

# Grants to support the promotion of the free early education offer for 2 year olds to Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities

## Background

The Government pays for up to 15 hours of free early education childcare for disadvantaged two-year olds (FEE2) in England. The aim of FEE2 is to reduce the attainment gap by better preparing disadvantaged children for the start of formal schooling. It has a strong evidence base for improving outcomes of children who take up the offer, but access varies in communities across England.

FEE2 take-up in Greater Manchester has been declining since 2018. There are concerns that the COVID-19 pandemic may have accelerated this decline further. Along with helping parents feel more confident sending their children to childcare in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, localities in GM identified groups with historically low take up as a priority. This is because even before the COVID-19 pandemic, almost 30% of eligible families had not been taking up the FEE2. Understanding who these families are and what barriers they face in taking up the offer was seen as crucial to helping localities develop more tailored approaches to reach these families.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) commissioned the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) to develop targeted approaches for improving take-up of FEE2 for two-year-olds in communities which have historically not taken up the offer.

The BIT team worked with qualitative and quantitative data and found that the Asian community, particularly parents from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds, had low take up of the two year old offer across.

Following interviews with parents from the Asian community and community leaders, as well as a co-production workshop with practitioners and community leaders, BIT produced a report with several key recommendations around a communication campaign:

- Develop FEE2 marketing materials specific to the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities that could be scaled across the region.
- Ensure marketing tools and materials better reflect the proactive barriers facing parents, as well as ensuring materials are accessible.
- Using trusted messengers can help get a message across, as people give different weight to information depending on who communicates it.
- Use non-written formats for marketing, such as videos and home visits, to convey messages. This is because of the insight that this community often prefers to receive information verbally.

After approval at the Greater Manchester School Readiness board, the School Readiness Programme team will look to deliver a GM-wide communications campaign around take up of the two year old offer with specific focus on the Pakistani and Bangladeshi community. A key aspect of this campaign will seek to draw on the expertise and experience of the voluntary sector.