

## **Child Poverty - Innovation and Supporting Communities Grant Application Form 2025/26**

Before completing this application form, please read the [guidance](#) for Child Poverty Innovation and Supporting Communities Grant which provides information on the types of activities that can be supported.

Please complete all sections of this application form, incomplete forms will not be assessed. There is a maximum word count in some areas of the form, we would ask that you do not exceed the word count for these sections as **any text over the word count will not be assessed.**

All the information must be provided within the application form under the appropriate heading. Additional documents or supporting information will not be accepted.

Completed applications will only be accepted electronically by email to [childpovertyinnovationandsupportingcommunitiesgrant@gov.wales](mailto:childpovertyinnovationandsupportingcommunitiesgrant@gov.wales) by **midnight on Sunday 13 April 2025**. No application will be accepted after the closing time/date. Receipt of submitted applications will be issued by email.

### **Section A: Project Summary**

<b>Title of Project (maximum 15 words):</b>
A collaboration to enable children/families in Gwent to achieve developmental milestones ready for school.
<b>Project Summary (50 words):</b> Please ensure this briefly but clearly identifies the aim of the project.
To engage children/parents/guardians and early years practitioners on developmental milestones for school readiness. To use the feedback to inform the testing of different approaches to enable children/families living in poverty to meet their developmental milestones and be 'school ready'.
<b>Is this a new or an existing collaboration? How will your project involve/promote local partnership working? (Maximum 300 words):</b> Please set out how you will build or use existing partnerships to deliver the project. Who is involved/needs to be involved, and how will relevant partners be engaged?

This is a new collaboration lead by Newport City Council and Public Health Team-Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) with Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Monmouthshire Local Authorities, Home-Start Cymru, The Health Determinants Research Centre, Torfaen Voluntary Alliance (TVA). These partners have all been engaged in this proposal development.

The collaboration recognises the Early Years landscape in Gwent and builds upon the existing partnership between the LA's and AUHB, but draws in new expertise and insight from new partners. The partners will be engaged via a steering group that will oversee the work. The Local Authorities and ABUHB have responsibility for the Flying Start/ Families First Programmes and Healthy Child Wales Programmes/health visitors respectively. These are key programmes that already support children to achieve their developmental milestones.

Home-Start Cymru has an established network of connections across Gwent due a history of delivering family support services as well as currently through delivering a number of active family support contracts. It has strong connections with schools, health practitioners, family services and to accept family referrals. For this project they will lead the consultation with children/families and practitioners, and deliver the pilot project of direct hand-on support to families.

Health Determinants Research Centre (HDRC) Torfaen will provide expertise to the community engagement work, including sampling strategies, development of research tools, methodological approaches, analysis of results, evaluation, and production of the final report.

TVA will support with linking in with community groups and venues.

Professor David Egan will provide Consultancy expert advice to the steering group.

There are other groups e.g., Barnardo's, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) and Cylchoedd Meithrin that we would like to engage in this work.

The work is aligned to Gwent Public Service Board priority 'To give every child the Best Start in Life' and will report to Gwent PSB.

**Lead applicant organisation name:**

Newport City Council

**Two named project contacts (these must be from separate organisations/departments):**

**Project Contact 1****(Lead Applicant Organisation)**

Name: Mrs Caroline Ryan-Phillips, Head of Prevention and Inclusion

Organisation: Newport City Council

Tel No:

Email: caroline.ryan-phillips@newport.gov.uk

**Project Contact 2**

Name: Eryl Powell, Consultant in Public Health

Organisation: Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Tel No:07854007715

Email: eryl.powell@wales.nhs.uk

**Amount of funding applied for:****£86,224****Project location:**

Please include which Local Authorities the project will be delivered in along with specific community/ communities, town/city, ward or particular postcodes.

Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Local Authority areas.

The consultation will target parents from across Gwent using a mix of targeting based on socio-economic deprivation and protected characteristics.

The pilot project will be delivered with at least 50 families in the catchment areas for primary schools in the 'most deprived' and 'next most deprived' fifth of deprivation according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

**Section B: What is the focus of your project?**

This section provides space for you to set out the aims of your project and how it would address one or more of the Child Poverty Strategy objectives identified in the Innovation and Supporting Communities grant's guidance.

**Which Objective of the Child Poverty Strategy does your project relate to?**

Select all that apply.

Objective 1	✓
Objective 2	✓
Objective 3	✓
Objective 4	✓
Objective 5	X

**Explain how your project directly addresses the selected Objectives identified above (maximum 600 words):**

Please set out the which objective/s your project will focus on and what activities will you implement to ensure it is successful.

