

## Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs

# FAQ to support early years settings applying to become a Stronger Practice Hub

**August 2022**

Please read in conjunction with the Stronger Practice Hubs Vision Paper, the application form and the scoring matrix.

PLEASE NOTE – this FAQ is a working document and will be added to as further queries are raised throughout the application window.

**Please check date below to ensure you have the most up to date version (see date below) and keep checking the website for updates.**

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## Application Process

### Who is running the selection process to become an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub?

The [National Children's Bureau](#) (NCB) has been contracted by the Department for Education to oversee and quality assure the work of the Stronger Practice Hubs for the duration of the programme, until late 2024, and will run the Hubs application and selection process.

### How do settings apply to become a Stronger Practice Hub?

To apply to become a Stronger Practice Hub, settings must read the Stronger Practice Hubs Vision Paper along with this FAQ document and ensure they meet the eligibility and criteria to apply. If settings do meet these, the first step is to complete an [online application form](#) which must be submitted (via the online form) by **12 noon on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September**.

As part of the application form settings need to provide contact details for a named contact in the Local Authority (LA) who will be asked to provide a statement of support for the application. Settings **must ensure** they have approached the LA before submitting the application form.

### What is the application process to become a Hub?

The applications process and timeline are as follows:

<b>Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August</b>	Stronger Practice Hub application process opens
<b>August – September</b>	Two webinars will be held for prospective Hubs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> August at 3pm</li><li>• Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September at 10am</li></ul> Webinars will be promoted through <a href="#">Foundation Years</a> and recordings of the webinars will be made available shortly after the live events
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> September – 12 noon</b>	Closing date for applications – all online applications must be submitted <b>by 12 noon</b>
<b>October 22</b>	Stronger Practice Hubs will be selected through a process of interview and site visit
<b>November 2022</b>	Stronger Practice Hubs will be launched and will begin operating

### Can settings submit their application before the closing date? Will this give them preference in the selection process?

NCB welcome early applications and the recruitment and selection process will begin on receipt of first applications. Settings who submit applications early will not receive any preference and all applications submitted by the deadline will be considered.

## **Which settings are eligible to apply to become a Stronger Practice Hub?**

To be eligible to lead a Stronger Practice Hub, settings must be:

- A group-based early years setting, including:
  - School-based (LA-maintained or schools belonging to Multi-Academy Trusts)
  - Private, voluntary, or independent (PVI)
- Currently rated good or outstanding by Ofsted
- Providing pre-reception early education

## **Can settings apply if they do not meet the eligibility criteria?**

No, the expectation is that settings meet the outlined eligibility criteria.

## **Can a new setting not yet inspected by Ofsted apply to be a Stronger Practice Hub?**

No, a setting must have received a good or outstanding rating from Ofsted to be eligible to apply.

## **Can an early years setting rated Good or Outstanding apply, even if the school it is part of has a Requires Improvement rating?**

Schools that run their own nursery provision will need to be rated Good or Outstanding to be eligible to apply. Where a nursery is run on a school site by a third-party provider, the early years provision needs to be rated Good or Outstanding, but it is not necessary for the school to be rated Good or Outstanding.

## **Why is there an extra location eligibility question? Can settings apply if they answer 'No' to this question?**

The Stronger Hubs Programme will mainly target settings and children most in need due to COVID-19, with a focus on supporting children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, we prefer that Stronger Practice Hubs are located in an area of deprivation, in order that they fully understand the challenges facing the settings they will be supporting. However, applications will be considered from settings that can demonstrate extended experience of working with socio-economically disadvantaged children and as such settings are welcome to apply if they answer 'No' to this question.

## **What is meant by a group-based early years setting?**

A group-based early years setting refers to settings that look after groups of children and has multiple staff members on a non-domestic premises, as opposed to a childminder, childminder with assistants or childcare on domestic premises. This may be:

- Nursery class part of LA maintained school
- Nursery class part of single academy or MAT
- Nursery school (private or LA maintained)
- Private or voluntary day nursery
- Pre-school and playgroup

Group-based does not mean the setting has to be part of a multi-academy trust or a nursery chain/group of nurseries. Single settings are welcome to apply, independently or as part of a

partnership, providing they meet the criteria and are able to fulfil the role of being a Stronger Practice Hub.

