

Micro Grants

Why we are piloting these grants?

At the Harpur Trust, we recognise that writing a grant application can be an unnerving experience for those who have little or no experience of doing so. We have therefore introduced this new small, pro-active community grants programme that will serve those new to funding applications, providing support and modelling for writing grant applications. By doing so we believe that we can help develop and improve resilience of the local small group community sector. In the longer-term, our vision is that this project will in a small way act as a catalyst to develop and sustain the VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) sector in Bedford Borough.

Who it is for?

Small Grassroots community organisations, charities, and community interest companies (limited by guarantee only) with an annual income no greater than £25,000 and with little or no experience of making grant applications as an organisation or team. (see our eligibility document for more details).

Organisations must be part of their community, have an active committee/board, have previously delivered an activity of some kind, and have evidence that their project or organisation is responding to a clear need.

We are sorry, but currently these grants are not applicable to new groups that are in the embryonic stage and not yet active in the community (if the formal group is new, but you've been active as an informal group or individually, we may be able to take this into account). We cannot provide seed money to test an untested concept.

Grants available

Grants up to £2,000.

All the grants we make must fit one or more of our charitable objects:

- Advancement of Education;
- Relief of poverty, sickness, or distress;
- Recreation with a social welfare purpose.

How it works.

Applying

There is no application form and no post-grant reports for you to complete alone. These will be completed in collaboration with you by one of our grants team. By working together in this way, we anticipate that this process will help improve the confidence of those writing grant applications for the organisation.

Simply email an Expression of Interest to grants@harpurtrust.org.uk. Please include the name of the organisation, the name and contact details for the lead contact, the type of organisation, what it does and a brief overview what you will be seeking funding for. Once received, one of

our

grants team will be in touch to discuss your eligibility, find out a little more about what your organisation does and to arrange to meet with the group. At this meeting which will be in person they will seek to understand your hopes and ambitions, more detail about the organisation, how it is run, what you are seeking funding for and what you plan to achieve with the funding. This will allow them to have enough information to start a draft application for you. They will then work with you to develop this until you are happy to submit your application.

Once you submit your application, we will let you know if any additional information is required and when the application will be considered.

Receiving a grant

If you are awarded a grant, once your organisation has accepted, signed and returned the grant agreement, the grant will be paid in full. Depending upon the length of time of the grant, we will either arrange to make a midway and an end of grant meeting to discuss progress and achievements or simply an end of grant visit. Our visiting grants team member will then work with you to complete a short report for your organisation and for our grants committee.

Throughout the application process and during the lifetime of any grant, you will have one dedicated member of the grants team working with you.

What will we be looking for as we learn about your organisation?

We see this process as a way to develop a relationship between ourselves and your organisation, which is why we like to complete the important aspects in person rather than remotely or via a telephone call.

When our grants team member gets in touch and then meets with you, they will be looking to find out more about your organisation, the work you do and how you do it, what you would like to achieve, and how you are having an impact.

We will also want to learn about the people involved; those who lead your organisation and their skills and experience, the work of any paid staff and the role of volunteers.

We will discuss how much funding you are seeking, what it will enable you to do, whether it will be for services, equipment, a project or to run your organisation to enable you to grow, strengthen or become more efficient or resilient.

We would like to know how the funds will help your organisation to achieve these changes.

To keep things simple, we will not require a budget breakdown from you, but we will need to understand how you intend to spend any grant.

We want to learn about your vision for how different your organisation or service will be once you have spent your grant.

If you are successful and receive a grant, when we make our progress and/or end of grant visit, we will be seeking to learn what difference the grant has made to your group and particularly to your beneficiaries.

Micro Grants Eligibility Criteria, Priorities & Exclusions 2024

This document explains what we look for in deciding which organisations to support, both from the charities or community organisations which apply and the work they do.

