

The Henry Smith Charity

founded in 1628

Improving Lives Funding Guidelines

Introduction

The Henry Smith Charity is one of the largest independent grant making trusts in the UK, distributing over £30m each year.

These funding guidelines are for our **Improving Lives programme only**; they outline the type of organisations and services we are looking to fund and aim to help you decide whether you are eligible to apply for a grant.

The majority of our funding is distributed through the Improving Lives and Strengthening Communities programmes but we do have a number of other grant programmes, including our Holiday, Christian and County Grants. Guidelines outlining what we fund under each of these programmes and how to apply can be found in the What we fund section of our website.

If you have any queries about the guidelines or are unsure whether or not your project fits within them, please call us on 020 7264 4970 and speak to a member of the Grants Team.

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1. Overview of our Improving Lives funding priorities

The Improving Lives funding priorities are part of our wider [grant making strategy](#) launched in October 2017.

The Improving Lives programme has six priority areas. These priorities describe what we want to fund and how we want to bring about change for the most disadvantaged people in greatest need.

Priorities	Outcomes		
 Help at a Critical Moment Helping people to rebuild their lives following a crisis, critical moment, trauma or abuse	People are supported at a time of crisis, critical moment, trauma or abuse, and helped to move on positively with their lives	There is an improvement in how people feel about themselves e.g. improved confidence, self-esteem, resilience, or well-being	People have improved mental health and/or ability to cope
 Positive Choices Helping people, whose actions or behaviours have led to negative consequences for themselves and others, to make positive choices	People have access to quality specialist rehabilitation services that enable them to move on positively with their lives	There is a change in people's ability to cope that results in them being less likely to engage in harmful behaviours	A reduction in harmful behaviours over time (e.g. a reduction in offending or alcohol/drug consumption)
 Accommodation / Housing Support Enabling people to work towards or maintain accommodation	People have access to support enabling them to gain and/or sustain stable accommodation	People have gained the skills needed to live independently and maintain a home	Vulnerable people in need of housing are given support to remain safe and gain the skills to live with greater independence
 Employment and Training Supporting people to move towards or gain employment	People have improved soft skills, are moving towards employment and/or being work ready	People have developed appropriate technical skills (including literacy, numeracy and job-specific qualifications) and are more likely to gain employment as a result	People have engaged in training to reach their personal potential to work or volunteer
 Financial Inclusion, Rights & Entitlements Supporting people to overcome their financial problems and ensure that they are able to claim their rights and entitlements	People have the support, information and advice to address their financial issues	People are able to navigate the benefits, migration and asylum systems and claim their rights and entitlements	People have improved financial literacy, are more able to understand their finances and have greater confidence when budgeting and managing their money
 Support Networks & Family Working with people to develop improved support networks and family relationships	An individual and/or family enjoys positive and constructive relationships with others; feeling and being socially connected	An individual and/or family has the skills, understanding and emotional capacity to maintain and manage positive relationships	An individual, family or carer receives support that increases their resilience, independence and/or reduces mental health issues and isolation

Our application form asks you to identify which priority (or priorities) your work meets. All the grants we make must meet one of our priorities. Some organisations may fit within several priority areas, **but you don't need to address more than one**. Applications will be assessed on the quality of their work rather than the number of priority areas they are working towards.

There are separate guidelines for our Strengthening Communities grants programme. In the Strengthening Communities grants programme we are looking for small, community-led organisations, working in highly disadvantaged areas. If you think that your organisation may be a better fit under that programme, please check the Strengthening Communities guidelines.