### **Will only settings of a certain size be eligible?**

Any size setting can apply – this could be a single setting, part of a trust or as part of a partnership. The setting(s) must demonstrate in their application that they have the capacity to meet the selection criteria and how they will fulfil the role of being a Stronger Practice Hub.

### **Why can't childminders apply as the lead applicant?**

We are very keen for childminders to be part of a partnership application and as such actively encourage childminders to approach local providers to facilitate partnerships. We have specified that hubs should be led by group-based provision to ensure the onus of meeting the delivery requirements sits within a group rather than individual Ofsted registration. We also do not want to overburden childminders with the administrative and financial workload of managing a Hub.

### **What is meant by a partnership?**

Applications are welcomed from partnerships. A partnership is a small group (up to 5 including the lead setting) of early years providers who will work together to form a Stronger Practice Hub in a local area.

### **What type of settings and what criteria must a setting meet to be part of a partnership?**

All partners applying as part of a partnership must be

- settings providing early years education
- rated good or outstanding by Ofsted

The lead partner must be a group based early years setting, as outlined [above](#), but other early years education providers can be part of the partnership, such as a childminder.

Applications from partnerships that span the PVI, maintained and home-based (childminder) sectors will be looked upon favourably since the programme seeks to encourage collaboration between different provider types.

### **Who will lead the partnership?**

The setting named as the lead setting on the application form will lead the partnership and will have overall responsibility for establishing and developing the Stronger Practice Hub. The lead setting will be the point of contact with NCB, although there may be times when other settings in the partnership will be contacted.

The vision for the partnership, what will make it a success and how it will work together as a Stronger Practice Hub must be clearly explained on the application form.

**For a partnership hub to be established do they have to be located close together?  
Could a group application be made over more than one locality within a local authority?**

We welcome partnership applications which span localities as well as provider types, providing such applications are able to demonstrate how the partnership will work together effectively.

**Can a provider with several nurseries apply, or does the application have to come from one setting? Can a partnership application, span more than 1 LA?**

Applications must come from a lead setting however an additional 4 settings can be added to a partnership application. Each partner applicant must be a registered early years provider.

**Would you need to have a school as part of your partnership bid?**

No. It is up to each hub to decide who to partner with, or whether to submit an individual application. Applications from partnerships that span provider types will be looked on favourably.

**Will all partners be expected to attend the interview?**

The lead setting will be invited to interview, they may bring one other person with them if they wish.

**Can you partner with a childminding organisation or does it have to be a specific childminder with a URN?**

Each partner setting must be a registered provider.

**What is the difference between a partnership and a network?**

A **partnership** is a group of settings working together as a Stronger Practice Hub to deliver the programme of support in their area.

A network is a wider group of early years settings, other agencies/services and organisations working within a local area to improve outcomes for children and families. Stronger Practice Hubs will be expected to establish a wider network of support within the local area, collaborating and sharing good practice to improve outcomes locally.

**Can Special Schools apply to be a Stronger Practice Hub?**

Special schools are welcome to apply as part of a partnership providing they meet the criteria listed **above**.

**Can a Multi-academy trust (MAT) apply to be a Stronger Practice Hub?**

Schools belonging to Multi-Academy Trusts are welcome to apply, providing they meet the criteria listed **above**. The application must be submitted from the school rather than the Trust itself.



### **How are you defining deprivation for the purposes of determining location eligibility?**

We are defining an 'area of deprivation' as a setting located in one of the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in England, according to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). This Index ranks small neighbourhoods (called lower super output areas, or LSOAs) according to deprivation among children. You can find more information about IDACI [here](#). The LSOAs are divided into 5 equal deprivation bands based on their IDACI score. These 5 groups are labelled from 'most deprived' to 'least deprived'.

There are instructions in the application form on how to determine which deprivation band your setting is located in, including links to the relevant data sets. There are different instructions on how to find this data, depending on whether your setting is registered on Ofsted's Early Years Register, but the underlying data is the same.

### **How will childminders be involved in/supported by this programme?**

Childminders and childcare on domestic premises are welcome to join as part of a [partnership](#) with early years setting(s) in their local area to form a Stronger Practice Hub, providing they offer early years education and are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted. Childminders can be registered directly with Ofsted or with a Childminder Agency.

Childminders will be able to access the support offered by their Stronger Practice Hub and will be encouraged to join the local network.

