

The Henry Smith Charity

founded in 1628

Strengthening Communities 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 **Strengthening Communities grant 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 Strengthening Communities and Improving Lives grant 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 Strengthening Communities programme

We know that small organisations embedded in their communities play a vital role in helping people make positive changes in their lives. We want to support organisations that work to address local needs from within their communities.

The Strengthening Communities grant programme aims to support and strengthen the most disadvantaged and deprived communities across the UK and is only open to organisations with an annual income of between £20k- £500k that are working in areas within the bottom 10% most deprived areas for England and Scotland, and within the 15% most deprived areas for Northern Ireland and Wales, on the government Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

This grant programme is intended to be as flexible and helpful as possible to the organisations we are supporting so we will provide grants for running costs which may include rent, overheads and salaries, as well as small capital costs needed to support the work.

For this programme, we define communities geographically and want to fund organisations which provide a range of services which are widely accessible to the community as a whole and are addressing the needs of people in that community.

There are separate guidelines for our [Improving Lives grants programme](#). In the Improving Lives grants programme we are looking to fund larger organisations (between £50k and £2m income) and organisations working to tackle specific issues (e.g. mental ill health or support for refugees and asylum seekers) across a wider geographical area. If you think your organisation may be a better fit under the Improving Lives grants programme, please check the Improving Lives guidelines.

2. Who can apply for a grant?

- We want our funding to reach the most disadvantaged places in the UK. For this reason we will only fund organisations both physically based and working in highly deprived areas

Before you apply, you must use the government Indices of Multiple Deprivation links' below to check whether you are eligible for this programme. The postcode where your organisation operates from must be:

For England & Scotland - within the bottom 10%

England	https://findthatpostcode.uk/
Scotland	https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD

For Northern Ireland & Wales - within the bottom 15%

Northern Ireland	http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/Home.aspx
Wales	http://wimd.wales.gov.uk/

- Grants are only made to organisations with an annual income of between £20k and £500k
- We want to fund established organisations that have a track record in their local area. Organisations must be at least 18 months old and have published their first set of annual accounts
- 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 they 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 all 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 we support. We are looking for the following characteristics **in all** the organisations 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. What we look for in applications

We are looking to fund work that aligns with one or more of the following broad aims:

- People from across the community are able to participate in activities that improve connectedness, opportunities and wellbeing
- People who are excluded, vulnerable, or facing other forms of hardship have access to community based services that support positive change
- A stronger, active and more engaged community

What we look for in the organisations we fund

When we assess an application, there are some characteristics we think are important when looking at the services being delivered. We are looking for these characteristics **in all** applications:

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

Community led

The best solutions to social problems are rooted in their community. We want to support organisations that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are working with the community to address them

Openness and accessibility

Organisations that are committed to equal opportunities and removing barriers to marginalised groups

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 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 overriding concerns.

It is very important to us that no potential beneficiary is excluded from the work that 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

- 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 is appropriate and proportionate to their financial position. (Except for the smallest organisations, we would not generally fund more than 50% of the projected running costs of an organisation per year)
- We only fund **running costs** through the Strengthening Communities programme. As we are providing funding for general running costs, your grant could be used to increase existing service provision, take on a new staff member, improve sustainability or cover small capital costs needed to support the work you are asking us to fund

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:

- Are not working within the bottom 10% most deprived areas for England and Scotland, or within the bottom 15% most deprived areas for Northern Ireland and Wales
- Have reserves (net current assets plus investments) covering more than 12 months' expenditure. In circumstances where the organisation's income is less than £80k and reserves are more than 12 months we will accept your application and assess on a case by case basis whether reserves are reasonable in the context of overall income.
- Have an annual income below £20k
- Have an annual income above £500k
- Have applied to us unsuccessfully within the previous 12 months
- Have another application under consideration in any of our grant programmes
- Have no up to date safeguarding policy
- Have an active grant from us under any one of our grant programmes unless you are in the last 6 months of your current grant and wish to apply for continuation funding

We will not support:

- Proposals for loans or social finance
- 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
- 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
- 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)

- Projects only providing pre-school services, 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 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