



Fund Guidance – Round 2

Background

In October 2021, as part of the Recovery and Renewal Fund, the Scottish Government announced the establishment of a new £15 million Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (The Fund). The Fund will be distributed by Third Sector Interfaces (TSI's) such as Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) to local community groups and organisations in their respective areas. The Fund intends to provide stable investment for fostering a strategic and preventative approach to improving community mental health and wellbeing and support the resilience of communities by investing in their capacity to develop their own solutions to tackling the social determinants of mental health.

The overarching aim is to support community-based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing and/or mitigate and protect against the impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population, with a particular focus in 2021/2022 on tackling issues such as suicide prevention, social isolation and loneliness, as well as addressing the mental health inequalities exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the needs of a range of 'at risk' groups.

Grass roots community groups and third sector organisations will be able to benefit from The Fund to deliver activities and programmes to people to re-connect with each other and revitalise communities, building on examples of good practice which have emerged throughout the pandemic.

February 2022 Update – £57k Round 2 application open

£470K was made available to community groups and third sector organisations in West Lothian with two funding rounds planned in 2021/22. The application process in Phase 1 closed on 14 January 2021 and was significantly oversubscribed.

However, £57k is being made available for a limited Phase 2 application process. **This is for new applicants only.** Applications of £2k - £10k are welcome. Organisations that submitted applications for monies in Phase 1 will not be considered for this additional round of funding.

Roles and Responsibilities including Application Assessment Panel

The Fund will be underpinned by a partnership co-ordinated approach comprised of representatives from West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway (Fund Lead), Health and Social Care Partnership and Community Planning Partnership.

The Partnership Group will build upon existing networks, partnerships, and alliances to work together to ensure support to West Lothian community-based organisations is directed appropriately and in a coherent way. They will also prompt wider reflection on continuity of planning, action, and wider engagement around how we support community mental health and wellbeing in future and align this with Primary Care. The Partnership Group will also take responsibility for assessing applications for the West Lothian Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (referred to as Assessment Panel).

The Fund outcomes

The intended outcome of The Fund is to develop a culture of mental wellbeing and prevention within local communities and across Scotland with improved awareness of how we can all stay well and help ourselves and others.

The Fund seeks to contribute to the four key areas of focus from the [Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan](#).

- Promoting and supporting the conditions for good mental health and wellbeing at population level
- Providing accessible signposting to help, advice and support
- Providing a rapid and easily accessible response to those in distress
- Ensuring safe, effective treatment and care of people living with mental illness

The Fund also seeks to contribute to the following national outcomes from the National Performance Framework:

- We are healthy and active
- We will live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth, and power more equally

Who can apply?

The ambition of The Fund is to support initiatives which promote positive mental health and wellbeing at a small scale, grass roots, community level. Applications will be accepted from a range of voluntary, *'not for profit'* community organisations: charities, constituted voluntary groups, social enterprises with asset lock and community councils. These do not have to have mental health and wellbeing as their main focus, but their application **does** have to clearly benefit the mental wellbeing of people in their community and demonstrate a focus of early intervention/ prevention.

Type of projects we can support

Should The Fund be oversubscribed we will prioritise projects based on local needs in the West Lothian area, within the context of the nationally agreed fund purpose. To identify the local priorities, evidence has been gathered through the work of the Third Sector Strategy Group and their Partners, the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Community Planning Partnership. We are particularly interested in projects addressing the following needs of the adult population (considered to be those 16 and over):

- **Social Isolation and loneliness:** particularly inviting activities which help to re-engage people back into community life; older people, single parents, and those within a BAME community.
- **Suicide prevention:** particularly inviting activities that support a reduction of risks that contribute to suicide. We particularly welcome areas of work that supports people coping with significant life changes and challenges, and work connected to reducing addictions (drugs, alcohol, gambling).
- **Unpaid Carers:** particularly inviting community-based initiatives that build community capacity to support the wellbeing of unpaid carers.

The Fund also aims to address the mental health inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic and for this reason we are particularly interested in projects supporting the following groups:

- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Care experienced adults
- Unpaid carers
- BAME communities
- Homeless/ rough sleepers
- People who have experienced bereavement
- People who are or have been on the NHS shielding list
- People affected by violence, including sexual.

What type of activities can be funded?

We can fund grants to most community-based activities that support good mental health and wellbeing of adults who have been impacted by Covid-19 pandemic and wish to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing. We are particularly interested on developing a wealth of community-based social prescription opportunities through a range of activities such as Art & Crafts, Gardening, Walking, Woodwork, Music, Bowling, Yoga, Dance, and specific support groups such as parent and toddlers, diet, and nutritional supports.

The Fund also seeks to fund activities that increase the capacity of community-based organisations to provide a service to local people. Communities may be geographical areas within and across West Lothian or communities of interest.

It is important to note:

- **That whilst The Fund can support the expansion of existing activities, it is intended to provide additionality, not replacement funding**
- **That the funding can only be used for the delivery of activities and services within the West Lothian area.**

What can we fund?