Settings selected as Stronger Practice Hubs will also support the new childminder strand of the DfE's Early Years COVID-19 Recovery: Experts and Mentors programme. [Please see the FAQ below for more detail.](#)

### **What is the model for the Stronger Practice Hubs programme?**

The Stronger Practice Hubs model encourages setting to setting collaboration, and is intentionally about building system leadership within and across settings, and providing peer-to-peer support.

### **Can a Local Authority set up a Stronger Practice Hub?**

The Stronger Practice Hubs model encourages setting-to-setting collaboration and will need to be led by a setting, but Local Authorities may wish to be proactive in encouraging applications from Stronger Practice Hubs, and considering how a Stronger Practice Hub might work with and through existing networks. Ongoing LA input and expertise will be valuable in making the Hubs a success.

### **What will the selection criteria be for the Stronger Practice Hubs?**

Through the application process, settings must demonstrate that they are able to meet the criteria and fulfil the requirements of a Stronger Practice Hub as outlined in the scoring matrix provided as part of the Application pack.

### **Why is a statement of support from the Local Authority required?**

Local Authorities will be asked to provide a statement for settings applying to become Stronger Practice Hubs. This will help ensure the applications process is informed by those who know the local area best, which will be key to making the most of the good practice and networks that already exist.

NCB will liaise with Local Authorities where necessary to ensure the Stronger Practice Hubs are able to deliver high quality support within their local context. Stronger Practice Hubs will be expected to work collaboratively with their Local Authority and signpost settings to high quality support provided locally by the Local Authority.

Ongoing Local Authority input is valued to help make the programme a success, and NCB will continue to engage Local Authorities as the programme develops.

### **Who will provide a Local Authority statement for a setting that is run by the Local Authority itself?**

As each Local Authority differs in the make-up of their Early Years teams, we suggest emailing [sph@ncb.org.uk](mailto:sph@ncb.org.uk) to discuss individual scenarios.

### **Where a Local Authority has commissioned an organisation to act on behalf of the LA for the purposes of Early Years functions, can that organisation provide the settings reference?**

We understand there are a range of differing agreements in place as to how Local Authorities interact with commissioned organisations, and suggest emailing [sph@ncb.org.uk](mailto:sph@ncb.org.uk) to discuss individual scenarios.

### **Which areas/regions/Local Authorities will be targeted?**

The Stronger Practice Hubs will be distributed across England, with an ambition of two per each of the [nine government office regions](#) (18 in total). Stronger Practice Hubs' support will predominantly target settings and children most in need due to COVID-19, with a focus on supporting children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

It is anticipated that support will be provided mostly to settings located in each Stronger Practice Hubs' Local Authority in the first year of delivery (or neighbouring Local Authority depending on local geography), broadening out to the wider region in the second year of delivery. We will keep this under review depending on progress and needs.

### **What location contexts will be a factor in the final selection?**

The ambition is for the Stronger Practice Hubs to offer support throughout England and this requires an even spread across the country of different provider types and locations. Therefore, as part of the application selection, the following contextual information will be applied:

- Geography – which government office region the hub will be situated in
- Provider type

- Location - rural or urban
- Location - area of deprivation (or sufficient experience of serving socio-economically disadvantaged children)

### **What are the details of the application process?**

There is a four-phase selection process:

1. Written application (submitted online)
2. Online interview
3. In person site visit (for partnership applications the visit will be to the lead setting)
4. Due diligence check (carried out by NCB).

### **What types of evidence should be provided in application?**

Please refer to the scoring matrix provided as part of the application pack. Settings should be able to provide real life examples to demonstrate high quality practice and will be expected to be able to talk about these during the interview and showcase during the visit.

### **Are you scoring separately against each of the criteria in each question of the application form or providing one score for each question?**

We will provide one overall score for each question but will be looking at how each criteria is met to influence the overall score.

### **When will settings find out if they are through to the interview stage?**

Settings that are put through to the interview stage will be notified by Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Due to the anticipated volume of applications we may not be able to notify settings who are not through to the interview stage. Applicants who have not heard from us by Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September may wish to contact us via email: [sph@ncb.org.uk](mailto:sph@ncb.org.uk).

### **Where and when will the interview be held? How long will it be?**

All interviews will be held online, via video conference, between Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September and Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October. It is anticipated that interviews will last no longer than one hour.

### **Who should attend the interview?**

A maximum of up to 2 people will be invited to attend the interview, which must be the named lead and one other, e.g. one of the partners if applying as a partnership or another member of staff if a single setting applying.