2. Who can apply for a grant?

- Nearly all our grants in this programme are made to organisations with an annual income of between £50k and £2m. In exceptional circumstances we will consider applications from organisations with income of up to £5m. If your organisation has an income of over £2m and you wish to apply you will need to demonstrate that your organisation is uniquely well placed to deliver the work and that you are unable to source funding from elsewhere. If you are in this category, please contact us before making an application
- We fund established organisations (by this we mean at least 18 months old and have published their first set of annual accounts) that have a track record. We are looking for applicants that have the necessary expertise and experience and are well placed to deliver the work for which funding is sought
- We make grants to fund charitable work. We primarily fund registered charities but are willing to make grants to other types of not for profit organisations, such as Community Interest Companies (CICs) or constituted community groups if they can explain how you would use our funding for charitable purposes. Please note: if your organisation is not a registered charity, we require you to submit a constitution, which shows your charitable purpose. If you are a CIC we require you to provide details of how your constitution prevents funds being removed from the organisation (asset lock)

What we look for in the organisations we fund

When we review an application, we use a wide variety of different criteria to assess an organisation. Each application is different and we are not prescriptive in our approach. However, there are some characteristics we think are important for any organisation which we support. We are looking for the following characteristics **in all** the organisations that we fund:

True to their mission

Organisations that are clear and consistent about what they aim to achieve. This is demonstrated through their actions and practice

Responsive to need and well placed to deliver

Well placed to deliver services and aware of what is going on around them

Person centred

The interests of the individual are at the heart of what the organisation does. People are meaningfully involved in developing solutions to the issues they face

Using resources well

High quality, well run organisations that have the skills and capabilities to make proper and effective use of their resources

3. The types of service we fund

- We fund work with people for whom other sources of support have failed, been inappropriate or are simply not available. We want to support people who are excluded, vulnerable, or facing other forms of hardship
- All the applications we fund must be able to clearly demonstrate the need for the service(s) they deliver. We want to understand the problems or circumstances that make your work necessary. It may be that people are lacking particular resources or facing certain barriers in accessing the support, information or care that they need
- When writing your application we will ask you to identify the priority area(s) you are working towards and how the outcomes of the service(s) you are delivering fit with the grid of funding priorities on page two. Some organisations may achieve outcomes across several priority areas

Please note that your application will not be assessed on the number of priorities you are working towards. An application that meets one priority will not be at a disadvantage to an applicant working across several priority areas. It is more important to explain how you will meet one priority well than to make small contributions to several priority areas. Therefore, please do not select priorities that are not directly linked to your work.

Some organisations may be applying for a service that works towards one (or more) of the listed priorities but also delivers services that are outside of our priorities. In this case the organisation would be eligible to apply to us, but must clearly state how they would use our funding to work towards our specified outcomes.

What we look for in the services we fund

When we assess an application, there are some characteristics we think are important when deciding which services to support. We are looking for these characteristics **in all** of the services that we fund.

Working to create lasting change

Having a positive impact on people and where possible, creating enduring, sustainable improvements in circumstances

Delivering holistic support

Taking a positive approach to the whole person, often addressing multiple issues, with those who are in some way excluded or vulnerable

Providing direct service delivery

Engaging directly with people to help them to build their capabilities and tackle the root causes of problems

Monitored and evaluated

Information is appropriately collected and analysed with successes/failures used to understand and improve services

- We do not fund new work; we fund work that is proven and effective. Evidence could come from your experience of delivering the same or similar services, or from independent research. If you have not delivered the work before, you must be able to show that the service(s) you are asking us to fund made a tangible, positive difference to people's lives elsewhere. You should also explain why you think the work is transferable and demonstrate that your organisation has the expertise to deliver the service
- We do not want our funding to be a substitute for work that is currently considered a statutory responsibility. However, we are willing to fund services that add value (i.e. that are in addition to, or that enhance the provision of public sector delivery). We do not apply a hard and fast rule that is applicable in every situation. Instead we work on a case by case basis with the quality of the organisation, the need for the service, and the social impact achieved, being the overriding concerns
- It is very important to us that no potential beneficiary is excluded from the work we fund on financial grounds. We are able to fund charities that charge for services where there is a clear rationale for the charges. Where this is the case there must be an appropriate fee waiver or discount in place for those who would not otherwise be able to access the service

