



Community investment – small community grants

application criteria and guidance

Before you complete your application

We encourage potential applicants to contact us first to discuss your project idea before submitting your application. You can contact the Community Investment Team by email: communitygrant@believehousing.co.uk or call us on 0300 1311 999.

Applications for projects must meet one of our key themes:

- **Health and wellbeing:** improving mental and physical health as well as building the confidence of individuals.
- **Employability and training:** including volunteering and other upskilling activities.
- **Increasing household income:** activities including debt and benefit advice, feeding families and employing people
- **A greener, fairer future:** by reducing, reusing and recycling.
- **Tackling inequalities as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.**
- **Bringing the community together**

Planning a Community Grant

When planning an application for a community grant, it's important to demonstrate that you have considered:

- **Administration:** How you will manage the scheme, including providing monitoring information and receipts.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** How you will track project progress and assess outcomes.
- **Publicity:** How you will promote the project.

Preparing Your Grant Application

To help you prepare, consider the following questions:

- **Project Details:** What do you want to achieve? Where and when will it take place? Who will be involved?
- **Evidence of Need:** How do you know there is demand for your project?
 - Do you have a waiting list or increased demand for your service?
 - Have you identified a gap in existing services?
 - Have people requested this support?
 - Are partner organisations referring people to you?
 - How will you ensure people access your project?
- **Targets and Outcomes:** What are your specific targets?
 - How many individuals will benefit?
 - How often will activities take place?
 - Example: *We will deliver weekly craft sessions over 40 weeks. A total of 25 people will attend, with an average weekly attendance of 10–12 participants.*
 - Show breakdown of numbers of children and adults benefiting.
- **Project Costs:** Provide a detailed breakdown of costs and explain how they were calculated.
 - For example, staff costs should include the hourly rate and the number of hours worked.

Who Can Apply?

We welcome applications from:

- Registered and exempt charities
- Community groups
- Schools
- Social enterprises
- Voluntary groups
- Town, parish, or community councils
- Faith groups or venues (must be inclusive and open to all)
- Other not-for-profit organisations
- Community Interest Companies (CICs)

Community interest companies must be able to demonstrate:

- **Operational history:** be registered for at least 12 months.
- **Purpose:** demonstrate clear charitable objectives and a defined social benefit.
- **Governance:** have a management committee with at least three directors, or four if two directors are related.
- **Banking:** maintain a bank or building society account in the organisation's name, with a minimum of two unrelated signatories.
- **Legal status:** hold a recognised legal status (e.g., company limited by guarantee) and be registered with the appropriate authority (e.g., Companies House).
- **Asset lock:** nominate an organisation as the asset lock body.
- **Trading income:** generate at least 25% of income through trading activities.
- **Project scope:** ensure the funded project is not a tradable asset or service.
- **Funding purpose:** apply for costs related to project delivery, not CIC management.
- **Charitable activity:** seek funding for charitable projects or activities, not for services normally charged as part of trading.
- **Cost structure:** align sessional costs with an appropriate pay structure.
- **Community impact:** provide clear evidence of community need and benefit.

Who Can't Apply?

Unfortunately, we are unable to accept applications from:

- Individuals
- For-profit groups
- Party political organisations
- Private companies or any for-profit organisations
- Groups whose objectives or ethos do not align with believe housing's charitable objectives

Inclusivity Requirement

All projects must be inclusive.

- If targeting a specific group (e.g., women-only activity), ensure no one is excluded due to secondary characteristics (e.g., disability).
- If exclusions are unavoidable (e.g., due to venue limitations), provide a clear explanation in your application.

Eligibility for Funding

Can I apply if I've already received funding from believe housing?

Groups can receive up to £1000 in a financial year from the small grants fund. You may apply for **two £500 grants** or **one £1,000 grant** per financial year, but you cannot hold two grants at the same time.

- You can apply for a £1000 grant if you have been successful in the community development grant funding and have a grant running through this fund.