You should refer to the activities that can be supported in the [grant guidance](#) to ensure activities proposed are within the scope of the grant, and do not include any ineligible activity.

Activity that directly addresses objective 2:

1. We will engage with children and parents/carers to understand:
  - a) What's meant by developmental milestones and school readiness and the challenges in helping children to reach milestones
  - b) The lived experience and impact of poverty on children's development and how it prevents them from achieving their full potential and forging pathways out of poverty
  - c) Their experiences/views of existing early years services (e.g. Flying Start, Healthy Child Wales) in relation to supporting child development, including views on accessibility, dignity, respect and reducing stigma.

Activity that directly addresses objective 4:

2. We will engage with early years practitioners in Gwent to understand:
  - a) What's meant by developmental milestones and school readiness and the enablers and challenges in supporting families to help children reach their milestones
  - b) Experiences/views of early years services in relation to supporting child development
  - c) The impact of poverty on children's development and the value base that underpins their work, including exploring, dignity, respect, and challenging the stigma associated with poverty.

Activity that directly addresses objectives 2 and 4:

3. We will use the engagement feedback along with evidence-based approaches to co-develop with families and practitioners a single agreed version of developmental milestones for school readiness. We will use this to design and deliver school transition workshops co-designed with local schools and nurseries. If we can better enable parents to support children to achieve their development milestones and to continue work in partnership with schools throughout their child's education this should have a positive effect on school attainment and aspiration. In turn this will help to forge pathways out of poverty for that child.

Activity that directly addresses objectives 2,3,4, & long-term outcomes will address objective 1:

4. We will test enhanced outreach and face to face support for families on enabling their children to reach their developmental milestones to be ready for school. We will use our agreed milestones to develop relevant activities and provide accompanying resources for children/parents. The interactive parent-child sessions will be focused on speech, play, language development, routines, and social skills. We will use parent-led peer groups or WhatsApp check-ins for encouragement and shared learning, and consider digital options for parents unable to attend in person. We will develop tailored resources /activities that address specific challenges, such as literacy/numeracy levels, language barriers or access to services,

ensuring they are culturally sensitive and accessible. We will provide a box of educational toys/resources to enable parents to carry out these activities and the Home-Start Cymru workers/volunteers will model how these can be used. We will use a distance travelled tool to understand the impact of the enhanced support pilot and how the learning can be applied to early years services/programme approaches. This work will support child and family wellbeing and help to ensure the realisation of children's rights in line with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Activity that directly addresses objectives 3 and 4:

5. Using the consultation feedback we will develop developmental milestones for school readiness guidance, best practice training and poverty proofing recommendations for Early Years Services provided by Local Authorities, ABUHB and the third sector in Gwent. We will use the collaborative partners to work with existing childcare providers, early years practitioners, health visitors, and community organisations to create a cohesive support network for families. This will ensure that children, young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect by the people and services who interact with and support them and to challenge the stigma of poverty.

**Explain why you want to deliver your project (maximum 400 words):**

Tell us how you know this project is the right thing to do. Tell us about local intelligence, data, evidence, existing work or strategies which inform your project's design.

There is no single, agreed definition of "school readiness" in Wales, but it is generally understood as the skills, behaviours, and attitudes that enable a child to thrive in a formal education setting. It encompasses physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills, including personal/ social development, language/ communication skills, mathematical understanding, and physical development domains.

There is no consensus on what age school readiness should be measured in Wales: aged 3 (non-statutory early years education) or aged 5 (compulsory school age in Wales).

There is a wealth of evidence on the relationship between low-income/poverty, delayed development, and poor educational attainment. This informed the Gwent Marmot report recommendation 'To reduce inequalities in the early development of physical and emotional health, and cognitive, linguistic, and social skills.

#### Delayed Development:

- Language/Communication: Children from low-income backgrounds often start school with weaker language skills (Save the Children UK).
- Cognitive Development: Poverty can negatively affect cognitive development, including problem-solving (Hughes & Davies, 2019)
- Social/Emotional Development: Children in poverty may face challenges in social interaction and emotional regulation and are at higher risk of bullying (Hughes & Davies, 2019).
- Physical Development: Poverty is linked to poorer health outcomes, impacting physical development (Public Health Wales; Hughes & Davies, 2019).

#### Educational Attainment Gaps:

- Learners eligible for Free School Meals consistently underperform compared to their non-eFSM peers across all key stages (Senedd Research; Hughes & Davies, 2019).

#### Barriers to Accessing Support:

- Families in poverty may face financial and practical barriers to accessing quality early education and childcare (Save the Children UK; Estyn).
- A significant percentage of children in income deprivation in Wales are not eligible for programs like Flying Start (Save the Children UK).

