



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
Tutor (two hours a week, for six weeks, at £25 an hour)	£350	£350	£0
Materials	£200	£100	£100
Equipment	£70	£70	£0
Hall hire	£40	£40	£0
Total	£660	£560	£100

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-notice/

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](#)

Contact us

We encourage early discussions about your project.

communitygrant@believehousing.co.uk

0300 1311 999