



### Introduction

We are proud of how far **SHINE Sunderland** has come since October 2024. In a short period of time, the fund has developed from an initial set of research-informed criteria into a city-wide programme that is building real momentum across schools. This progress gives us a strong foundation and a clear opportunity to go further and achieve even better outcomes for children and young people in Sunderland over the years ahead.

Since launching in October 2024, **SHINE Sunderland** has funded programmes that reach across all 18 secondary schools, with 16 schools funded directly. To date, over £4 million has been invested, with more than £7 million remaining to allocate.

Schools are engaging with the Purple Data platform to strengthen shared understanding of attainment across Sunderland, and 59 school representatives attended the recent **SHINE Sunderland** event, reporting strong enthusiasm for what has been funded so far and optimism for what we can achieve next. Collaboration has begun to connect teachers across the city and support improvement at scale.

## The Fund

Based on our learning through the first phase of the fund, and direct consultation with schools and project leads, the next phase of the **SHINE Sunderland** fund will focus more tightly on a smaller number of key themes that underpin attainment, to create strong foundations for all children across Sunderland. The priority will be on:

- ▶ **supporting larger scale or longer term work that addresses the needs of all children across the cohort, and**
- ▶ **projects where opportunities for sharing practice, collaboration across Sunderland, and long-term sustainability are built in from the outset.**

## Updates

We will continue to support projects that address literacy by implementing evidence-informed approaches that improve standards across the cohort. However, we will introduce a parallel funding criterion for work to address numeracy – an area of need that has been highlighted in Sunderland but that is not addressed by the current criteria.

We will continue to support projects that work to develop the foundations for successful transition between primary and secondary school. Successful projects within this theme should look to build strong bridges between phases, and support all children as they continue their secondary school journey. Outcomes should demonstrate a clear link to attainment.

The final area of focus within the next phase of the fund will be provision of pathways to future careers for all children across Sunderland. The **SHINE Sunderland** fund is already supporting the creation of an ambitious and city-wide approach to careers education to inspire ambition and broaden horizons– FutureReady Sunderland . It is our aspiration that within this theme schools will be able to apply to join this project, support the development of this work, and contribute to a truly City-wide experience of careers and employment for children across Sunderland.

The criteria are described in more detail below.



## The Criteria

### **1) Improve literacy and numeracy skills by implementing evidence-informed approaches that improve standards across the cohort.**

Funding can support evidence-informed, whole-cohort programmes that raise attainment for all pupils by improving day-to-day teaching of literacy and numeracy.

In practice, this could include:

- ▶ **training and supporting relevant staff to understand, diagnose and teach aspects of literacy or numeracy (for example through coaching, model lessons or embedded professional development)**
- ▶ **introducing consistent instructional routines for literacy and numeracy across year groups**
- ▶ **strengthening diagnostics and assessment of literacy and numeracy so schools can better track progress and adapt teaching**
- ▶ **implementing evidence-informed approaches to improving whole class literacy or numeracy outcomes**
- ▶ **opportunities for all children to engage in enrichment activities that help to develop literacy and numeracy skills.**

### **2) Provide the foundations for successful transition between primary and secondary school to improve secondary school outcomes.**

Funding can support collaborative work between feeder primaries and a secondary school or group of secondary schools to improve attainment outcomes in English, maths or science for whole cohorts moving through transition.

Proposals under this criterion should be based on creating a clear bridge from primary to secondary school, ensuring that practice, data, consistency and engagement is maintained across the transition to provide the very best foundations for attainment and success in secondary school. Projects could include:

- ▶ **creating a unified, sequenced curriculum from Year 5 to Year 8,**
- ▶ **shared diagnostic assessment of attainment and need across phases,**
- ▶ **joint professional development for KS2 and KS3 staff,**
- ▶ **sustained academic enrichment that supports engagement and progression.**

Projects should aim to provide continuity and insight across the transition, based on long-term practice rather than one-off activities. Projects should have a clear focus on improving attainment in secondary school as a core outcome.