#### Long-Term Consequences:

- Falling behind early increases the likelihood of continued struggles in education and poorer socioeconomic outcomes in adulthood (Save the Children UK; Senedd Research).

We recognise there are different views of developmental milestones/ school readiness. There is information and support available for families. However, the evidence tells us that what we're doing isn't working for families in poverty. Drawing on the existing information/ resources available (including the Early Years Evidence Store- Education Endowment Foundation, The Estyn Thematic report on 'Impact of poverty on educational attainment,

support, provision and transition for early years education, Home-Start UK- Big Hopes Big Futures programme) we will engage with families, develop Welsh specific milestones, provide activities and educational resources aligned to those milestones, an outcome monitoring framework and analyse distance travelled.

**How will you involve people with lived experience of poverty in the development and / or implementation of your project? (Maximum 200 words):**

The consultation element will include parents from across Gwent to help shape the project. We will make every effort to ensure that we engage parents that reflect the lived experience of poverty and diversity of parents/children across Gwent.

We will ensure that the activity that directly engage children has been co-produced and ratified by children.

Throughout the activity we will ensure that families treated with respect and that the approaches adopted are non- stigmatising and sensitive.

Home-Start Cymru will Create a Co-Production Group with parents from Gwent areas to work with the HDRC to oversee survey questions development, provide insight into barriers/ challenges, help advise on the approach to sampling, contribute to the content of the activity/resource pack, and support monitoring and evaluation.

The Co-Production Group will be engaged in the planning of the pilot project, helping to ensure that the approached adopted will meet the needs of families and children.

Children will be involved in the identification and testing of activities and resources for the pack. Home-Start Cymru will also engage their Volunteer Voice Group to help with engaging (sharing link to survey/ engage groups), oversee survey questions.

## **Section C: Project Plan and Outcomes**

**Please provide a project plan that details your desired outcomes, together with timescales for delivery that can be measured as part of the monitoring process (maximum 800 words)**

Your project will need to include if you can you start straight away, or would you need to recruit staff and/or bring in others? Please give an expected start date

The first phase of the project will begin on 01 May 2025 – key timelines have been indicated below.

### **Phase 1: Project Setup**

Timescale: 01 May to 31 May

- a) Complete contracts (Home-Start Cymru/Prof Egan), assign Project Staff, agree reporting requirements
- b) Establish Project Steering Group with representation from partner organisations to oversee project delivery, monitor progress, ensure effective collaboration.
- c) Establish Co-Production Group consisting parents from Gwent to ensure voices of lived experience shape project.
- d) Develop detailed project plan, including timelines, responsibilities, and communication strategy.

## **Phase 2: Consultation Engagement**

Timescale: 01 June – 31 August

- a) Conduct surveys and focus groups with parents/carers (target number: 30 per County/ ~150) across Gwent, including those in most deprived and next most deprived areas, to gather views on school readiness, challenges, and service experiences.
- b) Conduct surveys and focus groups with early years practitioners (target number: 200) across Gwent to gather their views on school readiness, challenges, and service experiences.
- c) Analyse consultation data to identify key themes and needs

## **Phase 3: Development of Resources and Training**

Timescale: 01 June – 30 September

- a) Co-develop consistent understanding of developmental milestones for school readiness, in collaboration with parents/carers, practitioners and project partners.
- b) Develop school readiness guidance, best-practice training materials, and poverty-proofing recommendations for Early Years Services, incorporating evidence-based approaches and the findings from consultation.

## **Phase 4: Pilot Project Implementation**

Timescale: 01 May – 28 February (2026)

- a) Recruit and train staff and volunteers to deliver the pilot project.
- b) Co-develop "school readiness box" of resources, including activities and materials to support children's development at home.
- c) Deliver pilot project providing outreach and direct support to 50 families in the catchment areas of primary schools in the most deprived and next most deprived fifth of deprivation in Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Newport (Caerphilly), and Monmouthshire.
- d) Provide training to parents, including how to support their children's learning at home.
- e) Provide progress report to Gwent PSB.

## **Phase 5: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Dissemination**

Timescale: 01 May – 31 March (2026)

- a) Develop and implement monitoring and evaluation framework to track project progress, measure outcomes, and assess the impact of the pilot project.
- b) Collect data on key indicators, including children's developmental progress, parental confidence, and service effectiveness.
- c) Evaluate pilot project using a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative and qualitative (case study) data analysis
- d) Disseminate findings/learning to Gwent PSB, partners, stakeholders, and the wider community.

