



Year 2 Fund Guidance

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Part 1: Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

Background

In February 2021, an additional £120 million was announced to support delivery of the commitments set out in the [Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan](#). This funding comes in response to the mental health need arising from the pandemic and is also intended to benefit the full agenda for mental health and wellbeing in line with the four key areas of need set out in the Plan.

From this funding, the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care announced a new Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (the Fund) for adults on 15 October 2021, with £15 million being made available in 2021/22. In February 2022, an additional £6 million was provided for 2021/2022 to the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund to meet the demand for local mental health and wellbeing projects, bringing total funding made available in 2021/22 to £21 million. A further £15 million for Year 2 of the Fund was announced on 7 May 2022.

Building on the focus on wellbeing and prevention in the Transition and Recovery Plan, the Fund provides significant investment into community support for adults. **£469k** has been allocated for West Lothian.

The **£469k** Fund is being delivered through a locally focused and co-ordinated approach via local partnership groups (building upon existing partnerships and with Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) as lead partner, working together to ensure that support to community-based organisations is directed appropriately and in a coherent way.

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

Fund aims and priorities

In line with the Scottish Government's long term outcomes for mental health in communities, this Fund intends to provide investment for:

- Fostering a **strategic and preventative approach** to improving community mental health
- Supporting the **resilience of communities** and investing in their capacity to develop their own solutions, including through strong local partnerships
- Tackling the **social determinants of mental health** by targeting resources and collaborating with other initiatives to tackle poverty and inequality

The overarching aim of the Fund 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 on:

1. Tackling priority issues within the **Transition and Recovery Plan** such as suicide prevention, social isolation and loneliness, prevention, and early intervention
2. Addressing the mental health **inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic** and the needs of a range of 'at risk' groups locally
3. Supporting **small 'grass roots' community groups** and organisations to deliver such activities
4. Providing **opportunities for people to connect** with each other, build trusted relationships and revitalise communities
5. Supporting **recovery and creativity** locally by building on what is already there, what was achieved through the pandemic, and by investing in creative solutions

While the effects of the pandemic on mental health will be long lasting, and still emerging, it is important to recognise that there are also other societal challenges affecting communities and their mental health and wellbeing such as the cost-of-living crisis. This issue deepens the importance of initiatives that support one of the Fund's 'at risk' groups – those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

Who can apply

The ambition of this Fund is to support initiatives which promote mental health and wellbeing at a small scale, grass roots, community level. The Fund will be accessible to all groups, no matter how small or inexperienced they are. National organisations undertaking initiatives in the local area are not excluded but are not the main focus of the Fund. Funded organisations do not need to have mental health and wellbeing as their sole focus, but, as this is the purpose of this Fund, their application does have to clearly outline how it benefits the mental health and wellbeing of people in their community.

Applications will be accepted from a range of voluntary, 'not for profit' organisations, associations, groups and clubs or consortiums/partnerships which have a strong community focus for their activities and have their own bank account. The range of organisations eligible to apply are:

- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO)
- Companies Limited by Guarantee
- Trusts
- Not-for-profit company or asset locked company or Community Interest Companies (CIC)
- Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies
- Community councils
- Parent councils

Type of projects we can support

The focus of the Fund is on the adult population and on projects which help whole communities and/or community groups, in turn making a difference to the lives of individuals. The adult population is considered to be those 16 and over, in that a wide range of community supports (such as an art club focusing on mental wellbeing) will be open to this age group. We recognise that there is some overlap with children and young people community support funding although that funding is focused on targeted CYP projects.

Only projects which meet the fund aims can be supported. Therefore, projects can be funded if they are a community-based initiative that promotes and develops good mental health and wellbeing and/or mitigates and protects against the impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population. In addition, local partnerships should ensure that funding is allocated to initiatives which have a focus on:

- Tackling priority issues within the Transition and Recovery Plan such as suicide prevention, social isolation and loneliness, prevention and early intervention
- Addressing the mental health inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic and the needs of one or more of the 'at risk' groups locally.

