referral routes through health visitors, teachers, social workers, GPs, the police, connexions, youth justice services, and voluntary and community sector offices.

Questions for consultation:

9. Is a concentrated approach, as outlined above, the right approach?

iv. INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF THE SECTOR TO GROW

2.22 The aim is to ensure that the mechanisms put in place to deliver the Parenting Fund would enable capacity in the sector to be built, thereby making future development more manageable. The focus will be on building existing capacity and developing a more seamless approach to service delivery, rather than increasing complexity. Training (both materials and courses), development, quality assurance and monitoring could be supported so as to build up the infrastructure that at present exists in only a limited way.

Workforce and infrastructure

2.23 The two main areas for development are a skilled workforce and an infrastructure to support provision, identify gaps, ensure management capability and share good practice. The impact of the Fund would be maximised by ensuring a learning culture is embedded in design so that knowledge can grow and good practice can be shared.

2.24 The Fundholder would work alongside other funds supporting parenting, both statutory and lottery-based, national and local.⁵ Large and established providers would be encouraged to work alongside small local providers to grow their staff and their organisational capacity, help with access and build training and development structures. Collaboration may mean, for example, building the capacity of a specialist provider to engage with a universalist provider, or vice versa – each working together to achieve common goals. The coordination of parenting support across national and local services could be strengthened by the further development of the Parent Education and Support Forum's model of parenting forums supported by regional co-ordinators of family and parenting support. This would build capacity and ensure effective linkages with the work on children currently being managed through the regional teams in the Government Offices and with other voluntary and community sector capacity building work that is currently being undertaken across Government.⁶

Questions for consultation:

10. Is the focus on increasing workforce skills and developing infrastructure support the right focus in order to increase the capacity of the sector to deliver parenting support?

11. Are there other more important ways to increase the capacity of the sector?

⁵ This will include Sure Start, the Children's Fund, Youth Offending Teams, and the Department for Education and Skills and lottery funded programmes (such as the New Opportunities Fund).

⁶ This includes improving access to public funds for *future*builders and other work resulting from the cross cutting review of the role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery; the capacity building / outreach work on the Local Network Fund; and other independent grant distribution bodies such as the Community Fund which have been working on improving access to lottery funds for smaller organisations and the most deprived areas.

THE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 The Parenting Fund is worth £25 million over the next three years, starting in the financial year 2003-04. The exact split over the three years will be confirmed in due course. It is expected that a smaller proportion of the Fund will be spent in the first year, simply because the consultation process means funding will not start until later in the year.

Fundholder 3.2 Separate work is being undertaken into the administration of the Fund. The Parenting Fund will be administered by a fundholding organisation which is within, or which has strong links to, the voluntary and community sector. This organisation will provide an independent source of expert advice, be professionally managed and independently audited. The organisation will not themselves be eligible for support from the Fund, other than to cover general administrative costs related to the Fund distribution.

3.3 The Fundholder will be selected following a two-stage competitive tendering process which will be publicised through sectoral networks and advertised in the press. This will take place during the consultation period.

3.4 The Fundholder will report regularly to Government to ensure that the Government's objectives for the Fund are being met. Because this is a new fund and new delivery structure, we believe it is worth spending the time to get it right. We recognise that the time taken to do so might mean that some decisions on Year 1 (2003-04) funding have to be taken by Government. If this is necessary it will not prejudice decisions on funding priorities for years two and three of the Fund – that is, the financial years 2004-05 and 2005-06.

DELIVERY

3.5 The Fundholder will deliver the fund through two processes:

- a **tendering process** for organisations to deliver the agreed services; and
- a **small grants programme** to enable small creative, perhaps specialist, locally based organisations to gain support from the Fund for work that meets the criteria set for the Fund. Organisations will be able to bid for funds to develop their parenting provision and to contribute to the work of larger organisations commissioned to develop the geographically-targeted services.

3.6 These new services will all be delivered by voluntary and community organisations with a track record in delivering parenting support. In order to strike a balance between fairness and impact we propose an open process with an approved list of providers based on quality and track record, with the proviso that small, local organisations can partner larger organisations who are commissioned to develop services in an area or to ensure that aspects of the menu are provided. Annex A sets out some suggested criteria developed in conjunction with the sector. Both the tendering and the bidding processes would be as light touch as possible.

3.7 Funds will be allocated on the basis of full cost recovery – which means that it is legitimate for providers to include the relevant element of overheads in their cost estimates. This was one of the key recommendations of the 2002 Spending Review Treasury cross cutting review of the role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery.¹ Funds will be allocated on the basis that they include consideration of any irrecoverable VAT liability.

¹ Available on the Treasury website at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

4

QUALITY CONTROL, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

4.1 £25 million is a significant investment of resources for the sector, and both Government and the voluntary and community sector will want to use it well. The Fundholder will be required to create systems of monitoring and evaluation that are consistent with the principles of the Parenting Fund. Wider evaluation of the Fund is also essential to enable both the Government and the voluntary and community sector to do more of what works in the future and disseminate the results more widely, particularly with regard to the effectiveness of geographic targeting.

4.2 An evaluation strategy will be built into the design of the Fund in such a way that it yields information about what is effective so that we can learn lessons, target future resources effectively and build the capacity of the parenting support sector more generally. It is important that the Parenting Fund operates in a complementary way to other relevant areas and learns from the research around and evaluation of existing policies such as those developed and operated by the Family Policy Unit, Sure Start, Children's Fund, Youth Justice Board and On Track. At the same time, evaluation must be balanced, with spending of as high a proportion of the fund as possible on actual service delivery.

4.3 Comments on how best to manage this tension are welcome. We intend to spend a small proportion of the Fund on an independent evaluation of its impact. This will be commissioned when the Fundholder is selected.

4.4 Determining how effective additional parenting support has been will be of particular interest in evaluation. In particular, the effectiveness of services designed to assist black and minority ethnic parents, fathers, and parents of adolescents; together with models for building capacity and financial and management expertise in smaller organisations.

Questions for consultation:

12. Are there any particular methods of evaluation that could inform evaluation of the Parenting Fund? For example, what can be learned from similar funds?

A

SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR PROVIDERS

This page indicatively sets out suggested criteria for selection of providers, large and small, which the Fundholder would use to assess which organisations receive support from the Parenting Fund.

MANAGEMENT

- Proper financial management / governance systems
- Internal quality assurance and monitoring systems
- Constitution
- Staff and volunteer recruitment and employment policies
- Evidence from peer organisations to verify financial and management competence and previous delivery of parenting services

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND FAMILIES

- 3 year minimum track record of work in parenting support (or, if new to service delivery, have an ability to work with larger organisations)
- Confidentiality policy
- Volunteers policy
- Child protection policy including referral process
- Complaints procedure for staff, users and volunteers
- Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse, poverty and mental health problems on children and families and capacity to signpost to protection and specialist services
- Evidence of understanding of impact of disability, illness, separation and loss on children and families and capacity to link appropriately
- Evidence of regular and reliable delivery of knowledge-based parenting support valued by users and partner organisations
- Evidence of open access and well signposted service
- Evidence of equal opportunity policies as an employer of paid staff; in respect of volunteers; and with respect to service delivery to users

COMMITMENT TO WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- Evidence of being connected with local community, either formally through partnership working, or informally through networking
- Evidence of partnership working and commitment to add value to existing provision
- Evidence of being connected to areas selected for delivery or capable of making these links