## Section D: Financial Management

This section is to provide specific and more detailed information on the financial aspects of your project. It should build on the information identified above on how your project will be delivered, including information on measures, targets or indicators.

**For the funding being sought, please give details of all proposed expenditure, including where match funding has been sourced:**

Item	Amount of funding requested through this grant	Amount of Funding secured through other identified sources
Project Coordinator (30hrs P/W, Consultation / Engagement Lead, Home-Start Cymru employed)	£28,610	
Family support Coordinator (34hrs P/W – Pilot Lead / Family Support / Volunteer Coordinator / Groups, Home-Start Cymru employed)	£28,113	
Management and Support for Home-Start Cymru project coordinator and Family Support Coordinator (2hrs P/W)	£1,760	
Professor Egan Consultancy – expert advice to the steering group & project 8 days x £500	£4,000	
Training Resources / Module / Data (developing resources based on the research, delivering training to staff & volunteers, monitoring framework development)	£2,000	
Travel expenses (for Home-Start Cymru staff & volunteers)	£5,500	
Phone	£220	
I.T.	£46	
Accessible venue hire (assumption most venues offer free use), translation inc. Welsh /other languages, British Sign Language	£1,000	TVA £500
Overheads Contribution Home-Start Cymru (10%)	£6,975	
Designing, printing and translation of Resources (Guide for parents, activity / work sheets)	£1,500	

Family Incentives (£20 vouchers x 150)	£3,000	
Family Resources (Boxes of books, educational toys, leaflets - £25 each)	£2,500	Books Trust book donations -£250
Monitoring & Evaluation (method, survey design, monitoring, evaluation – HDRC- Torfaen)	£0	£6,000
Steering Group member time (minimum 5 meetings) 8 partners		£3,000
Newport City Council Finance management overheads	£1,000	
	£86,224	£9,750

Please confirm there is no double funding from your other funding sources:

If 'other funding' is included in the above table, please tick here to confirm these funds are confirmed:

**Value for Money** - In this section please demonstrate how your project will provide value for money (maximum 300 words):

This proposal provides value for money by working with the key early years programme providers in Gwent who have responsibility for the early years system. This means that the work can commence quickly and the learning from the project can be applied to the Early Years system pan Gwent.

By embedding this in the PSB Best Start in Life priority for Gwent we are able to draw on the support and expertise of the HDRC who although have a remit for Torfaen are willing to work on a pan-Gwent basis for this project. HDRC also provide links and ready access to University of South Wales expertise, and wider HDRC research networks, for example the Childrens Social Care Research and Development Centre (CASCADE) at Cardiff University.

Home-Start Cymru bring some of the resources from the Big Hopes Big Futures UK programme which we can adapt and test in Gwent. They also bring a volunteer element to the pilot project providing additional hands-on support for families, but also developing skills and knowledge in the volunteers which could increase their employability or ability to secure a place on further training/education.

In the longer term there is a wealth of evidence on the social return on investment in early childhood education. A 2023 report by Public Health Wales highlighted that integrating early childhood education and care (ECEC) within family-friendly policies has the potential for a "triple dividend"—benefiting children's development, empowering women, and promoting economic growth. The report noted that quality

affordable childcare contributes to economic growth, with estimates showing a seven percent return on investment to society through benefits of improved early childhood development<sup>1</sup>. Research also indicates that every pound spent on early years interventions delivers a return of between £1.30 and £16.80 in long-term savings and benefits to the economy<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [Early childhood education and care pays triple dividend for society - Public Health Wales](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Priority areas for early years action identified to help support young families in Wales - Public Health Network Cymru](#)

## Section E: Exit Strategy

**When your project is complete how could your actions be embedded in your local practice and/or scaled up? What wider benefit could result from your project? (Maximum 300 words):**

**Please set out your plans for sustainability of this project.**

This could include plans to ensure successful changes are maintained and embedded in processes, building on knowledge generated to adapt existing systems, embedding new partnerships or ways of working, or securing alternative longer-term funding to continue activities.

Our proposal is predicated on the early years system taking the learning generated to adapt programmes and services in order to better enable families in poverty to enable children to meet their developmental milestones. The HDRC Torfaen will produce an end of project evaluation report which will be presented to Gwent Public Service Board thus ensuring that all leaders of Public Services in Gwent are sighted on the outcomes. If as a consequence of this work further development is recommended, the strategic leaders that form Gwent PSB will be ideally placed to agree this and consider the resource implications.

There will be a number of products resulting out of this work, including developmental milestones model of support, training packages, monitoring framework along with new ways of working which will sustain the activity after the funding has ended. We will use existing communications routes in Gwent Local Authorities (e.g., The Family Information Service and ABUHB (e.g., Healthier Together) as well as voluntary sector networks to ensure that developmental milestone and transition information is provided to parents/carers.