The Fund can support both **existing and new** projects. Projects funded through Year 1 of the Fund are eligible to apply again but must clearly show how they will further strengthen success or develop and improve in Year 2 (for example, in increasing accessibility and reach to different groups) and where possible, they should demonstrate early impacts from Year 1.

We will ringfence a proportion of the funding for new projects, to ensure fairness and innovation continues. We are keen to ensure additional emphasis for Year 2 on reaching harder to reach, at risk groups by promoting and making the Fund accessible to wider networks which should in turn unearth further 'new' projects not funded in Year 1.

Projects must also have a **specific community focus** rather than providing regional or national coverage.

What we can fund

The following list is not exhaustive and local partnership groups are expected to apply due diligence to the exact conditions they set locally – please also see Q&A for further details.

We will fund	We cannot fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equipment• One-off events• Hall hire for community spaces• Small capital spend up to £5,000• Staff costs (given longer term future of Fund is subject to evaluation and funding, these should be one off or fixed term)• Training costs• Transport Utilities/running costs• Volunteer expenses• Helping people to stay safe (PPE for small gatherings/group activity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest• Electricity generation and feed-in tariff payment• Political or religious campaigning• Profit-making/fundraising activities• VAT you can reclaim Statutory activities• Overseas travel• Alcohol

The Fund is aimed at projects that are primarily “support” and prevention focused within the community. While projects involving recognised therapeutic treatments can be funded, the Fund is not aimed at projects that are primarily “treatment” focused and is not meant to replace funding for direct therapeutic interventions in the community, such as counselling, or CBT. Instead, it aims to provide a range of broader community supports that can complement clinical care.

How much organisations can apply for

We would expect the majority of funding to go towards smaller scale community projects for example amounts of less than £10,000. Bids of £10,000 - £50,000 are also within scope. Partnership or collaboration bids are particularly welcome.

The reporting expectations should be proportionate – for example, a bid for £50,000 would require further detail than one for £2000. All funds will be distributed by end of March 2023.

Equalities considerations and at-risk groups

Ensuring equality of access and full participation from all relevant and at-risk communities is a priority of this Fund. Local plans must take into account equalities considerations. This should identify mechanisms to publicise the Fund widely, involve groups and communities from across the risk groups and ensure provision of sufficient support to enable equality of access for generally excluded/seldom heard from communities.

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 should ensure a focus on initiatives which are inclusive of the following priority ‘at risk’ groups:

- Women (particularly young women, and women and young women affected by gender-based violence);
- people with a long-term health condition or disability;
- people at higher risk from COVID;
- people from a Minority Ethnic background;
- refugees and those with no recourse to public funds;
- people facing socio-economic disadvantage;
- people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage;
- people with diagnosed mental illness; people affected by psychological trauma (including adverse childhood experiences);
- people who have experienced bereavement or loss;
- older people (aged 50 and above); and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities.

Applicants should also set out how their proposal contributes to promoting people’s human rights.

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 2023, successful organisations should spend their award **in full** by the end of March 2024. Future funding may be forthcoming but is not guaranteed.

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. We also anticipate that a smaller proportion of bids may be supported, for collaborative partnership bids **up to** the value of £50,000.

With the above in mind, we have developed **two grant applications**.

[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.

[Large Grant Application £10K - £50K](#)

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.

Whilst not essential, we actively welcome collaborative approaches within the Third Sector that can demonstrate how you identified a need for this activity/ service you seek funding for, who you involved and when this occurred. We expect you to use recent evidence and feedback gathered in the last two years and particularly want to understand how people who are to benefit from your project have been part of the process.

Collaborative approaches that include participants and organisations from other sectors are not excluded, but a Third sector organisation will **need** to be the accountable and lead member of the collaborative project, including financial management of the Grant Award. **Please note, given the higher amount of grant on offer this application will require more detailed information and evaluation evidence.**

[When organisations can apply](#)

Phase 1 of The Fund will go live on **17th October 2022** at which point community groups can submit their on-line applications to Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian. Phase 2 of The Fund will go live on **1st February 2023**.

Note: Organisations can submit applications to **either** Phase 1 or Phase 2, **not both**.