4. What you can apply for

- We provide grant funding for charitable activities; we do not provide loans or social finance
- The amount requested must be between **£20,000 and £60,000 per year**. The maximum length of funding that can be requested is **three years**
- Within this range, we encourage organisations to apply for the amount and length of funding that they need, and that makes sense in the context of the application. (We will not consider making a grant that is equivalent to more than 50% of the current annual running costs of an organisation.)
- We can provide funding for either running costs or for specific projects or areas of work
- Where all of an organisation's activities fit within our priority areas, we can make grants towards running costs, which may include salaries, overheads and day to day running costs. Where an organisation delivers some activities that are outside of our priority areas we will only consider applications towards a specific project that fits with our priorities
- Our grants are for revenue costs and direct service delivery. We **do not** fund capital costs

5. What we do not fund

It is important to read this page carefully before applying to us.

We do not accept applications from organisations which have:

- Reserves (net current assets plus investments) covering more than 12 months' expenditure
- An annual income below £50k
- An annual income above £2m (in exceptional circumstances we are willing to consider applications from organisations with an income up to £5m subject to discussion with a member of our Grants Team)
- Applied to us unsuccessfully within the previous 12 months
- Another application under consideration in any of our grant programmes
- No up to date safeguarding policy
- An active grant from us under any one of our grant programmes unless they are in their last 6 months of their current grant and wish to apply for continuation funding

We will not support:

- Proposals for loans or social finance
- Proposals for grants of more than 50% of the annual running costs of an organisation
- Proposals that are only for the benefit of one individual
- Work that is not legally charitable
- Work that has already taken place
- Start-up costs, pilot projects or organisations that do not yet have a track record of service delivery, or a year of annual accounts
- Capital costs; including new buildings and building refurbishment
- New work; we wish to fund work with a track record of success
- Research, scholarships or student fees
- Local authorities or work usually considered a statutory responsibility
- Schools, colleges, tutoring services or universities, except for special schools exclusively for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs and ESOL services. We will not fund the education of pupils, but will consider funding additional services or facilities
- Organisations that do not provide direct services to clients (such as umbrella, second tier or grant-making organisations)
- Work that benefits people outside the UK
- Uniformed groups

- Work that specifically targets current or ex-service men and women
- Professional associations or training for professionals
- Services that actively seek to proselytise or promote any religion
- One-off holidays, overseas travel or events (such as festivals, conferences, exhibitions and community events)
- Pre-school projects, out of school hours play activities or holiday schemes
- Healthcare which has a clinical basis including medical care and research, physical therapy, hospices or other palliative care services or specialist equipment
- Heritage or environmental conservation projects
- Campaigning, lobbying, or general awareness raising work
- Work that provides legal advice specifically to support court action

6. Application process

When you can apply

- Applications can be submitted at any time. We have no deadlines and we assess applications as they are received

How to submit an application

- To apply, you will need to complete an online application form and submit it using the links on our website
- The online application form includes help text and explains what additional documents you will also need to upload
- A Sample Application Form, which includes the help text, is also available on our website

What happens when we receive your application

Stage 1 Assessment

- We will email you within a week to let you know we have received your application
- All eligible applications are reviewed by our team of Assessors
- It can take us up to eight weeks to complete the Stage 1 Assessment and make a decision (although in practice you will often hear from us sooner than this)
- During the Stage 1 Assessment we may contact you if we need to clarify any information
- We will be in touch after we have completed the Stage 1 Assessment to let you know whether your application has been put through to Stage 2

Stage 2 Assessment

- If your application progresses to Stage 2, we will contact you to ask for additional information, which will include details about income projection, a budget and your fundraising strategy
- The additional information we ask for is used to decide which applications will get a Stage 2 Assessment Visit
- In order to minimise delay in processing your application, we will ask you to provide this information within two weeks

Stage 2 Assessment Visit

Applications selected for a visit will be assessed by a member of staff, one of our network of volunteer visitors or, in certain parts of the country, the local Community Foundation.

