



West Lothian

COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING FUND - Year 4



Year 4 2024/25 Fund Guidance

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September 2024

Part 1: Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults

Introduction

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults (the Fund) was established in October 2021 and to date has distributed around £51 million to community initiatives supporting mental health and wellbeing across Scotland. Funding for a fourth year of funding (£15 million) was announced in March 2024

The Fund has a strong focus on prevention and early intervention and aims to support grass roots community groups in tackling mental health inequalities and address priority issues of social isolation and loneliness, suicide prevention and tackling poverty and inequality. There will be a continued emphasis in Year 4 on responding to the ongoing cost of living crisis and on those facing socio-economic disadvantage, with a particular focus on supporting the six priority family groups identified under Best Start Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan.

The Fund will continue to be delivered through a locally focused and co-ordinated approach via local partnership groups (building upon existing partnerships and with TSIs as lead partner), working together to ensure that support to community based organisations is directed appropriately and in a coherent way. This collaborative approach is more important than ever, giving increasing budget and capacity constraints within individual sectors.

Fund value

£467k is available for West Lothian based `voluntary and Third Sector` organisations for activity in 2024/25.

Fund aims and outcomes.

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 (aged 16 or over), with a particular focus on prevention and early intervention.

Specifically, it aims to:

1. Tackle **mental health inequalities** through supporting a range of 'at risk' groups (as outlined in the Equalities section).
2. Address priority issues of **social isolation and loneliness, suicide prevention and poverty and inequality** with a particular emphasis on responding to the cost of living crisis and support to those facing socio-economic disadvantage.
3. Support **small 'grass roots' community groups** and organisations to deliver such activities.
4. Provide **opportunities for people to connect** with each other, build trusted relationships and revitalise communities.

The Fund directly contributes to Outcome 4 of the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

published in June 2023: “better equipped communities to support people’s mental health and wellbeing and provide opportunities to connect with others”

It also clearly supports the three key areas of focus in the Strategy:

- **Promote** positive mental health and wellbeing for the whole population, improving understanding and tackling stigma, inequality and discrimination;
- **Prevent** mental health issues occurring or escalating and tackle underlying causes, adversities and inequalities wherever possible; and
- **Provide** mental health and wellbeing support and care, ensuring people and communities can access the right information, skills, services and opportunities in the right place at the right time, using a person-centred approach.

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.

Specifically, the intended outcomes of the Fund remain the same as in Years 1, 2 and 3, and are 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.
- Foster a **strategic and preventative approach** to improving community mental health.
- Support the **resilience of communities** and investing in their capacity to develop their own solutions, including through strong local partnerships.
- Tackle the **social determinants of mental health** by targeting resources and collaborating with other initiatives to tackle poverty and inequality.

Fund criteria

The fund criteria sets out the broad parameters for how funding will be allocated to community organisations. Funding decisions must reflect the broad principles of the fund criteria as well as local priorities.

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. It must be accessible, no matter how small or inexperienced they are. National organisations undertaking initiatives in the West Lothian area are not excluded but are not the main focus of the Fund. Funded organisations do not need to have 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 the local community.

Applications will only 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. The range of **organisations eligible to apply are**:

- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO)
- Unincorporated Associations

- 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

Please note that parent councils are eligible to apply, subject to the following conditions:

- *The funded activities must meet the aims of the Fund and specifically must focus on supporting young people aged 16 or over or supporting adults rather than their children.*

How much organisations can apply for

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 the cost of living crisis and on those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

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 or 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.

Application timeline

Fund opens **9am Monday 30 September 2024** and closes **Noon, Thursday 31 October 2024**

Fund Timeline <u>Go live 30 September 2024</u>	
Closing date for applications	Noon, Thursday 31 October 2024
Panel assessments	Large grant – November 2024 Small grant – November 2024
Funding decisions confirmed	Mid December 2024
Project activity	1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026
Evaluation	30 April 2026

Monies will be issued to successful applicants in early February 2025.

