

Family Learning Impact Fund frequently asked questions

Date of issue February 2011

Q. What is the Family Learning Impact Fund (FLIF)?

A. In December 2007, the then Department for Children, Schools and Families announced an additional £30 million would be available over a three year fixed period 2008/11 to provide more family learning. It included a commitment to ensure that greater numbers of parents and carers from families at risk were included within funding and delivery arrangements for family learning programmes.

FLIF was set up to develop new approaches to family learning that would:

- increase take-up, progression and achievement
- deliver outcomes for children and their parents
- address wider challenges around systems and services to expand the potential of family learning programmes for those most in need
- build the capacity of the workforce, including training for volunteer numeracy champions.

Q. Is there FLIF for 2010/12 or beyond?

A. FLIF is a three year programme ending in March 2011. No funding has been agreed for future years. As you will already be aware, some FLIF providers' programmes will not be completed until the end of the *academic* year in August 2011. This is a timing matter only. The work is covered by the existing funding drawn down from the 3-year funding agreement and does not constitute new or additional funding.

Q. So why is funding for FLIF not continuing?

A. When the Department for Children Schools and Families announced this funding it also made clear that this would be limited to a 3 year period from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011. Its purpose was to enhance and expand family learning provision more widely through the development of the FLIF programme.

The Department for Education (DfE) is, however, keen to work with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Skills Funding Agency so that that the FLIF legacy, including new approaches and lessons

Skills Funding Agency

Cheylesmore House Quinton Road Coventry CV1 2WT
T 0845 377 5000 www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk
An agency of the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

learned, continues to enhance Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy and Wider Family Learning programmes.

Q. So how do you intend to build on this legacy?

A. The BIS £210m Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) budget which funds Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy and Wider Family Learning has been protected as part of the recent spending review. BIS and the Skills Funding Agency are now working with a range of stakeholders to reform and reinvigorate informal adult and community learning so that it helps build the Big Society, motivates disadvantaged groups and creates progression pathways towards wider learning.

In *'Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth'* the Government announced new 'freedoms and flexibilities' for providers in order to reduce bureaucracy and unnecessary regulation. From 1 August 2010 providers will have more flexibility in how they use their allocation to deliver across the four programme areas of ASL. A single ASL budget will be allocated, which will comprise the previous four budget lines. Providers will be responsible for continuing to deliver a balanced offer across the four elements, and is responsive to the needs of the local community.

Q. What will be the priorities for Family Learning going forward?

A. Family learning will continue to seek to engage hard to reach families and to deliver outcomes for children and parents with a focus on achievement, progress and progression. Providers will continue to meet individual needs and deliver high quality learning opportunities to parents and their children.

Q. Can we use the FLIF courses, materials and training?

A. Yes, these are available on the [LSIS website](#).

Q. Do providers need to complete final reports and returns?

A. Yes, for more information on the financial reporting requirements, see the [FLIF Guidance](#). Final reports should be completed by August 31 2011.

Q. FLIF allowed providers flexibility with course numbers. Will this continue?

A. Yes. Where providers cannot recruit and are able to deliver alternative Family Learning courses. It is hoped they will embed the lessons learnt from FLIF, build on the partnerships developed, continue to target families at risk and in doing so, reach as many families as possible.

Q. Where can I find the lessons learned from FLIF?

A. Key messages will be included in the family programmes guidance for 2011/12.

Q. How can Family Learning contribute to the Big Society?

A. The Coalition Government is committed to building a Big Society in which individuals, families and communities have the power and information to come together, solve problems and build the Britain they want. Over the coming months BIS will work closely with a wide range of partners to reform and reinvigorate informal adult and community learning , including family learning, so that it:

- helps build the Big Society, through learning for personal , family and community development
- engages the most disadvantaged people in our communities and offers progression routes into further learning.

We know from a 2009 Ofsted survey¹ of local authority family learning providers that all those sampled had well-established partnerships which contributed to community cohesion.

Q. How does Family Learning target the disadvantaged?

A. BIS family learning programmes offer an entry point to wider support for families, so that people facing difficulties like worklessness, relationship difficulties, poor housing, crime and anti-social behaviour or substance abuse can be encouraged to:

- take up learning
- achieve and progress in education and training
- improve their quality of life, health and wellbeing.

Q. How does volunteering impact on Family Learning?

A. Volunteering, both formal and informal, is a characteristic of family learning. It is typical of family learning that parents on courses often help each other. Although volunteers have not been widely used in course delivery, they have played a key role in encouraging others to take up learning. For many parents the next step after finishing a course is to become a regular helper/volunteer in school.

The FLIF numeracy champions training programme has helped providers offer short training courses to parents and others wishing to promote family numeracy and wider family learning, and encourage other parents to join these courses. As well as increasing the number of parents joining FLIF courses, the training programme has given many parents a chance to take a step up and helped some become tutors and volunteers in family learning settings. It gives them status in the school and community and helps to maintain their involvement with the school and the wider world of learning.

Q. How will future Family Learning provision engage hard to reach families?

¹ *Family learning: an evaluation of the benefits of family learning for participants, their families and the wider community*, Ofsted 2009

A. One of the challenges of family learning has always been engaging hard to reach families. The most successful providers have found a variety of strategies that have helped them engage with the less confident parents, disadvantaged families and fathers. These include:

- good planning with schools and early years services
- finding partners that can promote the programme and encourage and support parents onto the courses and during the course
- being clear who the provision is for and what the courses offer
- finding the right language to 'sell' the course with an emphasis on the practical and enjoyable rather than the literacy and numeracy.

Working with partners in the community has helped providers engage families and develop flexible learning opportunities – for example, the Citizens Advice Bureaux, football clubs, health initiatives, housing groups, parent support advisers.

Q. What is this new Pupil Premium and what impact will it have on Family Learning?

A. The Government has made it clear that it wants to see more resources being spent on the education of deprived children. This presents new opportunities going forward as it will be for schools to determine how best to utilise the schools budget they have been allocated, to which is being added the new pupil premium. This additional funding is being introduced in order to enable schools to provide more support which is directed at the education of their most disadvantaged children, with the primary objective of boosting their attainment.

The pupil premium will amount to an additional £430 per eligible pupil in 2011-12 and will be allocated in its entirety to schools and targeted at exactly those pupils who need extra support to reach their full potential.

The Pupil Premium will be allocated to those children who are currently eligible for Free School Meals, children looked after for more than six months and pupils receiving free school meals in non-mainstream settings.

Q. What other funding opportunities might be available?

A. There will be ongoing opportunities to compete for contracts from all central government departments, including their agencies and non-departmental public bodies. From January 2011, all new tenders with a total value of £10,000 or above (along with details of all contracts that have been awarded) are being published on 'Contracts Finder' on the [Business Link website](#). This will enable you to identify a wide range of public sector tendering opportunities in one place.

Q. Is there anyone I can contact if I have a query?

A. Yes. The first point of contact is your Account Manager in the Skills Funding Agency.