- We will email you to advise which member of staff or volunteer visitor will visit your organisation
- The visit enables us to discuss your work with you in more detail and to find out more about your organisation and the people you work with
- As well as exploring your funding request, visits will look more closely at your organisation's governance, management, and fundraising strategy
- We would normally expect to meet with staff, a member of your Board/Trustees and, if appropriate, some of the people you support. Once the visit has taken place a final report is prepared for our decision making panel

Final Decisions

The final decisions about whether to award a grant are made quarterly in March, June, September and December

- A letter notifying you of the outcome will be sent to you within two weeks of the decision being made
- Please note that we cannot guarantee your application will go to a particular meeting as this is dependent on the number of applications we receive
- If your application progresses this far it can take up to six months from when you apply to hear the outcome of an application

Continuation funding

- We will consider applications for continuation funding providing that a final progress report has been submitted to us
- We define continuation funding as the continuous funding of an organisation. This doesn't have to be for the same piece of work as we realise that needs of your organisation can change over time. Grant holders can begin the process of re-application six months after the final payment of their current grant
- We can fund an organisation for up to nine years consecutively, or for nine out of 12 years where there has been a break of a year between applications. After this we would not accept an application from an organisation for three years. There is no guarantee of continuation funding. A new application will be needed each time, and will go through the same assessment process as applications from organisations who have not had recent funding

Collaborating with other Grant Makers

We reserve the right to disclose non-personal information, regarding your application, activities and organisation, with other grant makers unless you expressly request otherwise. No personal data will be shared with other grant makers for this purpose.

Detection of fraud

We reserve the right to share personal information to detect and prevent fraud and do not require your consent.

7. Once a decision has been made

What happens if your application is successful?

- If your application is successful we will write to you with an offer letter outlining the terms and conditions of your grant and the next steps. We will do this within two weeks of a decision being made

What happens if your application is unsuccessful?

- If you have had an application for funding declined by us you cannot make another application until at least one year after the date you were notified of the decision
- We offer verbal feedback to unsuccessful applicants. If you would like feedback please call our Grants Team
- All decisions are final and we cannot revisit any decision

8. Funding priorities explained

This section gives a more detailed overview of the six funding priorities that describe the work we support and how we want to bring about change for the most disadvantaged people in the greatest need.

In each priority area we have outlined the outcomes we would like grantees to be working to deliver. We have also identified ‘high need groups’ that we are particularly interested in funding. These groups are included as illustrations of people we are particularly keen to fund, but they are not meant to be exhaustive. It is up to you to explain the needs of the people you are working with and the outcomes that will be achieved.

Our application form asks you to identify which priority (or priorities) your work meets. All the grants we make must meet one of our priorities. Some organisations may fit within several priority areas, but you don’t need to address more than one. Applications will be assessed on the quality of their work rather than the number of priority areas they are working towards.



Priority 1 - Help at a Critical Moment

Helping people to rebuild their lives following a crisis, critical moment, trauma or abuse

A crisis point, trauma or abuse can have profound consequences for individuals. People who have been through, or are in the middle of this type of life event may need support to overcome the difficult circumstances they are facing.

We want to fund services that work with people at a point of crisis, critical moment, trauma or abuse and help them to move on with their lives. Work may help people to live free of abuse and/or provide a way out of difficult circumstances. Services may include: advocacy, and practical and emotional support to enable people to make positive changes. Work that we support in this area is likely to be holistic and reasonably intensive. It may involve helping people to explore their options and make the right choices, but also to reduce risk and minimise the chances of ongoing problems or repeat victimisation.

