



West Lothian

COMMUNITIES MENTAL HEALTH &
WELLBEING FUND FOR ADULTS - Year 6 (26/27)



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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THE GATEWAY
Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian

Fund Guidance - Year 6 (2026-27)

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September 2026

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 £66 million to community initiatives supporting mental health and wellbeing across Scotland. Funding for a fifth and sixth year (£15 million each year) was announced in March 2025.

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 addressing priority issues of:

- social isolation and loneliness;
- suicide prevention; and
- tackling poverty and inequality.

There will be a continued emphasis in Year 6 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 main implications of the pilot for the Communities Fund for Year 6 are as follows: **A micro-grants scheme will operate for Year 6 only.**

Due to the Scottish Government's Fairer Funding pilot, a significant portion of the fund for Year 5 and 6 is already ringfenced for multi-year projects.

Please note

- Organisations already receiving grants for Years 5 & 6 through the Fairer Funding Pilot need not apply as they are already included in Year 6, even if for different initiatives.
- Organisations that received funding for Year 5 only **are** eligible to apply in Year 6, however must indicate how the proposed Year 6 activity will provide additionality.

Fund value

£26,500 is available for West Lothian based 'voluntary and Third Sector' organisations for activity in 2027/28.

Micro grant available: £500 - £2,500

Fund ambition

The ambition is to support initiatives which promote mental health and wellbeing at small, grassroots and community level. The funding will go to smaller scale community projects.

National and large organisations with an income of over £1M undertaking initiatives in the local area are not excluded but are not the main focus of the fund and will only be funded by exception.

[Link to Application Form](#)

Application Timeline

Fund opens **9am Monday 7 September 2026** and closes **Noon, Monday 5 October 2026**.

Note: Unfortunately, applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

Milestone	Details
Go live	Monday 7 September 2026
Closing date for applications	Noon, Monday 5 October 2025
Panel assessment	November 2026
Funding decisions confirmed	December 2026
Project activity	1 April 2027 - 31 March 2028
Evaluation deadlines	30 April 2028

Monies will be issued to successful applicants in February 2027 covering activity from 1 April 2027- 31 March 2028.

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.

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.

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 must 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.

What can be funded?

The following list is not exhaustive

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).</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 £2,500.	

Equalities considerations and supporting at risk groups.

The funding is aimed at 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, and from neurodiverse communities;*
- *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities;*
- *Young people aged 16-24.*

Promotion of funded projects

To improve signposting to the wealth of community supports afforded by the Fund, all successful applicants must register their projects with Westspace, <https://westspace.org.uk/>, the West Lothian Directory of Mental Health support Directory.

Reporting and Evaluation

The application form is more detailed than in previous years. This is to aid reporting requirements from those organisations that receive an award to enable Scottish Government to collate national impact.

Organisations must provide a light touch report on their progress in April 2028. VSGWL will provide a reporting template in advance.

Fair Work First Requirements

Fair Work First is the Scottish Government's flagship policy for driving high quality and fair work and workforce diversity across the labour market in Scotland.

Their [Fair Work First Guidance](#), updated on 18 November 2024, explains

our Fair Work First approach, provides good practice examples to guide employers' approaches and, importantly, explains the benefits of fair work for workers and organisations. It is designed to encourage and support employers to adopt fair work practices within their organisation, focusing on the Fair Work First criteria.

Through Fair Work First the Scottish Government is asking employers in receipt of public sector grant funding to adopt the following criteria:

Mandatory

- payment of at least the Real Living Wage; <https://scottishlivingwage.org/>
- provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition
- All staff who are directly employed by the grant recipient and directly engaged in delivering the funded activity but based elsewhere in the UK.
- All workers (in a third party organisation) not directly employed by the grant recipient who are directly engaged in delivering the funded activity and based anywhere in the UK.

The Fair Work First Guidance states that where the cumulative value of grant funding received by an organisation from an individual funder over a single financial year is below £100,000, self-declaration is sufficient.

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

Part 2: FAQs

1. CONTINUATION OR RECURRING FUNDING

Are Year 6 priorities the same as Year 5?

In the main, the core fund priorities as outlined in the fund aims have not changed. **Note:**

- Organisations already receiving grants for Years 5 & 6 through the Fairer Funding Pilot need not apply as they are already included in Year 6, even if for different initiatives.
- Organisations that received one-year funding for Year 5 only **are** eligible to apply in Year 6, however must indicate how the proposed Year 6 activity will provide additionality.

2. IF OUR APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WHEN WILL WE RECEIVE OUR MONEY?

We will transfer monies to your nominated bank account in February 2027.

3. 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. The majority of grants will go to small to medium sized groups with incomes less than £1 million.

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

12 months, or this can be extended slightly if agreed with VSGWL in advance.

5. CAN YOUNG PEOPLE BE ENGAGED TO DELIVER A PROJECT?

The Fund is intended to benefit adults. If a proposal includes young people as volunteers in delivering support to adults is this still eligible?

The Fund is intended to support people aged 16 and above therefore includes support to young people.

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.

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

Yes. We are aware that match funding occurs in some areas and is very much welcomed.

8. CAN AN ORGANISATION USE THIS FUND TO MATCH FUND ANOTHER PROJECT THAT IS ALREADY FUNDED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT?

Yes, but only where the funding supports additional activity. The Fund cannot be used to duplicate costs or activity already funded by the Scottish Government

9. CAN WE USE AI TO HELP WITH OUR APPLICATION?

We understand many groups use AI writing tools in creating applications, particularly as an accessibility tool. The content of applications will be judged on merit regardless of whether AI is used, but applications must remain authentic and accurate to an organisation's ambitions.

10. 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. Churches and religious bodies can apply for the Fund, but the activity must be consistent with the aims of the fund and cannot be used to fund religious or campaigning activities. Activities must not be restricted only to members of the faith-based organisation.

11. DO APPLICANTS HAVE TO COMPLETE A MINIMAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DECLARATION AS PART OF SUBSIDY CONTROL?

Yes. Minimal Financial Assistance is a specific provision within the UK Subsidy Control Act 2022 which does not apply to this Fund.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/subsidy-control-guidance>

12. WILL THERE BE ANY CONTINUATION OR RECURRING FUNDING?

Yes, the Scottish Government has confirmed Year 7 of the Fund. Details will be shared once more details are known.

Part 3: Further information

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