What We Fund small community grant (up to £1000)

- Activities that **encourage social integration**, develop sustainable communities, or support start-up projects for not-for-profit groups.
- **Classes, sessions, activities, and events** for the community, or purchasing equipment for community-based activities.
- **Short-term coaching, training, or sessional worker costs.**
- Projects that include **fixed capital costs**, up to **60% of the grant value.**
- Activities that help people **develop new skills**, gain qualifications, or access work experience to improve employability.
- Projects that **promote health and wellbeing**, such as healthy eating workshops, fitness activities, or providing refreshments/snacks/meals as part of an activity.
- **Art and craft events** that improve mental wellbeing or reduce isolation.
- Activities that **reduce anti-social behaviour**, help people feel safe, and create a stronger sense of community belonging.
- **Marketing and promotional costs** to increase participation (up to **£200**).
- **Venue hire and rent**, up to **50% of the total project cost.**
- **Essential minor repair works** that are integral to the project.
- **Travel costs** directly related to the activity.

For the Small community grant, we will consider items such as laptops, tablets, non-fixed furniture, and electrical items (e.g., washing machines, fridges) if they deliver a clear community benefit.

Examples of what we won't fund.

- Requests to purchase goods or services on behalf of another organisation.
- Applications aimed at building financial reserves, including buying items for fundraising purposes (e.g., raffle prizes).
- Religious, party-political, or lobbying activities (multi-faith and non-religious activities may be considered).
- Loan repayments or debt clearance.
- Taxi fares for individuals to attend meetings or events.
- Core funding, such as ongoing organisational running costs (including salaries for permanent or fixed-term staff), utilities, and insurance.
- Maintenance costs.
- Projects or activities intended for personal profit.
- Vehicle purchases.
- Funding for individuals.
- Referee fees.

Is there a minimum or maximum timescale for projects?

Projects funded by the small community grants can be a one-off event or run for up to one year.

Your project

must start after the date you the application is awarded funding. Please allow at least **4 weeks** from application submission for your project start date.

Information we will review or require assessing your application:

- Evidence showing how your project meets the funding criteria.
- Details of any match funding, including evidence of secured funds (if applicable).
- The project/activity start date must be within **4 months** of submitting your application.

- We do not fund retrospectively. Projects with a start date before the assessment cannot be considered.
- Detailed and accurate costings for the project/activity.

You must ensure you have all relevant documentation in place, including but not limited to:

- Appropriate documents or insurance relevant to the project/activity.
- Safeguarding arrangements, where applicable.
- Health and safety measures, where applicable.

Targets – How many people will benefit from the project?

- **What are your targets?**

Be specific about numbers and frequency.

Example: “We will deliver weekly craft sessions for 40 weeks. 25 people will attend overall, with an average weekly attendance of 10–12.”

Examples:

- **Example 1:** 40 families will benefit from the service each week. This includes 25 children and 35 adults. In total, 60 individuals will benefit from the project.
- **Example 2:** 16 children and 2 adults will benefit. Overall, 18 individuals will benefit.

Budget example for application form

Items or activity	Total cost	Amount requested from believe	Match funding.
Tutor costs, 2 hours per week £25/per hour for 6 weeks.	£350	£350	£0
Materials-	£200	£100	£100
Equipment -	£70	£70	£0
Hall Hire costs.	£40	£40	£0
Total	£660	£560	£100

Example Expenditure and Details Required

Below are common types of expenditure and the information we expect to see to help us assess value for money. These are examples only—your project may include different costs.

- **Sessional workers or performers:** Provide the hourly rate, total hours, and number of sessions or performances.
- **Venue hire:** Include the hourly rate, total hours, and number of sessions.
- **Volunteer expenses:** State the number of volunteers per activity/session and the level of expenses to be covered.
- **Refreshments:** Specify how many people will be served, what items will be provided, and the total cost.
- **Equipment:** Detail the cost of items such as books, toys, sports equipment, and quantities for each.
- **Publicity and stationery:** Include costs for flyers, posters, adverts, etc.
- **Materials and labour:** Provide any quotes you have received.
- **Transport:** Indicate the number of trips, number of users, and estimated costs for minibus, coach, fuel, parking, or community transport.

How are grant awards decided?

Once you submit your application, the Community Investment Coordinator will review it for eligibility and contact you if further information is required.

Final decisions are made by a **grant panel composed of our tenants**, which meets every two weeks to consider applications. In some cases, the panel may request additional details to support your application. If this happens, we will contact you and, once the information is provided, the panel will review and make a decision.

The Application Is Approved – What Happens Next?