Outcomes

- People are supported at a time of crisis, critical moment, trauma or abuse, and helped to move on positively with their lives
- There is an improvement in how people feel about themselves e.g. improved confidence, self-esteem, resilience, or well-being
- People have improved mental health and/or ability to cope

High need groups

- victims/survivors of domestic abuse
- refugees and asylum seekers
- children who have been sexually exploited
- those in mental health crisis
- those involved in sex work and those who are victims of trafficking
- victims of hate crime
- people experiencing homelessness

Examples of current grants

- Specialist one-to-one support and advocacy for people who have been victims/survivors of domestic and/or sexual abuse
- A recovery and support service for families where a parent has experienced a mental health crisis
- A counselling and psychotherapy service for refugee and asylum-seeking women
- An arts based mentoring programme working with offenders in the run up to release from prison



Priority 2 - Positive Choices

Helping people, whose actions or behaviours have led to negative consequences for themselves and others, to make positive choices

Crime and substance misuse have a damaging effect on the lives of individuals, their families and communities.

We want to fund services that work to reduce harmful behaviours such as offending and/or drug/alcohol misuse and that help people to rehabilitate and reintegrate into society. Offenders typically have multiple and complex needs. These might include family breakdown, mental health problems, unemployment, homelessness and poverty. Long-term substance misuse is also often intertwined with similar issues and multiple, complex needs. The complexity of these issues means we are looking to support interventions that are relatively intensive and treat individuals holistically while challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours. We also want to support preventative work with those who are at high risk of drug or alcohol dependency or offending.

Outcomes

- People have access to quality specialist rehabilitation services that enable them to move on positively with their lives
- There is a change in people's ability to cope that results in them being less likely to engage in harmful behaviours
- A reduction in harmful behaviours over time (e.g. a reduction in offending or alcohol/drug consumption)

High need groups

- young people at risk of offending
- substance misusers
- perpetrators of domestic abuse
- prisoners and ex-offenders

Examples of current grants

- A treatment centre providing a structured rehabilitation programme for people with alcohol and/or drug abuse issues
- A perpetrator programme working to reduce sex offending
- An early intervention programme working with disaffected young people displaying antisocial behaviour
- A programme working with both victims and perpetrators to address domestic abuse



Priority 3 - Accommodation / Housing Support

Enabling people to work towards or maintain accommodation

Everyone has a right to adequate housing and shelter. Safe, stable and affordable housing is a foundation from which to tackle other social issues. There has been a sharp rise in the number of people who are homeless or vulnerably housed in recent years and routes to finding independent housing are getting more complex, taking longer and becoming harder to navigate.

We want to help people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or who are vulnerably housed. We fund work that helps people stabilise their situation and move towards sustainable accommodation. We also support work that helps people make informed decisions around their housing and take steps to improve their housing circumstances. Finally, we want to assist vulnerable people to access (or maintain) accommodation where they can be safe and achieve their personal potential to live independently.

Outcomes

- People have access to support enabling them to gain and/or sustain stable accommodation
- People have gained the skills needed to live independently and maintain a home
- Vulnerable people in need of housing are given support to remain safe and gain the skills to live with greater independence

High need groups

- refugees and asylum seekers
- young people
- victims/survivors of domestic abuse
- people with substance misuse issues
- people with mental health issues

Examples of current grants

- Advice and advocacy for those who are homeless or vulnerably housed
- Life skills training to help homeless or vulnerably housed young people move towards independence
- Practical support and maintenance that helps older people to live safely in their own homes

A significant proportion of our work in this area is with people who are homeless or vulnerably housed. Many organisations working with this client group will also address the underlying reasons for homelessness (e.g. mental health crisis, lack of employment, lack of support networks, lack of financial understanding, substance misuse) and are therefore likely to meet outcomes in a number of priority areas.



Priority 4 - Employment & Training

Supporting people to move towards or gain employment

Unemployment– particularly over long periods – has substantial social and financial costs and is often associated with wider disadvantage. Being unemployed can impact on a person’s mental health and can lead to social exclusion for individuals and their dependents.