### **Who will be carrying out the interview?**

NCB will be carrying out all the interviews.

### **What will happen at the interview? Is a presentation required?**

The interview will consist of a series of questions and applicants will be asked to give a presentation on their vision for a Stronger Practice Hub.

**When will settings find out if they are through to the visit stage?**

Settings will be notified no later than 4<sup>th</sup> October.

**When will the visits take place? How much notice the setting be given?**

Visits to settings will take place during normal operating hours in October (factoring in any half term dates). Due to the tight timescales to recruit and establish the Hubs, NCB will let settings know when they are planning to visit them two days in advance.

**Who will carry out the visits?**

NCB will visit settings that have been successful at interview stage. Visits will only be made to lead settings, although contact may also be made with other settings who are applying as part of a partnership.

**What will happen at the visit?**

During the visit, NCB staff will have a discussion with the proposed Stronger Practice Hub lead contact, observe practice and have a tour of the setting.

**What will due diligence checks involve?**

Due diligence checks will be carried out by NCB. They form part of the wider assurance processes that NCB will undertake to ensure that settings can successfully deliver the requirements of a Stronger Practice Hub, that they have an appropriate reputation to carry out work on behalf of the DfE, and ensure the best use of public funds.

Applicant settings will be asked to share information with NCB to help them understand more about their setting's financial health, for example, recent financial reports, information on income and expenditure, and any debts held. NCB may also check publicly available information on settings' social media accounts. Ofsted registration and ratings will also be checked to ensure it matches the information provided within the application form.

**When will settings find out if they are successful in being selected to be a Stronger Practice Hub?**

Settings will be notified by the end of October if they have been selected to be a Stronger Practice Hub.

**Will settings receive feedback if their application is unsuccessful?**

Due to the anticipated level of applicants, feedback will not be provided for those unsuccessful at the first stage of application (online form).

Settings who are not successful following interview or visit stage will be able to receive feedback if requested.

**How will Stronger Practice Hubs operate?****How will Stronger Practice Hubs decide which settings in their area to support?**

Following successful appointment as a Stronger Practice Hub, NCB will hold a planning meeting with each Stronger Practice Hub to develop initial plans for the new Stronger

Practice Hub. Local Authorities will be key to this programme and Hubs will be expected to collaborate and work closely with the LA. Stronger Practice Hubs will reach settings, including childminders, in a range of ways.

### **Will Hubs have to follow a specific curriculum/programme?**

Stronger Practice Hubs are not required to follow a specific curriculum, but they will need to implement evidence-based practice underpinned by the reformed Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework (2021). The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) will support Hubs with this by developing an evidence-based Framework to underpin the work of the Stronger Practice Hubs. This will provide accessible information about the evidence around Early Years pedagogy and processes that support practice change. We expect Stronger Practice Hubs to be able to deliver some core offers.

### **How will the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) help Hubs identify programmes to make available to settings in their area?**

Each Stronger Practice Hub will play a key role in developing the types of support that they will offer to settings and providers in their area. Hub deliverables will be agreed as part of a co-produced process with the Stronger Practice Hub, DfE, EEF and NCB, to produce a bespoke support offer for the local sector that meets the needs of early years professionals, and ultimately children under 5. One part of the hubs bespoke offer will be to select and promote professional development programmes for their area. The EEF will provide a curated menu of programmes that have been identified through their 2022 funding rounds as offering promising approaches. Hubs will select and make available some of these programmes within their region and the EEF will commission independent evaluations of these programmes in order to grow the evidence base on what works to improve child outcomes. At the same time EEF will offer hubs guidance to identify other evidence-informed programmes that are currently being provided in the area that the hubs would like to reach more setting and be included in their offer.

### **What is the expected capacity for each hub? How many providers/settings will each hub serve?**

It is not a one-size fits all approach and we recognise that local authority areas vary greatly in size, as well as differences in locality such as urban or rural. As such, delivery will be bespoke for each hub and the number of settings served may vary from hub to hub. The programme is about building partnerships and networks, offering peer-to-peer support through a variety of means and meeting the needs within an area. This will form part of the initial planning discussions between NCB and Hubs once recruited, as well as working with local authorities to determine the need within an area.

