**Together We Begin Funding Guidelines**

**Purpose**This document provides key information about the Together We Begin fund – including who is eligible, what we’re looking to support, and how to apply.

**1. Introduction**

**Together We Begin**

We’re looking to fund organisations that provide early years parenting support and promote children’s development through sustained, face-to-face work in the home.

The key aims of the fund are to:

* Strengthen parenting skills to improve children’s outcomes
* Build confidence and reduce stress in the home.
* Connect families to their local community

The Together We Begin fund is part of our Getting Started funding priority, which supports families to give young children the best possible start in life.

**Who we support**

We want to fund organisations that:

* **Support families with children aged 0-5** (including during pregnancy) who face financial hardship or social isolation
* **Work in areas with high levels of child poverty** - at least 24.9% of children live in poverty in your local authority area ([using 23/24 End Child Poverty data](https://henrysmithcharity.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/sites/GettingStarted/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BBD77D5FF-DDF1-4DE8-BC2C-A78E33B59163%7D&file=Child%20Poverty%20AHC%202023-24%20Local%20Authorities%20Statistics%20(for%20HSF%20website).xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true))

We're committed to funding work that is:

* Rooted in communities
* Strengths-based
* Responsive to need, inclusive and accessible
* Focused on meaningful, lasting change

**What we want to achieve**

We fund work that helps achieve the following two objectives:

**1. Enhanced parenting skills**

Families feel more confident and capable in supporting their children's development.

This might include:

* Reduced stress and anxiety
* Better daily routines
* Improved parent and child wellbeing

**2. Better community connections**

Families feel less isolated and more connected to local services and other families. They can access resources and build relationships that continue beyond your service, ultimately helping children develop and thrive.

**Funding Details**

* **Grants of £40,000-50,000 per year for three years** (maximum £150,000 total)
* **Flexible funding** - you can use the money for your general running costs
* Support and relationship-building beyond just funding

**Please note:** You can only submit one application per organisation for this fund.

**2. Eligibility Criteria**

**Your work must:**

* **Have proven experience** of working with families facing financial hardship or social isolation, who have children aged 0-5 and/or during pregnancy
* **Provide long-term face-to-face support** to families in their homes
* **Be based in a high-need area** - your local authority must have child poverty of 24.9% or higher (23/24 data)
* **Be part of the local community** and able to connect families to other services and support
* **Be willing to share learning** with us to help improve early years practice and policy

**Your organisation must:**

* **Be registered** as a Charity, Community Interest Company (CIC), or Community benefit society
* **Have a year’s worth of** accounts that have been audited or independently examined
* **Have annual income below £1m** (from your most recent published accounts)
* **Be based in and deliver services in the United Kingdom** (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales)

**We cannot fund:**

* Public sector or private organisations
* Work that doesn't focus on early years (pregnancy to age 5)
* Projects that are not home-based or relationship-focused
* Organisations that cannot show past impact
* Generic support that isn't tailored to individual family needs

**Demonstrating impact**

We’ll ask you to show how you measure the difference your work makes in line with the fund’s two objectives. We welcome a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators and encourage you to use methods that work for your organisation and community – such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, case studies and co-produced sessions with families.

We recommend using standardised assessment tools and indicators where you can, such as: [Family Star](https://outcomesstar.org/family-star-plus-and-family-star/); [Common Outcomes](https://www.commonoutcomes.org.uk/) for children and young people; [Parenting Stress Index](https://www.corc.uk.net/media/2764/parent-stress-scale-fillable-pdf.pdf). You need to decide what evaluation and learning approach is right for you. We don’t expect you to be limited to these suggestions.

**Think about:**

* Simple visual reporting (dashboards, outcome maps)
* Participatory evaluation (involving families in assessing what success looks like and capturing barriers and challenges they face)
* Reflective learning workshops or reports that include not just data, but lessons learned
* Disaggregating data to assess whether marginalized or underserved groups are benefiting equally from your work and whether there are any gaps in service delivery
* Collecting and using data in ethical and appropriate ways, ensuring you’ve gained consent and that your privacy policy and other documents are clear and have been understood
* Continuous learning and adaptive design – are you changing things to benefit those you support?

**Already funded by Henry Smith Foundation?**

If you currently receive a Henry Smith Foundation grant, you can still apply - but please speak to our programme team first.

