



Frequently Asked Questions: Ready for School, Bridging the Gap & Flying High

Who can apply for SHINE funding?

We accept applications from individual schools, groups of schools (e.g. Multi Academy Trusts or informal learning clusters) and early years settings.

Does SHINE accept unsolicited applications?

SHINE does not accept unsolicited applications; however, we are happy to receive unsolicited enquiries from Schools, MATs, groups of schools or early years settings via the contact form on our website. Please provide an outline of the project, including an indicative budget and a summary of the expected number of beneficiaries.

How can I get an application form?

Our full application forms are not publicly available; please submit an outline proposal via the enquiry form on our website, [here](#), and a member of the team will be in contact to discuss your idea further.

What are your deadlines for submitting a funding application?

Our main application deadlines are at the end of January and April year, for programmes to begin the following academic year. In rare circumstances, we also take some proposals forward at the end of October where there is an especially good reason to do so (for example, if delivery is due to begin outside of an academic year cycle). However by this stage of the year the majority of SHINE funds will already have been awarded so it is usually advisable to wait until the spring. Exact dates will be confirmed once you have submitted an initial enquiry.

How long does SHINE's application process take?

Applicants hoping to submit a proposal at one of the draft application deadlines should ensure they have submitted their outline via the enquiry form with sufficient time to establish a discussion with SHINE and complete the forms – this is frequently one to two months in advance of the draft application deadline.

What do you look for in a successful application?

SHINE hopes to identify the most innovative approaches to meeting the needs of disadvantaged children; projects that demonstrate innovation, either in type of intervention, or in the model or mode of delivery, are more likely to be successful.

SHINE assess proposals against the advice provided in our [Application Guidelines](#), [Core Priorities to 2025](#) and the additional information provided in these FAQs.





In general we look for:

- ◆ evidence that the project meets the needs of disadvantaged students, for example, by targeting Pupil Premium students, or working across schools that have a high overall proportion of Pupil Premium students
- ◆ a clear statement of what the problem is that you hope to address and how this links to our Core Funding Priorities (Ready for School, Bridging the Gap or Flying High). When discussing the problem, this should be directly referenced to your school's context
- ◆ a clear statement of how you hope to address this problem, including a description of the structure of the project. Imagine you are describing what you wish to do, over two to three years, to someone who knows nothing about your plans
- ◆ a clear statement of what you expect the outcomes to be. A small number of specific, attainment-related outcomes is usually more useful than a large list of less clearly-defined outcomes
- ◆ clear information on how you hope to measure the outcomes and assess the impact of your project. How will you know if the intervention has worked to address the problem you have identified?
- ◆ a plan for the long-term scalability and sustainability of the project, including how you might share anything you have learned with other schools, settings or organisations, and how the intervention might be sustained once any grant funding has come to an end
- ◆ evidence of value for money. One way we might look at this is through the cost per child/student/beneficiary. We will look at how intensive the project is for the cost, how likely it is to achieve significant impact, and how it might be sustained once funding has ended. We will also assess your budget to confirm that all costings are reasonable
- ◆ SHINE usually prefers that a project has some match funding in place. This can, however, be in the form of 'in-kind' funding, e.g. a school being willing to cover the cost of some teacher time or space for a project to take place. However, we are also happy to receive applications with match funding from organisations be that monetary, time or resources
- ◆ we'd also like to know about how your school(s) or setting(s) works in collaboration with other schools, families, community groups or organisations, or about other experience you have of running and testing ideas or projects.

How does SHINE's application process work?

Once an enquiry has been submitted, the next steps are:

- ◆ we will contact you within two weeks to advise on whether your enquiry/outline proposal meets our criteria and priorities
- ◆ if your enquiry/proposal meets our criteria and priorities, we will arrange a telephone call or meeting to discuss the project
- ◆ we will then provide SHINE's application forms and advise of the next deadline for draft application submissions; if you have any additional queries about the forms, please contact SHINE by [email](#)



- ◆ you should submit your application form and budget template online, by the draft application deadline for the funding round you are applying in
- ◆ SHINE will review your draft application and provide feedback prior to the final deadline. In some circumstances, SHINE may respond at this point and recommend that you do not proceed further with your application. If this happens, we will always endeavour to give you feedback and information on why we have provided this advice
- ◆ applicants can then rework and amend their application based on this feedback and should resubmit the forms by the final application deadline for the relevant funding round
- ◆ we will provide a decision on whether your application has been successful within one month of the final application deadline.

What types of programmes does SHINE fund?

Our aim is to develop the very best practice in schools and make a lasting contribution to the capacity and potential of schools, teachers and students across the North of England. For more information please review our Funding Guidelines: Ready for School, Bridging the Gap and Flying High. Additionally, to learn more about some of SHINE's successful projects you can find project information and case studies on our [website](#).

How competitive is SHINE funding?