If your application is successful, we will:

- Send you an **acceptance letter**, which forms a contractual agreement between your organisation and Believe Housing for project delivery.

What We Need to Process Your Grant Payment

All successful applicants must provide:

- A **signed award letter** (issued when the grant is awarded).
- A copy of the organisation's **bank statement** dated within the last 3 months.
- **Governing documents**, such as an up-to-date constitution or charity confirmation

Returning Documentation

All requested documentation must be returned within **2 weeks** of the date we request it. If documents are not received within this timeframe, we will be unable to process payment of the grant. If you experience difficulties providing the documents, you may request an extension.

Governing Documents

Your governing document sets out how your organisation operates, its purpose, and how decisions are made. This may be a **constitution, memorandum and articles of association, set of rules, or trust deed**.

- **Statutory bodies** (such as schools, health bodies, and town or parish councils) are regulated, so we do not require their governing documents.
- **Charities** (registered or exempt) must provide their charity registration number. All information must be up to date on the charity register.

For all other organisations, we need to review governing documents to ensure eligibility for funding.

Requirements

- Governing documents must be **complete, up to date, and properly signed**.
- Organisations must have:
 - An up-to-date constitution.
 - Their own bank account with **at least two unrelated signatories**.
- Proof of bank details and a copy of the constitution must be provided if applicable.

Checks We Carry Out

We verify the information you provide to ensure accuracy and identify any risks before awarding grants.

- **Governing Documents:** Must comply with regulatory requirements and be correctly signed.
- **Bank Statements:** Should show the organisation's name and address, consistent with application details and public records. Statements should demonstrate proper financial management.
- **Signatories:** Contacts named on the application must be aware of the project. Provide full legal names (as shown on ID). Signatures must match official documents. Confirm that at least two signatories are unrelated by email.
- **Charity Confirmation:** We will check the Charity Commission register. If we cannot access your details, we may request further information. Ensure you provide the correct charity number and registered name.

Community Groups Without a Constitution

If you do not have a constitution, examples can be found [Constitutions | Resource Centre](#). Durham Community Action may also be able to provide advice.

Match Funding

Our grant can be used alongside other funding sources (e.g., Lottery funding, Princes Trust).

- If your project requires additional funds, you must explain how you plan to secure them.
- If match funding is not yet secured, we will contact you for further details.
- For projects where match funding is essential, **Believe Housing grant funds will not be released until confirmation that funding match funding has been confirmed.**
- You must notify us immediately of any changes to your match funding arrangements.
- **Important:** The Community Investment Grant cannot be used to raise funds for another organisation or body.

Safeguarding

If your project involves working with vulnerable adults or children:

- You must have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- We may request to review these documents.
- If working in partnership, you are responsible for ensuring all partner organisations also have suitable safeguarding measures.

Publicity

Successful applicants must agree to any publicity or marketing activities required by believe housing. This may include press releases, online content, and updates on grant outcomes.

- If you plan to promote your project outcomes, you must inform believe housing **at least two weeks before publication or promotion goes live**, wherever possible.

Data Protection

believe housing is a data controller under the **Data Protection Act 2018**. We take care to handle any personal information you provide in accordance with the law.

- Your information will only be used to process your application and manage any funding awarded.
- It will not be shared with other organisations unless required by law.

For full details, please see our **Privacy Notice**: <https://www.believehousing.co.uk/company-information/privacy-notice/>

Reporting for small community grants

We require a short report detailing:

- How the project went
- How many people benefited from the project- with a breakdown of how many children and adults have benefited.
- Receipts for all expenditure.

If you know how many participants were **believe housing tenants**, please record this accurately (do not provide estimates).

Participant numbers must be recorded so we can confirm whether the project met its targets. If it appears that reasonable steps were not taken to achieve the objectives outlined in your application, this may affect your eligibility for future grants.

If you need information on areas where we have properties, a list of locations is available on the application form page for each grant. Due to data protection, we can only share **postcodes** for these areas and cannot provide more detailed information.

Receipts -must be provided

Terms and Conditions

If Believe Housing agrees to award a grant for your project or activity, you will be required to accept our **terms and conditions**. Please ensure you have read and understood these before submitting your application, as you must agree to them if your funding is successful.

To view the full terms and conditions, please visit:

[click here.](#)

Contact us

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