Funding will be short-term to support additional demands resulting from the COVID pandemic, as such applications should be for time limited projects. The Fund is primarily focussed on supporting operational and revenue costs; for this year's funding a small Capital spend of up to £10k will also be eligible.

- **Capital costs** are often associated with equipment, something that is not recurring such as a laptop.
- **Core revenue costs** are often associated with staffing costs or regular overheads like room hire. Organisations applying for core revenue costs will be asked to provide details of their exit strategy.

The following list, of what could and can-not be funded, is not exhaustive.

We will fund
Small capital spend, including equipment, up to £10,000
One-off events
Hall hire for community spaces
Staff costs (noting this is a 2-year fund therefore one off or fixed term)
Training costs
Transport
Utilities/running costs
Volunteer expenses
Helping people to stay safe (PPE for small gatherings/group activity)

We cannot fund
Contingency costs, loans, endowments, or interest
Electricity generation/ feed-in tariff payment (re self-producing energy i.e., solar/wind turbine)
Political or religious campaigning
Profit-making/fundraising activities
Statutory activities
Clinical treatment services, such as counselling, or CBT
VAT you can reclaim
Overseas travel
Alcohol

How much organisations can apply for/when does it need to be spent?

The current round of funding will be allocated by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian no later than 31st March 2022, successful organisations should spend their award **in full** by the end of March 2023. Subject to parliamentary approval of the 2022/23 Scottish budget, it is hoped this will be a recurring fund. Further information is expected in the coming weeks.

The ambition is to ensure a broad reach across range of small West Lothian community-based organisations through the distribution of smaller value grants between £2,000 and £10,000.

Small Grant Application £2K - £10K

For community-based activities that support good mental health and wellbeing of adults who have been impacted by Covid-19 pandemic and wish to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing (see what type of activities can be funded page 3)

When organisations can apply

Round 2 of the Fund will go live on Friday 18 February 2022 at which point community groups can submit their on-line applications to VSGWL.

Fund Timeline		
Phase 2	Closing date for applications	Noon, Friday 4 th March 2022
	Panel assessment	Week commencing 7 th March 2022
	Funding decisions confirmed	Week commencing 21 st March 2022

Equalities considerations and at-risk groups

Evidence shows that the pandemic has exacerbated existing mental health inequalities and has had a disproportionate impact on the mental wellbeing of a range of groups in society. Local fund allocations will ensure a focus on initiatives which are inclusive of priority groups: see examples on page 3.

Reporting and Evaluation

All projects will be asked to complete a one-page interim evaluation report followed by an end of project closing evaluation. The latter will expect you to confirm the actual breakdown of spend and a report against the delivery of the outcomes that you outlined in your application.

Please Note: All successful applicants will be required to keep detailed financial records of all related expenditure, including all receipts, for a period of three years and to submit these on request of VSGWL and/or Scottish Government.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will there be any continuation or recurring funding?

Yes, a second year of the Fund has been planned, subject to approval of the Scottish budget.

What size of organisation can apply for the fund?

The Fund has been established to provide grants to small, constituted grassroots organisations (i.e., voluntary/ community groups, clubs; registered charities; social enterprises with asset lock; not-for-profit companies and community councils). Applicants must ensure they are seeking funding **solely** for project activities/ services delivered to beneficiaries' residing within the West Lothian area.

What size of grant can be awarded to applicants?

The guidance from the Government is that most of the grant awards will go towards small scale community projects, with award amounts between £2K and £10k ([Small Grant Application](#)).

When will successful applicants receive the money?

Grant awards will be disbursed by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian by no later than 31st March 2022.

When will the grant award have to be spent?

We would encourage all successful applicants to aim to spend their grant award within a 12-month period and by no later than 31st March 2023.

Does the fund have to be used for new projects, or can it be used for expanding projects or continuing existing projects?

It should be noted that whilst the Fund can support the expansion of existing activities, it is intended to provide additionality, not replacement funding.

What can the Fund be used for?

Funding will be short-term to support additional demands resulting from the COVID pandemic, as such funding applications should be for time limited projects.

Capital costs are often associated with equipment, something that is not recurring such as a laptop.

Core revenue costs are often associated with staffing costs or regular overheads like room hire. As funding is time limited organisations applying for core revenue costs will be asked to provide details of their exit strategy.

The Fund is primarily focussed on supporting operational and revenue costs: please see the example lists of what could and can-not be funded on page four of the Fund Guidance. For this year's funding a small Capital spend of up to £10k is eligible.

Can grants be used as part of a match funding process?

YES. However, particular attention should be made with respect to any significant impact on timescales should match funding be pursued.

How will the Funds Grant Awards will be monitored?

All Funded organisations will be required to complete a one-page interim report followed by more detailed end of project closing evaluation, including financial breakdown of spend and evidence of the delivery of the measurable outcomes outlined in your application.