



## Community investment – small grants

### Application criteria and guidance



## Before you apply

We encourage all applicants to contact us before submitting an application:

### Community Investment Team:

communitygrant@believehousing.co.uk  
0300 1311 999

Your project must meet **one** of the following themes:

- health and wellbeing – improving mental/physical health, building confidence
- employability and training – volunteering, skills development, upskilling
- increasing household income – such as debt advice, benefits support, feeding families
- a greener, fairer future – reducing, reusing, recycling
- tackling inequalities linked to the cost-of-living crisis.

## Planning your community grant

When planning your project, consider:

- administration - how you will manage the project, keep records, and provide receipts
- monitoring and evaluation - how you will track progress and measure success
- publicity - how you will promote your project to the community.

## Preparing your grant application

When filling in your grant application, make sure you include the following.

### Project details

What do you want to achieve?

Where/when will it take place?

Who will deliver it?

### Evidence of need

How do you know the project is needed?

Examples:

- Waiting lists or increasing demand.
- Gaps in current services.
- Community requests.
- Referrals from partner organisations.
- How you will ensure people access the activity.

## Targets and outcomes

Be specific:

- How many people will benefit?
- How often will activities run?
- What is the target number of adults/children?

Example: weekly craft sessions for 40 weeks. 25 people will attend overall, with 10–12 attending weekly.

## Project costs

Provide a detailed breakdown, including:

- How each cost has been calculated.
- Staff costs (hourly rate × hours worked).

## Who can apply?

- Registered or exempt charities.
- Community groups.
- Schools.
- Social enterprises.
- Voluntary groups.
- Town/parish/community councils.
- Faith groups (open to all).
- Other not-for-profit organisations.
- CICs (must meet extra criteria below).

## Additional requirements for CICs

CICs must demonstrate:

- at least 12 months of operation
- clear charitable aims with social benefit
- a management committee (at least three directors, or four directors if two are related)
- a bank account in the CIC's name, with two unrelated signatories
- proper legal status and registration (for example, Companies House)
- an asset lock
- at least 25% trading income
- the funded project is not a tradable service
- funding requested is for project delivery only
- costs align with appropriate pay structures
- a clear community need and benefit.

## Who cannot apply?

- Individuals.
- Private/for-profit companies.
- Party-political groups.
- Organisations not aligned with believe housing's objectives.

## Inclusivity requirement

All projects must be inclusive.

Targeted groups (such as women-only activities) are permitted as long as:

- people are not excluded for unrelated reasons (for example, disability)
- any unavoidable exclusions are clearly explained.

## Funding eligibility

Can I apply if I've received funding before?

- Groups can receive up to £1,000 per financial year (either one £1,000 grant or two £500 grants).
- You cannot hold two grants at the same time.
- You can hold a £1,000 community development grant at the same time as a small grant.

## What we fund (up to £1,000)

Examples include:

- community activities, classes, events, start-up support
- equipment for community use
- short-term coaching, training, sessional staff
- fixed capital costs (up to 60% of grant)
- employability projects (skills, qualifications, work experience)
- health and wellbeing activities (fitness, healthy eating, meals/snacks)
- art and craft activities to reduce isolation
- activities reducing antisocial behaviour or improving safety
- marketing/promotion (up to £200)
- venue hire (up to 50% of project cost)
- essential minor repairs
- travel costs linked to project delivery
- items such as laptops, tablets, furniture, and electrical appliances (where there is clear community benefit).

## What we do not fund

Examples include:

- items purchased on behalf of another organisation
- building financial reserves or items for fundraising
- religious, political or lobbying activities
- debt clearance or loan repayments
- taxi fares for individuals
- core running costs (rent, utilities, permanent staff salaries)
- maintenance costs
- projects for personal financial profit
- vehicle purchases
- grants to individuals
- referee fees.

## Project timescales

- Projects may be one-off or run for up to one year.
- The project must start after funding is awarded.
- Allow at least four weeks from submission to start date.
- Start date must be within four months of application.
- We cannot fund projects retrospectively.

## Information required during assessment

You must provide:

- evidence the project meets funding criteria
- details of match funding (if applicable)
- accurate costings
- relevant documentation (such as insurance, safeguarding, health and safety).

## Targets – number of people benefiting

Be specific.

Examples:

- Example 1 – 40 families per week; 25 children + 35 adults = 60 individuals
- Example 2 – 16 children + 2 adults = 18 individuals.

## Budget example

Item/activity	Total cost	Amount requested	Match funding
<b>Tutor (two hours a week, for six weeks, at £25 an hour)</b>	<b>£350</b>	<b>£350</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Materials</b>	<b>£200</b>	<b>£100</b>	<b>£100</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	<b>£70</b>	<b>£70</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Hall hire</b>	<b>£40</b>	<b>£40</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£660</b>	<b>£560</b>	<b>£100</b>

## Cost details required

You must provide:

- sessional worker rates, hours and number of sessions
- venue hire rates and duration
- volunteer expenses
- refreshment numbers and cost per item
- equipment itemised with quantities
- publicity costs
- quotes for materials/labour
- transport details (trips, users, estimated costs).

## How grant decisions are made

- A Community Investment Coordinator checks eligibility.
- Tenant-led grant panel meets every two weeks.
- The panel may request more information.
- Once received, a final decision is made.

## If your application is approved

You will receive a grant acceptance letter (contract).

To process your payment, you must provide:

- a signed award letter
- a bank statement (dated within three months)
- governing documents (such as constitution, charity confirmation).

Documents must be returned **within two weeks**.

## Governing documents

Required unless you are a statutory body.

Must be:

- complete.
- up-to-date.
- signed.

Organisations must have:

- their own bank account with two unrelated signatories.
- up-to-date constitution.

## Checks we carry out

We check:

- governing documents
- bank statements and signatories
- Charity Commission records (if applicable).

## Groups without a constitution

Examples available at: [Constitutions | Resource Centre](#)

Durham Community Action can also advise.

## Match funding

- You must explain how additional funds will be secured.
- Funds must be confirmed before believe housing releases payment.
- You must notify us of any changes.
- Grants cannot be used to raise funds for another organisation.

## Safeguarding

If working with children or vulnerable adults:

- appropriate safeguarding policies are required
- we may request copies
- you must ensure partner organisations also comply.



## Publicity

Successful applicants must agree to believe housing's publicity requirements. If promoting your own outcomes, notify us two weeks in advance where possible.

## Data protection

We process your information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Full privacy notice:

[www.believehousing.co.uk/company-information/privacy-notices/](http://www.believehousing.co.uk/company-information/privacy-notices/)

## Reporting requirements (£1,000 grants)

You must provide:

- a short project report
- numbers-number of adults and children participating
- actual numbers of believe housing tenants (no estimates)
- receipts for all expenditure.

## Terms and conditions

You must agree to believe housing's terms and conditions if awarded funding.

They are available online at [New-terms-and-conditions-for-grants-revised-7-11-2025-.pdf](http://New-terms-and-conditions-for-grants-revised-7-11-2025-.pdf)

## Contact us

We encourage early discussions about your project.

[communitygrant@believehousing.co.uk](mailto:communitygrant@believehousing.co.uk)

0300 1311 999