We hope, through our collaborative funding process, to identify the projects that most closely meet our criteria and priorities, and that have the greatest chance of being approved by our Board of Trustees. However, our funding is still competitive at this final stage, and the Trustees will be reviewing more proposals than they are likely to be able to support. As a broad indication, in previous rounds, around 50-60% of applications that have reached this final stage and been reviewed by the Board have been approved. We are happy to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants on the reasons for this decision.

Do you have any priority regions for funding?

SHINE will consider applications to work in any part of the North of England, however, in order to ensure the biggest impact, we are particularly interested in ensuring that all geographies, contexts and communities within the North of England are served by our funding. As such, we particularly welcome proposals for work that serves the most disadvantaged parts of the North.

Is it necessary to focus on attainment? What about other skills or areas of focus, such as behaviour, motivation, engagement, or career development/awareness?

SHINE's mission is to improve the educational attainment of disadvantaged children in the North of England; we achieve this by supporting innovative interventions, within our core priorities. We recognise that interventions that support non-cognitive skills or attributes, such as engagement, motivation, communication skills, attendance, wellbeing, enquiry, creative thinking or aspiration, can contribute significantly to successful education outcomes, however, the links between these and attainment should be clearly articulated in an application. Proposals that solely address the personal, social or career development of children and young people without any clear link to educational outcomes are much less likely to be successful.

How much funding does SHINE provide?

The normal range of SHINE grant funding for the full duration of a two- to three-year project is around



£20,000-£100,000. Projects that are new, or being piloted/tested for impact, or that impact on smaller numbers of students, will be funded at the lower end of this range, whereas projects with a stronger evidence base and that reach a greater number of beneficiaries will be considered at the higher end of this range. More guidance is available in our [Approach to Evidence](#).

SHINE can also award grants for over £100,000, in some circumstances. Such projects usually have a strong evidence base, a history of improving attainment for disadvantaged children, and will have the potential to have an impact on a larger number of schools, students or other beneficiaries.

Do you provide bursaries or capital build costs?

SHINE does not provide grants for bursaries, simple resources, staff, capital build costs or direct replacements of statutory funding. Additionally, we will not fund ideas where the total equipment or license costs are over 50% of the total budget. We will pay for administrative support and cover should teaching staff need to take time out of the classroom to deliver aspects of the project. All proposals to SHINE should be for a sustained project of two to three years' duration that can be monitored and evaluated.

I am a school that wants to submit a proposal to work with other schools. Do I need to have the schools signed up/committed before submitting an application?

We would prefer that schools were signed up before applying, as this helps to confirm that there is sufficient demand and buy-in from other schools for the intervention you are proposing. If it is not possible or practical to identify schools in advance of making an application, then evidence of your school's track record and capacity to develop partnerships with schools, evidence of demand for your intervention from schools, and a plan for identifying and establishing the commitment of schools should be included in your application.

Does SHINE focus on any groups with particular needs, e.g. children from BAME backgrounds, girls or SEN students?

SHINE's core focus is on socioeconomic disadvantage, and we usually use Pupil Premium as a top-level measure for this. We are interested in, and collect data on, how other needs may be addressed through our projects, however, the primary focus of any proposal should be socioeconomic disadvantage.

I'm unsure as to what SHINE mean when they refer to 'scaling a project', what would this look like in an application?

We look to fund interventions that could scale, grow, or be replicated in other settings. Generally, the evidence we would look for in an application might include scenarios such as:

- ◆ the outcomes will be shared with other schools in the area, a MAT or informal cluster
- ◆ the evidence will be shared more widely through other specialist hubs/knowledge sharing events or networks
- ◆ the intervention could be based on an online or digital platform in the future
- ◆ the intervention involves a CPD model or resource pack.

Examples of successfully scaled SHINE projects, including case studies, can be found on our website [here](#).



What evidence base does SHINE require to fund an intervention?

SHINE look to fund a range of interventions from very innovative early stage ideas, through to those that may have been piloted in your school / setting or ideas that are well established and supported by the available educational research. Our requirements for evidence are based on the size of the grant requested, and some guidance on this is provided in our [Approach to Evidence](#).

What are SHINE's monitoring requirements once a grant is awarded?

SHINE requests termly reporting, with more comprehensive end-of-year reporting, and our monitoring requirements are based on the scale of the grant, the nature of the project, and the outcomes you discussed in your application. We broadly hope that projects can use data that is already collected by schools or settings to assess the impact on attainment. More information on the quality of evidence and evaluation is available in our [Approach to Evidence](#). As the funding request increases, we would look to see greater rigour behind the existing evidence base to support the intervention or programme.

Successful applicants will also be invited to take part in SHINE's workshops from evaluation experts, and opportunities to collaborate with other grantees and obtain ad hoc advice and support, so that you can be sure that your project is having the impact you hope it will, and can identify any learning and scope for adaptation and improvement over the course of your project.

If successful how and when will I receive the grant payment?

SHINE is a 'hands-on' funder and we work with successful grantees throughout the project. Payments are therefore generally paid three times per year in accordance with our reporting schedule.

If you have any further questions or would like more information, please get in touch at info@shinetrust.org.uk or give us a ring on 0113 280 5872.