We want to support services that improve people’s employability and lead to more people being meaningfully employed. We wish to fund support and training for those who are the furthest from the job market giving them the opportunity to build their confidence, identity and self-worth and reach their personal potential to work. We are interested in services working with people who are currently unemployed or are likely to struggle to find work in the future by removing barriers to employment and moving people closer to the workplace. Services could include structured volunteering and placement in a work environment.

Outcomes

- People have improved soft skills, are moving towards employment and/or being work ready
- People have developed appropriate technical skills (including literacy, numeracy and job-specific qualifications) and are more likely to gain employment as a result
- People have engaged in training to reach their personal potential to work or volunteer

High need groups

- young people
- ex-offenders
- people experiencing homelessness
- people with a disability
- refugees

Examples of current grants

- Career coaching and employability support for young care leavers
- ESOL and IT classes for unemployed people who have recently arrived in the UK
- Supported work experience for ex-offenders
- Café providing volunteering placements for people experiencing mental health problems



Priority 5 - Financial Inclusion, Rights & Entitlements

Supporting people to overcome their financial problems and ensure that they are able to claim their rights and entitlements

Financial exclusion unduly affects the poorest in society. Financial pressures exacerbate poverty and are a key factor in wider social exclusion. Life is more expensive and unstable for people who do not have access to appropriate financial services. Many people are not aware of their rights and are not able to receive the support that they are entitled to. Being in financial difficulty can also have an adverse impact on a person's mental health and wellbeing.

We want to fund work that helps people to make the right choices about financial issues. Being informed about financial options, money management, debt repayment and saving money all contribute to stable living arrangements and an ability to plan ahead. We also want to help people to access mainstream services and navigate systems (e.g. the benefits, immigration and asylum systems) to ensure they receive the support they are entitled to. Finally, we want to fund services that help people to develop the knowledge and ability to understand and manage their own finances. These services may improve financial literacy or work to improve an individual's attitude towards financial matters.

Outcomes

- People have the support, information and advice to address their financial issues
- People are able to navigate the benefits, migration and asylum systems and claim their rights and entitlements
- People have improved financial literacy, are more able to understand their finances and have greater confidence when budgeting and managing their money

High need groups

- low income households
- people experiencing homelessness
- people with disabilities
- refugees and asylum seekers

Examples of current grants

- Specialist advice on claiming financial entitlements and on navigating the asylum process for recently arrived asylum seekers
- Tailored financial literacy, debt counselling and budgeting services for those in need
- Financial advice service offering guidance on debt, financial management and benefits entitlements, for disadvantaged local communities
- Unified advice and counselling service dealing with debt among people with mental health issues



Priority 6 - Support Networks & Family

Working with people to develop improved support networks and family relationships

Good quality relationships are important. A wealth of evidence shows that social relationships with family, friends and peers improve mental wellbeing, resilience and longevity. On the other hand social isolation and a lack of relationships are associated with a diminished quality of life.

We want to fund work that helps people to develop positive social networks and/or family relationships. We want to help people cultivate relationships that provide emotional and practical support, increase resilience and foster a sense of connectedness. This includes early years work with families - helping parents to cope with the challenges they face and improving the health and development of children - as well as social support for older people to feel connected and protect against loneliness and isolation.

Outcomes

- An individual and/or family enjoys positive and constructive relationships with others; feeling and being socially connected
- An individual and/or family has the skills, understanding and emotional capacity to maintain and manage positive relationships
- An individual, family or carer receives support that increases their resilience, independence and/or reduces mental health issues and isolation

High need groups

- early years work with parents and children
- care leavers
- older people
- people with mental health issues
- people with learning disabilities
- carers

Examples of current grants

- A befriending service to reduce loneliness among older people
- An early years support service for families in difficult circumstances providing practical assistance, facilitating a positive home environment and functional family relationships
- Group activities and training for young carers
- Family and parenting programmes to help prisoners maintain positive relationships
- A mentoring programme for young people identified as at risk
- A peer support group for people with mental health issues