What type of project can be funded?

The focus of the Fund is on prevention and early intervention and we would expect all funded projects to focus on one or both of these themes. The focus of the Fund is also on supporting the adult population, which is considered to be members of the population aged 16 and over. We recognise that there is some overlap with the children and young people's community mental health and wellbeing supports and services funding, distributed by local authorities, although that funding is focused on targeted projects for those aged 5-24 (26 if care-experienced) and their family members.

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:

1. Tackling **mental health inequalities**, including support to 'at risk' groups (those identified in the Equalities section and any local priority groups) as well as support to the general population.
2. Addressing priority issues of **social isolation and loneliness, suicide prevention and poverty and inequality** with a particular emphasis on responding to the cost of living crisis and support to those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

Projects must also have a **specific community focus** rather than providing regional or national coverage. As per previous years, the intention is that funding provided in the local allocation supports initiatives based within the West Lothian area, though the initiatives need not exclude people living in surrounding areas.

Funding can be given to support new projects or continuation of existing projects. The Fund can support both **existing and new** projects. Projects funded through the first 3 years of the Fund are eligible to apply again but should clearly show how they will develop and improve in Year 4 and

where possible, they should demonstrate early impacts from earlier years.

What can be funded?

What can be funded	What cannot be funded
Equipment	Contingency costs, loans, endowments or interest
One-off events	Electricity generation and feed-in tariff payment
Hall hire for community spaces.	Political or religious campaigning <i>(please note that faith based organisations are eligible to apply with the exclusion of any religious campaigning activities or activities restricted only to members of the faith based organisation.</i>
Staff costs (these should be one off or fixed term)	Profit-making/fundraising activities
Training costs	VAT you can reclaim
Transport	Statutory activities
Utilities/running costs	Overseas travel
Volunteer expenses	Alcohol
Small capital spend up to £5,000. <i>The benefits of the capital expenditure must demonstrably contribute to the Fund outcomes. This limitation does not apply to the purchase of small items of equipment.</i>	

Funding of counselling and other therapeutic treatments

The Fund is primarily aimed at a range of **preventative community supports** for improved mental health and wellbeing and the allocation of funding should reflect this. However, the Fund also aims to support early intervention approaches and support to those with existing mental health and wellbeing issues. We also appreciate there are cases where support and treatment are hard to distinguish and recognise that some community based complementary supports as part of their offer also provide counselling, as well as other therapeutic treatments.

As such counselling and other therapeutic treatments are not excluded from the Fund, but should be considered on a case by case basis.

- The **main intention** of the Fund is not about 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 and is an opportunity to support a wide range of approaches to providing emotional and practical support to individuals (for example peer support practices).
- There are other funding streams which can support counselling services in various realms (for example, the Scottish Government Survivors of Childhood Abuse Support Fund and Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Fund)
- If such supports are funded, there must be appropriate safeguarding around this, including staff/volunteers having access to adequate sources of support and/or supervision.

Equalities considerations and supporting at risk groups.

The Fund is aimed at supporting the following priority ‘at risk’ groups:

- *Women particularly women experiencing gender-based violence*
- *people with a long-term health condition or disability*
- *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;*
- *people disadvantaged by geographical location (particularly remote and rural areas)*
- *older people (aged 50 and above)*
- *people with neurological conditions or learning disabilities*
- *people from neurodiverse communities*
- *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities.*

Fair Work First Requirements

Through the Fair Work First policy we will use the Scottish Government's financial powers to drive fair work practice and achieve the ambition for Scotland to be a leading Fair Work Nation by 2025.

The Scottish Government [Fair Work First Guidance](#) explains their Fair Work First approach, provides good practice examples to guide employers' approaches and, importantly, explains the benefits of fair work for workers and organisations.