**Not sure if you're eligible?** We’re happy to talk it through. Contact us for an informal chat.

**3. How to apply**

We’ve kept the process simple and clear. Here’s what to expect at each stage.

**1. Eligibility quiz**

Start by taking our short online quiz to check if you can apply.

**Applications open: 31 July 2025 at 9am.**

**2. Expression of Interest**

Help us decide if your work fits before you spend time on a full application. It’s a short form with approximately 10 questions.

**Deadline to submit EOI: 28 August 2025 at 5pm**

We'll tell you by **17 September 2025** if you're invited to submit a full application

**3. Full application (invited organisations only)**

We'll ask detailed questions about your approach, your team, the difference you're making, and what this funding could do for you. We'll also carry out background checks during this stage.

**Deadline to submit: 17 October 2025 at 5pm**

**4. A conversation with us**

You'll have a call with a member of our team to:

* Learn more about your work and safeguarding processes
* Give you a chance to ask questions

**When:** **5 - 27 November 2025**

**5. Grant decisions**

We'll make around 40 grants and let everyone know by **mid-December 2025**.

Your grant will need to be drawn down within 6 months of the grant award date.

**What happens if you're unsuccessful**

We'll let you know the outcome and, where possible, provide feedback. You're welcome to contact us to discuss your application and how you might strengthen future applications.

**Terms and Conditions**

**What happens if you're successful**

**Annual check-in**

Each year, we'll call to hear:

* How your work is going
* Your successes and challenges
* The difference you're making

You'll also complete a short online monitoring form before we release your next payment.

**Site visit**

In your second or third year, we'd like to visit you to:

* Get to know your work better
* Build a stronger relationship
* Meet your team or see your work in action

These visits aren’t linked to funding decisions - they're about building relationships and learning.

**Get in touch**

We’re here to help. Whether you’re thinking about applying or just have a few questions, we encourage you to contact us before submitting your Expression of Interest.

* Call us on 020 7264 4970
* Request a callback and a member of our team will get in touch
* If you have a specific question and prefer to write, feel free to email us at: gettingstarted@henrysmith.foundation

We’re happy to talk through your plans and help you understand if this programme is the right fit for your organisation.

**Read our FAQs**

Check our frequently asked questions before applying - this covers many common queries.

**Join our webinar**

We'll be hosting a webinar to share more about the Together We Begin Fund our approach and what we’re looking to fund. You will hear from the programme team, who will share more about their thinking behind the fund and approach. You'll be able to ask questions about what we’re looking to fund, who’s eligible, and how to apply.

**Date:** **30 July 2025 at 2-3pm**

**Register:** <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/5ec15e19-205e-4f00-ae2e-f216dc6b6c7d@8b63492b-8ac3-46f9-bc35-f7b7ceb0c214>

**Can't attend?** A recording will be available on our website.

**Accessibility Support**

We want this process to be accessible to everyone. If you, or someone in your organisation, needs support to complete an Expression of Interest or full application because of disability, neurodivergence, language or communication barriers or other access needs we can help.

We offer an accessibility support grant to help cover the cost of things like BSL interpreters, scribes, translation services, assistive technology, or support workers. You can apply for:

* Up to £250 at the Expression of Interest stage
* Up to £500 at the Full Application stage (if invited)

How to apply:

1. **Get in touch**

* Email: gettingstarted@henrysmith.foundation
* Phone: 020 7264 4970
* Enquiry form: [Contact The Henry Smith Charity](https://henrysmith.foundation/contact-us/)

1. **Tell us what you need**

When you get in touch, let us know:

* Your name and organisation
* What kind of support do you need
* Who will provide the support (they must be UK-based)
* How much will it cost (up to the relevant amount)
* Your preferred way and time to be contacted

*No personal data concerning third party individuals should be included within your email without their explicit knowledge, and informed consent, that this information will be shared with the Henry Smith Foundation.*

*We process all personal data provided to us in your email for the purposes of assessing your application, managing or monitoring any grant awarded and any related administration or research purposes in accordance with our privacy policy, a copy of which can be viewed here.*

*We reserve the right to share personal information to detect and prevent fraud and do not require your consent.*

1. **We’ll get back to you**

We’ll aim to respond within five working days to confirm if the request has been approved. We will then make the grant to you.

If you’re not sure what kind of support you need or want to talk it through, we’re happy to have a chat. Please get in touch.