### **What is the time commitment to be a hub?**

This will vary from region to region and is dependent on the composition of the hub. The aim of the programme is to build and share good practice, for Hubs and the settings they are supporting. Collaborative discussions will be held between NCB and hubs, during the set-up

phase and throughout the programme, to ensure hub's capacity is not being overwhelmed and that they are able to manage the commitment of being a hub, alongside managing and delivering their high-quality provision.

### **How will the 2 hubs in a region serve/support such large geographical and diverse areas? How will the 2 hubs in a region work together and coordinate support?**

It is not intended that practitioners from Hubs will need to travel far and wide across regions to provide in-person support to all settings. There will be different layers of activity provided by the Hubs that people can access:

- Activities that anyone in the region can access, such as blogs, newsletters, website content, online events, the framework developed by EEF.
- Targeted activities and support that will be offered in different parts of the region through the professional development programmes.
- Targeted offers to particular localities e.g. in-person intensive support.

It is important to note it will not be a one size fits all approach and how each hub decides to reach their areas might be very different. How best to work in each area will be discussed with Hubs in the initial set up meetings, including how 2 hubs in a region can best work together and coordinate the support offered.

### **When will Stronger Practice Hubs be expected to start operating?**

Stronger Practice Hubs will be launched in November 2022.

### **What training will be available to Stronger Practice Hubs?**

Stronger Practice Hubs will be provided with training as well as ongoing support in their role as a Stronger Practice Hub. NCB will provide the training and support regarding practicalities of Stronger Practice Hub delivery as well as quality assurance, while support around fully understanding, using and disseminating evidence will be provided through EEF.

### **Who will oversee the Stronger Practice Hubs? Will there be regular inspections of the Stronger Practice Hubs?**

NCB will oversee the Stronger Practice Hubs and will have regular contact with the Stronger Practice Hubs. There will be an annual site visit and conversation with the Stronger Practice Hub. The Stronger Practice Hubs will form a peer network and there will be opportunities for collaboration, support and practice sharing between Stronger Practice Hubs.

### **Will the Hubs be accountable to Ofsted regarding inspection outcomes for settings they are supporting?**

Hubs will not be accountable to Ofsted for the outcomes of other settings.

### **How much funding will Stronger Practice Hubs get?**

The DfE will provide funding to the lead setting of each Hub [via Section 14 grants](#). The grants will be provided to deliver agreed Stronger Practice Hub objectives, with each Stronger Practice Hub receiving sufficient funding to cover staffing and resourcing costs, and the



external support that Stronger Practice Hubs make available to settings in their area. Grant funding will be subject to the DfE's monitoring and assurance processes and will be paid in arrears for the specific services provided by Stronger Practice Hubs.

The exact amount of funding available will be worked through with each Stronger Practice Hub at a later stage in the application process. In total, and subject to delivery considerations, it is estimated that up to £900,000 will be available to each Stronger Practice Hub across the whole two-year delivery period for the programme. Delivery considerations will include the extent to which a Stronger Practice Hub is delivering the minimum expected offer and where additional, locally identified needs are being met through Stronger Practice Hub activity. More detailed information about the funding arrangements will be shared with shortlisted applicants at a later stage of the process.

### **How will payments by Stronger Practice Hubs to childminders participating in the Experts and Mentors programme work?**

Settings selected to become a Stronger Practice Hub will also be required to provide some support for the new Childminder strand of the Department of Education (DfE) Early Years Covid-19 Recovery: Experts and Mentors programme.

Stronger Practice Hubs will be required to pay invoices to childminder Mentors, who will be providing support through this programme on behalf of the DfE. We will also consider how Hubs and Childminder Mentors may work together.

The DfE will provide funding to the Stronger Practice Hubs for completing this work, to cover their staffing and administration costs. More information on the Childminder Experts and Mentors programme will be shared in due course.

### **How will other settings within the Partnership receive funding?**

The lead setting will receive the grant funding and will be responsible for distributing it as required to other settings within their partnership.

### **How will Hubs have access to the range of information that LAs hold on providers, ensuring GDPR regulations are adhered to?**

Information that hubs have access to such as Ofsted outcomes is all in the public domain and so not restricted by the requirements of GDPR. Local Authorities will not be expected to share confidential information.

### **How will the hubs measure the impact of their support/work?**

At the beginning of the planning process, NCB will work closely with each hub, looking at the individual Key Priority Indicators (KPIs) for each hub and discussing how the impact and success will be measured. There will be Quality Assurance (QA) processes in place and NCB will hold regular meetings with Hubs to review what they are doing, progress and outputs. Part of the QA process will involve the settings that Hubs have supported giving their views and feedback on what the impact has been for them.