It comprises five sections:

1. [Our priorities](#)
2. [Our eligibility criteria](#)
3. [Exclusions](#)
4. [Our grant criteria](#)
5. [Contact us](#)

Our priorities

Our Micro Grants are focused on supporting grassroots not for profit community organisations, small charities, and Community Interest Companies (CICs) that:

- Have little or no experience of writing grant applications either as an organisation or as a committee/board;
- Have clear objectives of what they want to achieve and what success looks like;
- Require funds to start a project or purchase equipment;
- Want to develop their funding application skills;
- Are open to receiving support from Bedfordshire CVS to develop their organisation's governance and fundraising.
- Have evidence of need for the project in their community.

Our eligibility criteria

Organisations must be part of their community, have an active committee/board, have previously delivered an activity of some kind, and have evidence that their project or organisation is responding to a clear need.

The organisation must...

- Be located in Bedford Borough and active in the community.
- Have at least 80% of beneficiaries for the project resident in Bedford Borough
- Have been in existence for less than 2 years*,
- The organisation must have an annual income below £25,000 (for groups that have operated for more than two years, this would be for the previous two years).
- The organisation **must not** hold more than three months operating costs (reserves)
- The organisation **must not** hold any substantial asset.

Organisations that have been operating for more than two years

- * We may be able to accept interest from organisations that have been operating for more than 2 years if it has a new and inexperienced committee/board that are new to running a community group or charity (not applicable to CICs);
- **OR**, has not successfully applied for independent Trust and Foundation grant funding, or Local Authority funding (excluding ward councillors' funds) before.
- For such groups the no greater than £25,000 income stipulation will only apply to the previous two years accounts.

Organisations are also expected to have the following in place or in process:

- A governing document (i.e. a constitution or set of rules);
- A bank account in the name of the organisation with at least two unrelated signatories (if a new organisation, you can apply while seeking to open an account, but no agreed grant will be paid until the account is opened or other arrangements made);
- A Safeguarding and an Equality policy (or be willing to work with Beds CVS to implement these before any grant is released).
- We will require copies of your governing document, your latest accounts (or bank statement for new groups), your safeguarding and your equality policies.
- **IF YOU DO NOT have any, or all of the above four items, you can still send in an Expression of Interest- there are ways that we may be able to support you, but we cannot guarantee this.**

Development

We may, at our discretion, agree to progress an application where an organisation requires support to develop its governance (including, a governing document, policies, and financial processes) to become grant-ready, if that organisation agrees to work with Bedfordshire CVS and to do this alongside the application. We will put you in touch with one of their development workers. In such cases, a final submission will not be accepted until this work is completed.

Your governance

You need to have an active board/committee of at least three unrelated trustees/committee members/directors. Where trustees/committee members/directors are related, we will consider the relationship, conflicts of interest and the balance of power of the related Trustees/committee members.

For example, if two of four trustees are related, we are likely to view this as that they hold too much influence and that there is a conflict of interest; whereas if two out of ten trustees are related and there are clear procedures in place to manage any conflicts of interest, then this is likely to be seen acceptable.

If you are unsure, please get in touch and discuss your situation with us.

Exclusions

We will not fund:

- Recently established groups that are not actively delivering in their community;
- Sole traders, private businesses and companies (excluding Community Interest Companies limited by guarantee);
- Groups that are local branches of international, national, or regional organisations;
- Projects which promote a religion or faith;
- School PTAs (or equivalent);
- 'Friends of' groups of larger organisations i.e. hospitals;
- Groups where the sole beneficiaries are the group's own members;
- Building improvements.

Grant criteria

- All funds must be spent within one year;
- You agree to work with one of our grants team to develop your application;
- You agree to meet with one of our team members to discuss progress during and at the end of the grant to evaluate your project;
- You agree to access and work with Bedfordshire CVS, if necessary, on related issues raised for your organisation.

Contact us

For an informal discussion email: grants@harpurtrust.org.uk or telephone: 01234 369500

To submit an expression of interest email: grants@harpurtrust.org.uk

Do ensure that you include the name of the organisation, the name and contact details for the lead contact, the type of organisation, what it does and a brief overview what you will be seeking funding for.