### 3) Provide pathways to future careers in Sunderland.

Funding can support coherent, age-appropriate pathways from school into employment, further study or training, with meaningful employer engagement that is sustained over time. This grant funding theme offers an opportunity for all schools to engage with FutureReady Sunderland, so that every school and every child can benefit from a consistent, high-quality offer which has already been developed in the City. Further guidance on the criteria and framework for FutureReady Sunderland is available as a separate document. This grant theme will be available for applications from January 2027.

#### **Equity, Collaboration and Sustainability**

To ensure equitable access to the fund for all 18 Sunderland secondary schools, each school has been allocated an equal share of the overall funding to support activity that benefits pupils in their school. This is made up of (a) projects led by the school as a direct applicant, with in-school practice that directly benefits pupils in the lead/applicant school (b) participation in projects led by other schools.

This approach is intended to ensure that each lead/applicant school is able to make full use of their own allocation while maximising the opportunities for collaboration across the City, and ensuring this benefit is fairly represented in a school's total drawdown against their allocation. More detail on how this calculation is made can be found in the FAQs.

The **SHINE Sunderland** fund aims to foster collaboration, improve attainment across the City, enable measurable change, and create sustainable long-term change that can be shared more widely. Within this phase of the fund, sharing, collaboration and sustainability will be more directly centred within proposals approved for funding.

Sharing of practice and collaboration can take many forms, including communicating and reflecting on insights about what worked and why, co-operation around resources, curricula or training, or formal collaborations intended to implement common approaches and develop collective outcomes.

In this phase of the fund, we will prioritise project applications that have sharing of practice or collaboration built in from the outset, to further progress our aim to change outcomes for all children across the city. In addition, project leads may wish to join opportunities to share practice through SHINE's approach to collaboration in Sunderland.

Projects should include a long-term plan for the sustainability of the work, which may be through developing systems, resources, or relationships that outlast the grant term, or by building knowledge and capacity within schools that will have a long-term impact on children in Sunderland.



## Essential Criteria

All proposals must:

- ▶ **Present work that will support all children across the whole cohort rather than targeting towards any particular group.**
- ▶ **Be over £200K and be sustained over at least 2 years in duration**
- ▶ **Directly address 1 of the 3 updated criteria for the next phase of the SHINE Sunderland fund.**
- ▶ **Be developed and led by a Sunderland secondary school or collaboration of Sunderland secondary schools with a dedicated lead.**
- ▶ **Target children, schools, teachers and/or families within Sunderland.**
- ▶ **Focus on approaches that can demonstrate improvement in academic attainment in core subjects.**
- ▶ **Be cost effective and offer value for money.**
- ▶ **Be demonstrably additional to work, staffing and resources already supported by school core budgets.**
- ▶ **Have the potential to achieve measurable impact, with at least 5% of the total request or an equivalent amount of project lead time ring-fenced to support evaluation activities.**
- ▶ **Include an approach to sharing insight or collaboration from the outset.**
- ▶ **Have a realistic plan for sustainability after the funding ends.**
- ▶ **Fall within the remaining funding allocation for the lead/applicant schools and other collaborating schools.**

We will look favourably on applications for projects that:

- ▶ **Work in direct collaboration with other schools, providers or networks in Sunderland.**
- ▶ **Link to the wider educational research evidence of effective practice.**

We do not fund:

- ▶ **Projects that work with teachers, students or schools outside of Sunderland.**
- ▶ **Projects that are not led by a mainstream secondary school in Sunderland.**
- ▶ **Short-term or one-off projects.**
- ▶ **Approaches that do not work to impact on attainment.**
- ▶ **Bursaries or any kind of student fees.**
- ▶ **Direct replacement of statutory funding.**
- ▶ **Capital build projects, including gardens, libraries, vehicles or building refurbishments.**

As well as funding, SHINE offers grantees ongoing support with evaluation and project development along with regular opportunities to connect and collaborate with other schools at events. More information can be found in our FAQs.