## Section F: Your organisation and collaboration arrangements


This section is to provide specific and more detailed information on your organisation, as well as the collaborative and partnership arrangements involved in your project. It should build on the information identified above on how your project will be delivered.


**This table should be completed for the lead applicant organisation submitting the project.**


<b>Registered organisation name:</b>	<b>Newport City Council</b>
<b>Type of organisation (private/public/higher education institution/charity):</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Company/charity VAT/UTR number (if applicable):</b>	
<b>Alternative contacts in your organisation (name and contact details):</b>	<b>Mandy Shide – Service Manager</b> <a href="mailto:Mandy.shide@newport.gov.uk">Mandy.shide@newport.gov.uk</a>
<b>Registered organisation address:</b>	Newport City Council, Civic Centre, Godfrey Road Newport, South Wales, NP20 4UR

**Please provide the detail for each partner organisation involved in the delivery of your project.**


You can copy and paste this table for each organisation in your application form. We have provided letters of support for the partners involved in the collaboration.

<b>Registered organisation name:</b>	<b>Aneurin Bevan University Health Board</b>  Letter of Support GPHT.docx
<b>Type of organisation (private/public/higher education institution/charity)</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Company/charity VAT/UTR number (if applicable):</b>	
<b>Main contact name:</b>	<b>Eryl Powell</b>
<b>Registered organisation address:</b>	<b>Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Headquarters, Lodge Road, Caerleon, Newport, NP18 3XQ</b>

<b>Registered organisation name:</b>	<b>Home-Start Cymru</b>  CPIG Partner Letter HSC.docx
<b>Type of organisation (private/public/higher education institution/charity)</b>	<b>Charity</b>
<b>Company/charity VAT/UTR number (if applicable):</b>	<b>Company Number: 1118968 Charity Number 1105577</b>
<b>Main contact name:</b>	<b>Iestyn Evans</b>
<b>Registered organisation address:</b>	<b>Rainbow House, 1 Newent Road St Mellons Cardiff CF3 0BL</b>


<b>Registered organisation name:</b>	<b>Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, The General Offices, Steelworks Road, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6DN</b>  LMM letter 11.04.25.doc
<b>Type of organisation (private/public/higher education institution/charity)</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Company/charity VAT/UTR number (if applicable):</b>	

<b>Main contact name:</b>	<b>Dr Luisa Munro-Morris</b>
<b>Registered organisation address:</b>	<b>Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, The General Offices, Steelworks Road, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6DN</b>

<b>Registered organisation name:</b>	<b>Torfaen County Borough Council</b>  HDRC Torfaen letter of support...
<b>Type of organisation (private/public/higher education institution/charity)</b>	<b>Public</b>
<b>Company/charity VAT/UTR number (if applicable):</b>	
<b>Main contact name:</b>	<b>Gareth Cooke</b>
<b>Registered organisation address:</b>	<b>Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, NP4 6YB</b>

<b>Registered organisation name:</b>	<b>Caerphilly County Borough Council</b>
<b>Type of organisation (private/public/higher education institution/charity)</b>	<b>Public</b>

education institution/ charity)	
Company/charity VAT/UTR number (if applicable):	
Main contact name:	Sarah Mutch
Registered organisation address:	Caerphilly County Borough Council, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed, CF82 7PG

Registered organisation name:	Monmouthshire County Council, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA   MM Partner Letter - Monmouthsh...
Type of organisation (private/public/higher education institution/ charity)	Public
Company/charity VAT/UTR number (if applicable):	
Main contact name:	Charlotte Drury
Registered organisation address:	



CPIG Partner  
Letter DE.docx

### **Applicant declaration**

- I hereby confirm that the information contained in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief, having taken all reasonable care to ensure that such is the case.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the [Child Poverty Innovation and Supporting Communities grant guidance](#) and my organisation meets the eligibility requirements.
- I am authorised to sign or submit this application on behalf of the organisations outlined above.
- I confirm that this application has been agreed by all partner organisations identified in the application.
- I confirm that this project does not have any pending applications being processed or have any other grant aid for this project.
- I confirm that no work on this project has been undertaken.
- I declare that there are no conflicts of interest in relation to the application for grant funding whether actual, potential or perceived

**ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE:** By emailing this form to the Welsh Government's Child Poverty Innovation and Supporting Community email address you are making the declaration above.

Date: 11.04.25  
Name: Caroline Ryan-Phillips  
Organisation: Newport City Council

Position: Head of Prevention and Inclusion

Signature;

C. K. M. - P. H. P. S.