There is a requirement for all grant recipients awarded a public sector grant on or after 1 July 2023 are to pay at least the real Living Wage and provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, subject to limits on devolved competence. With regards to the real Living Wage, the guidance notes that:

All UK-based staff aged 16 and over, including apprentices, who are directly employed by the grant recipient, must be paid at least the real Living Wage; and any UK-based workers who are not directly employed but are directly engaged in delivering the grant-funded activity, whether they be sub-contractors or agency staff, must also be paid at least the real Living Wage.

A key condition –is that the real Living Wage policy applies to employers commissioned by grant recipients to deliver an aspect of the grant funded activity. This means that staff working in the funded community projects should be paid at least the real Living Wage. We appreciate the challenges in implementing the policy particularly for small organisations and low value grants. You may wish to be aware of the following exceptions which are outlined in the Fair Work First guidance and can be discussed with the Communities team:

- The Scottish Government or other relevant funder may apply limited exceptions to provide funding to organisations who cannot afford to pay the real Living Wage in order that the measure remains proportionate. In particular, where grants are essential for an organisation to continue its activities, it will be important to ensure that there is an exception to address any situation in which a potential grant recipient is heavily or entirely dependent on grant funding but cannot pay the real Living Wage.
- Alternatively, the funder may commit to pay a bigger grant in circumstances where there is arguably no choice for the recipient, so as to allow the recipient to pay the real Living Wage and thereby meet the grant condition. If the funder cannot commit to pay the bigger grant needed, the grant recipient may have to be considered exempt from the real Living Wage condition.

It should be noted that fair work guidance around effective workers' voice do not apply to the funded projects.

1. CONTINUATION OR RECURRING FUNDING

Will there be any continuation or recurring funding?

There is no confirmation of funding beyond Year 4 of the Fund although we will update you on this through the Scottish Government's Spending Review process.

It should be noted that funding will be time limited and, therefore, applications to the fund should be sought for time limited projects and tests of change.

Are Year 4 priorities the same as Year 3?

In the main, the core fund priorities as outlined in the fund aims have not changed. All projects should have a prevention or early intervention theme, therefore are not identified as 'priorities' as such in the Year 4 guidance.

The Fund was initially set up to respond to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and this is now not a priority theme. Year 3 of the Fund sought to also respond to the cost of living crisis and provided increased emphasis on one of the 'at risk' groups – those facing socio- economic disadvantage. Year 4 will be a continued and important emphasis on supporting mental health and wellbeing of communities through the ongoing cost of living crisis.

2. WHAT SIZE OF ORGANISATIONS CAN APPLY TO THE FUND?

The Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for adults aims 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).

The majority of grants in each local area should go to small to medium sized groups with incomes less than £1 million to ensure grassroot organisations are supported.

3. WHAT IS THE APPLICATION TIMELINE?

Fund opens **9am Monday 30 September 2024** and closes **Noon, Thursday 31 October 2024**.

4. HOW MUCH MONEY CAN ORGANISATIONS APPLY FOR?

Organisations can apply for the small or large grant;

- [Small Grant Application](#) (£2k-£10k)
- [Large Grant Application](#) (£10k-£50k)

5. CAN THE FUND BE USED FOR EXISTING PROJECTS?

The fund can be used for new projects and can be used for expanding projects or continuing existing projects.

6. 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.

Applicants can request funding for capital expenditure such as the construction, refurbishment and/or purchase of buildings, amenities or vehicles up to the value of £5,000 for such capital expenditure. This limitation does not apply to the purchase of small items of equipment.

7. WHEN WILL THE GRANT BE PAID?

Organisations will have money in their accounts in early February 2025.

8. WHAT ACTIVITY PERIOD DOES THE FUND COVER?

The funding is to cover activity during the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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

An online Question and Answer (Q&A) session about the fund will be held on **Thurs 3 Oct at 9.30am**. Details will be shared separately.

The session will be recorded and made available to those unable to join on the day.