DfE are commissioning an overarching evaluation of the Stronger Practice Hubs programme and of the hubs network as part of this. EEF will be assessing the impact of the professional development programmes that the hubs offer, which will assess the direct impact of the programme on children and the success of implementing the programmes with settings.

**What will happen if a Hub receives a less than good judgement following an Ofsted inspection? Or if they have a serious investigation or registration suspended?**

If a Hub's Ofsted grade changes during the process, or if they are under serious investigation or registration suspension, we would pause hub delivery until we have done an individual assessment and discussion with the Hub. There will be Quality Assurance processes in place and NCB will be working closely and liaising with Hubs throughout the programme, so NCB expects to be aware in advance if a setting is experiencing challenges or problems.

**Are LAs in receipt of any funding if they have a Hub in their area? How will LAs time be funded to support the SPH programme?**

Funding for the Hubs will be paid directly to settings via Section 14 grants, to support setting-to-setting support and systems leadership. It is expected that the scope of the Local Authority role in the programme will be fulfilled without incurring any additional burdens.

**What types of evidence will be used to inform the framework for Stronger Practice Hubs?**

The starting point for developing the framework has been knowledge of practice. This is particularly important within the field of early years education where the quality and quantity of research is limited and therefore it may not have yet captured or researched pertinent elements of pedagogy. Knowledge of practice will lead to a taxonomy of early years approaches and practices. Scoping searches and systematic searches will be used to understand whether the approaches have been shown to improve children's outcomes. Systematic reviews and single studies which used the designs of Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) or Quasi-Experimental Designs (QED) will be included in the searches.

**Will professional development programmes include those that support professionals to gain accreditation at Level 2/3/4?**

Yes, some of the programmes under consideration to be included in the offer to hubs have been externally accredited and can support participants to achieve Level 2 or Level 3 awards.

**What is the anticipated legacy of the Hubs programme?**

This programme aims to build capacity within the early years sector, by supporting the sector itself to lead, develop and share evidence-informed practice. The local networks established and strengthened by hubs should provide a sustainable and lasting legacy beyond the lifetime of the programme. NCB will work closely with each hub throughout delivery to ensure sustainability beyond the funding period.

Professional development programmes provided through the hubs will be supported to reach more settings and be evaluated. This will ensure we learn more about what works to support



practice change and children's outcomes and that there is more capacity in the system to receive training to implement evidence-informed practices.

## Other Programmes

### **How will this programme relate to the DfE Early Years COVID-19 Recovery Experts and Mentors programme?**

The Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs programme and the Early Years Experts and Mentors programme are separate but related strands of the [Early Years Stronger Practice Programme](#). The two will interact, for example it is expected that Stronger Practice Hubs will receive referrals from Experts and Mentors, where the Expert or Mentor identifies that a setting needs further support that the Stronger Practice Hub can provide. Stronger Practice Hubs may also draw on the expertise of Experts, Mentors and Area Leads in their area.

The Early Years Stronger Practice Programme forms part of the wider [Early Years Education Recovery Package](#) which aims to provide advice, share good practice and offer evidence-based professional development for practitioners.

### **Can a setting that already has an Expert/Mentor/Area Lead apply to be a Stronger Practice Hub?**

Involvement in Experts and Mentors does not preclude a setting from applying to become a Stronger Practice Hub and a setting that already has an expert/mentor/area lead may apply to be a Stronger Practice Hub, providing they meet the criteria and are able to fulfil the expectations of being a Stronger Practice Hub.

### **How will this programme interact with existing local hubs or networks, including Teaching School Hubs?**

Stronger Practice Hubs will build on the current system of hubs and networks in local areas. Stronger Practice Hubs will use their understanding of local networks and communication channels to establish and develop the Stronger Practice Hub, collaborating and liaising with that which already exists within an area. This includes Department for Education Hubs such as Teaching School Hubs and English Hubs.

### **Can an existing Hub (e.g., Teaching School Hub / English Hub) apply?**

Yes, existing Hubs are welcome to apply providing they meet the criteria listed above.

## Contact

### **Who should I contact about the programme?**

For questions about the programme or application process, please email the National Children's Bureau's Stronger Practice Hubs team: [sph@ncb.org.uk](mailto:sph@ncb.org.uk).