Fund Timeline		
Phase 1 goes live 17th October 2022		
Phase 1	Closing date for applications	Thursday 24th November 2022
	Panel assessment	Week commencing 5 th December 2022
	Funding decisions confirmed	Week commencing 12th December 2022

Fund Timeline continued		
Phase 2 goes live 1st February 2023		
Phase 2	Closing date for applications	Thursday 23rd February 2023
	Panel assessment	Week commencing 6th March 2023
	Funding decisions confirmed	Week commencing 13th March 2023

Meaningful monitoring/Avoiding box ticking or tokenism

For Year 2 of the Fund, we are keen to improve the data gathered in terms of how projects are reaching target groups. It is important to make clear that projects can have a broad focus and/or address specific target groups.

The local application process should make clear what is meant by meaningful reach, which could be:

- The project is set up specifically with a target group in mind
- Or the project has a broader focus but efforts have been taken to ensure the project is accessible and inclusive, for example, has fully considered the specific needs of a target group regarding accessibility needs (e.g what challenges do the refugee community face when using a project, such as language issues, cultural differences, stigma etc) and the project has been adjusted accordingly.

All funded projects must register their projects with West Space, the online space for mental health and wellbeing information in West Lothian- <https://westspace.org.uk/>

Roles and responsibilities

The Fund will be delivered through the same approach as Year 1 - a locally focused and co-ordinated, with a focus on collaboration across all processes. Local partnership groups should:

- be comprised of TSIs, Integration Authorities (via Health and Social Care Partnership Chief Officer or representative) and a range of other local partners including local authority leads

Part 2: FAQs

1. CONTINUATION OR RECURRING FUNDING

Will there be any continuation or recurring funding?

There is no confirmation of funding beyond year 2 of the Fund although we will update you on this following the Scottish Government's Spending Review process.

Are Year 2 priorities the same as Year 1?

The core priorities as outlined in the fund aims have not changed. The initial priority of the fund was responding to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. While the effects of the pandemic on mental health will be long lasting, and still emerging, it is important to recognise that there are also other societal challenges affecting communities and their mental health and wellbeing such as the cost of living crisis.

2. THE SIZE OF ORGANISATIONS THAT CAN APPLY TO THE FUND

What size of organisation can apply for the fund?

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund has been established to provide grants to small, grassroots community groups and organisations (i.e. voluntary or community organisations; registered charities; groups or clubs; not-for-profit companies or Community Interest Companies, and community councils).

3. WHAT TIMESCALE DOES THE RECIPIENT ORGANISATION HAVE TO USE THE FUNDS BY?

Funds must be spent by 31 March 2024.

4. CAN THE FUND BE USED FOR EXISTING PROJECTS?

The funding can be used to support expanding projects or continuing existing projects.

5. WHAT CAN THE FUND PAY FOR?

The Fund is primarily focused on supporting operational and revenue costs – e.g. volunteer and one off fixed term staff costs, expenses, equipment, etc - to fulfil the activity. Up to £5k can be committed towards capital expenditure.

6. CAN THE GRANT BE USED AS A PART OF A MATCH FUNDING PROCESS?

Yes. An organisation could use this fund to match fund another project that is already funded by Scottish Government, but it must be for additional activity and activities cannot be double funded.

7. CAN CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS BODIES APPLY FOR THE FUND?

Promotion of religion is ruled out, does this prevent churches and other religious bodies applying?

No, but the activity must be consistent with the aims of the fund and cannot be used to fund religious or campaigning activities.

8. CAN COUNSELLING AND/OR OTHER THERAPEUTIC SERVICES BE SUPPORTED BY THE FUND?

The Fund is aimed at projects that are primarily “support” focused within the community. While projects involving therapeutic treatments can be funded, the Fund is not aimed at projects that are primarily “treatment” focused and is not meant to replace funding for direct therapeutic interventions in the community, such as counselling, or CBT. Instead, it aims to provide a range of broader community supports that can complement clinical care.

Further information

If you have any questions about the fund, please email vsg@vsgwl.org or call 01506 650111.